Leading for Change: Incorporating the Values of the Liberal Arts in Student Affairs Practice

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West Chester University  
Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs  
THESIS  

Leading for Change: Incorporating the Values of the Liberal Arts in Student Affairs Practice  

Ben Shalk  
May 2020
Leading for Change: Incorporating the Values of the Liberal Arts in Student Affairs Practice

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

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

By
Ben Shalk
May 2020

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Dedication

To all of the student affairs educators who seek to use the liberal arts to transform higher education.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the faculty who teach in the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs master’s program at West Chester University. Your transformative methods and approaches to higher education have enlightened an entire cohort of student affairs educators. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Jacqueline Hodes for her tireless efforts to build the program and serve as our good company. Her multitude of experiences in higher education have instilled a deep sense of putting student development front-and-center in my journey. I am deeply grateful to her for cultivating a sense of curiosity within me about student affairs and higher education. I am appreciative of my thesis advisor, Dr. John Elmore, who was instrumental in the editing of this thesis. Our discussions have made this thesis better and inspired a sense of resisting the status quo within me.

I am thankful for all of the hard-working staff at West Chester University and Swarthmore College who have been pivotal in my development as a student affairs educator. Thank you for allowing me to put theory to practice. These experiences have enriched this thesis and my degree. Thank you as well to my parents, Chris and Sandy, who have encouraged me to pursue student affairs as a career path and persevere with this degree. Thank you to my brothers, Alec and Colin, for encouraging me on this journey.
Abstract

Higher education, once a public good, has undergone a period of systemic divestment. The business model of the University, perpetuated by neoliberalism, has changed the values of higher education. Traditionally, the core mission of higher education created critically-engaged citizens who sought to democratize society. In its current state, higher education has lost its status as a public good that benefited all of society. The liberal arts can reinvigorate higher education by reengaging students through contemplative methods. Student affairs educators live in a world of limited budgets and neoliberal practices. The connection of neoliberalism to their work in student affairs will serve as a path forward for resisting corporate practices in the university. Transformative leadership will propel anti-neoliberal practices and policies into the inner workings of the university.
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Chapter 1

Introduction and Positionality

I come from a family of educators who believe in the value of public education. My parents both taught in elementary and secondary education respectively. My experience, in public education, has shaped my view of society. The role of public education should be to create a more democratic society where all can achieve success regardless of their circumstances. Public education enriches society because, in theory, it is inclusive of all people and a place where new generations share their values. In as much the way that K-12 education has become stratified along class lines, higher education is unequal. Public institutions of higher learning have historically been the backbone of the middle class. These institutions provided a quality and affordable liberal arts education to the masses. Public institutions used to educate critically-engaged citizens who would then participate in American democracy.

In the modern era, the values of a traditional liberal arts education have been stripped away in favor of higher education as a commodity. The concern is that as a society most Americans fail to realize what has happened to the university. We have lost something that invigorated democracy and encouraged a state of intellectualism. The idea of a university is to have a place where students, faculty, and administrators can engage intellectually and share ideas. The mechanical, impersonal, nature of a business was never meant to be introduced into the university. Higher education is so much more than a place to acquire skills that lead to a career in a neoliberal society. My experiences, in a research university, have informed my view of the need to transform public higher education.
My vision for the university is not to return to an era where there was increased public funding and little accountability. I recognize that society has changed since the era of the ivory tower. We must instead fight for the university that advocates for increased public funding, but reflects the intersectionality within our country. The cost to attend the university has skyrocketed in recent decades and millions of students are facing an onslaught of debt. As a result, students are seeking to major in what will produce financial gain in the workforce. The liberal arts are viewed as passe; curriculum from a bygone era where a college degree in any subject was a ticket to a good life. The true value of the liberal arts, however, is to educate the whole student and instill a set of values that works to democratize society.

The truth is that the liberal arts have all but disappeared in public institutions where predominantly working and middle-class students receive four-year degrees. These students are told to major in something that aligns with the capitalist framework of society. These students do not need to be enlightened by the liberal arts; they should seek to fit into society by majoring in something “practical” during their college years. The working class must never be enlightened by liberal values because it is their responsibility to do the work of society. The liberal arts, however, is thriving at elite institutions. The ivory tower, where students acquire social capital, is on full display at these institutions. How is it that these students, at elite institutions, can major in the liberal arts and become very successful in a neoliberal society? Why are these opportunities not afforded to students at institutions that have predominantly working and middle-class student bodies? The answer lies in a multi-tiered uniquely American system of higher education.

The working class has scrimped and saved to attend college only to be told that the liberal arts is irrelevant and will cause them to be unsuccessful. Truthfully, the public university has not kept up with rapid changes in the economy. Wages are stagnant as productivity has gone way up
in recent decades. The mass-customization model, where public universities provided a quality liberal arts education for all students, is no longer working in the modern economy. In a time when mass customization benefited students, society was also democratized because of the values ingrained in the liberal arts. Now that mass customization no longer works from a business mindset, the liberal arts are undervalued and unworthy of study.

Elite institutions have figured out these changes in the economy and have adapted an individualized approach to higher education. You can still study the liberal arts because creativity combined with defying authority is encouraged at these institutions. The elite class in the United States is making the decisions about society and modern democracy. The working and middle classes that should be making these decisions are pushed to the side and not given the same quality of education.

My Concern

Since the 1980s, public higher education has undergone a systematic divestment and defunding process that has increased tuition for millions of students. Federal and state governments have reduced funding levels for public higher education. This has disproportionately affected working and middle-class students who attend public institutions. The opportunity for these students to earn a liberal arts education has been hollowed out over the decades. Wealthy and privileged students attend institutions that espouse the value of the liberal arts, but participate in a stratified system of higher education. As divestment has ensued in public higher education, a neoliberal mindset has crept into the university. Students are told that they can only major in something that will provide a path to succeed in a neoliberal society.

Suddenly, learning is no longer about becoming enlightened; it is about finding your place in society. Neoliberalism, an ideology that encourages a business mindset and prioritizes
private over public goods, has taken shape in the university. The university was meant as a public, social good that benefited all of American society. These days, universities are increasingly having to engage in partnerships with private industry to offer services to students and their families. The quality of public higher education that was afforded to students several decades ago is vastly different than what it is today. Students who go to large, public universities must reckon with the fact that standardized exams and lecture classes in the hundreds is the norm. How are these students supposed to attain a quality liberal arts education when there is so little support for them?

Students who attend elite institutions are asked to develop creatively. These students are asked to develop their own thoughts through writing and reflection. The liberal arts are still relevant in a complex and diverse society. The neoliberal ideology in which students must study only what can get them a vocation, is promoted to the working and middle classes. Students at elite institutions are very much still studying the liberal arts.

Framing the Concern

The selection of my major was a long, complicated, and arduous process for me. I did not, by any means, know what to study as a first-year student. I entered my first year at a large, public research university as an undeclared (or undecided) student. I was overwhelmed by the vast selection of bachelor’s degree options. I had many questions regarding how my choice of major would impact me both personally and professionally. Would I be relegated to a low-paying desk job? Would I enjoy learning the concepts and material in my major? I spent most of my first year taking breadth (or general education) requirements and elective courses. Although I did not realize it at the time, my indecision at selecting a major is a normal occurrence for many college students.
During my undergraduate years at a large public research institution, I began to realize that many students are known more by their identification numbers than their names. The size of the institution prevented me from receiving the individualized education that many students receive at smaller liberal arts institutions. These universities often have limited resources and must provide a higher education to thousands of students. It is difficult to scale the individualized approach of liberal arts institutions to regional and research universities. The large class sizes and mechanized nature of grading at the contributed to my understanding of the limitations of research universities. Public institutions have had to make up for reductions in public funding by finding ways to reduce instructional costs. Tuition and fees paid by undergraduate students support these institutions in other areas such as their graduate schools, law schools, and research operations.

The corporatization of higher education has particularly affected public institutions. As an undergraduate, I questioned why dining services were contracted out to private corporations. The career center received funding from major banks. Research and even entire professorships were funded by corporations or private entities. While I was not able to label the corporatization of the university as an undergraduate, the effects of it were on full display in college. Neoliberalism encourages universities to see corporatization as a win-win scenario. The university is able to offload costs because it is receiving funding from outside entities. Corporations gain access to students and faculty. As the university has become more like a business, the relationship between the institution and students has become increasingly transactional. An influx of corporate funds and practices into the university assumes that the benefits from a university education are purely financial. In the transaction what is lost, however, is love of learning and seeking knowledge to better understand society and its problems. If the
grip of neoliberalism continues in the university, society will lose out on the ability for future generations of college students to change the world. An approach to higher education that acknowledges financial reward while maintaining the liberal arts is paramount.

The careers of my parents as educators showed me the rewarding and honorable nature of the teaching profession. I decided, after extensive research and conversations, to become an economics major. Even though the courses were rigorous and challenging, I felt that a degree in economics was attainable from my perspective as a college student. After three years in an economics program, however, I found myself being funneled into an increasingly corporate career path. Additionally, I was disappointed in the teaching abilities of some of my professors. They were brilliant in their field of economics but lacked the patience and understanding needed for educating undergraduate students. The research institution ensures that contributions to a field of study and the teaching of students compete for the attention of faculty.

**Broad Intro to the Concern**

Neoliberalism, an ideology that promotes a corporate market structure and weak social state, is at odds with a thriving liberal arts curriculum. The values within the liberal arts seek not only to introduce democratization into society, but inspire a spirit of critical thinking and reflection. Corporate culture begets profitability which is focused on capitalism instead of educating students (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). The influence of corporate thought in the university changes it into something that is unrecognizable in the modern era. Higher education is so much more than a place where students learn skills to achieve vocational success (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). It is a place where intellectualism leads to new ideas and an ongoing conversation about the issues facing society.
In the United States, neoliberalism began in the early 1980s with the rise of Reaganomics. This ideology promoted free markets, trade, and corporate power in modern society (Steger & Roy, 2010). Neoliberal research institutes, such as the Cato Institute and Heritage Foundation, were invited into the Reagan administration to offer their views on economic growth led by the private sector. The view that contributed to a divestment in public higher education was an overwhelming belief that high taxes caused poor economic performance (Steger & Roy, 2010). In the early 1980s, the American economy was in the deep throes of a recession. These sub-par economic times were taken full advantage of by the Reagan administration and neoliberal policy experts. The public could be convinced that public goods (such as higher education) drained resources in the form of federal tax dollars from hard-working Americans. During this period, the view that higher education was a public good began to melt away in favor of privatization. Higher education, traditionally a good paid for by society, was rapidly becoming a private good paid for by the individual.

Wealthy individuals benefited from the American abandonment of public goods and higher taxes. Supply-side economists, like Arthur Laffer, advocated for freeing the amount of capital in the economy for private investment. This meant that wealthy individuals in society benefited because taxes were reduced on private income (Steger & Roy, 2010). Suddenly, individuals who were asked to pay for public goods were now free to spend more of their money privately.

This shift in economic ideology was embraced by both major political parties in the United States. The introduction of neoliberalism into society continued in a second wave led by the Clinton administration in the 1990s. President Clinton and his administration sought to combine the neoliberalism introduced by the Right with moderate social policies. While
neoliberalism possessed the values of neoconservatives in the 1980s, the 1990s brought about a softer globalism (Steger & Roy, 2010). The neoconservative values in the 1980s, a disdain for multiculturalism and love of militarism, were tied to the pro-business aspects of neoliberalism. The neoconservative leanings of neoliberalism were softened in the 1990s to allow for an interconnectedness in global economies. The information age of the 1990s, when economies were rapidly moving online, was ripe for a second coming of neoliberalism. The Clinton administration firmly believed that a liberalization of trade policies and focus on global markets would help lift the economic fortunes of all Americans (Steger & Roy, 2010). Economic policies were geared towards cutting taxes on capital-gains investments made by homeowners.

Steger and Roy (2010) explain that a second wave of neoliberalism blends initiatives in the market with social concerns in society. A prime example of this is advocating for a reduction in taxes on venture capitalists in the hopes that it will spark technological breakthroughs that will benefit all Americans. Taxes were lowered on corporations and wealthy investors to make way for technological growth and innovation. The working and middle classes saw modest tax relief in this period as well. The tax relief provided is disingenuous at best because the programs and services that help lift working Americans (a healthy social state) were now so much more expensive. The costs were no longer being fronted by higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy. Modest tax relief is unhelpful if it suddenly costs so much more to put children through higher education.

The Democratic party of the 1990s moved away from the traditional values of liberalism. A strong social state paid for by higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy were cast aside for policies steeped in neoliberalism. The framework of neoliberalism encouraged a divestment in public higher education that changed its mission. Beginning in the 1980s, public higher
education transitioned to a private good with public characteristics. Public universities continue to make enormous strides in research and innovation. They still admit millions of American college students each year. What has been lost, however, is much more subtle than a surface-level understanding of American higher education. Neoliberalism has worn down the role of the university as an incubator of new ideas and social change in favor of values that benefit business.

The university itself has become much more corporate through public-private partnerships and less public funds. This has all come at a time when higher education costs more than ever and the quality has eroded in public institutions. Students simply do not have the time to reflect on their time in college and engage in new ideas. Neoliberalism has introduced a mindset within students that they are in college to learn vocations. The university is so much more than a place to receive job training. The influences of neoliberalism in the university matters because we are losing the potential for newly engaged citizens to rise up against the unfairness and oppression in society.

Universities must take back control from corporate interests to better the lives of students. Newfield (2016) asserts that public colleges and universities have the power to democratize intelligence. A thriving middle class cannot exist without accessibility to higher education on a mass scale (p. 16). The middle class was built on the ability to access affordable and quality higher education. Students were educated with a focus on a strong liberal arts education. Newfield (2016) asserts that, “today a generation of political, business and educational leaders has somehow decided that mass quality is out of reach” (p. 16). The claim that a privileged few are making decisions for the masses should concern all proponents of higher education. The middle class should fight for a higher education system that is both affordable and produces well-rounded citizens. Middle and working-class students are passionate
about issues of social justice, income inequality, and the environment. An opportunity is missed if the university does not train these students to introduce change into society.

Society must be wary, however, that a restoration of public funding for higher education is sufficient for a revolution of ideas. The university must design a curriculum for students that favors a healthy higher education system. While this may seem self-serving of institutions, it is necessary for their survival. A place for universities to begin to address a lack of support for higher education is first-year experience courses. All too often the curriculum of these courses revolves around frivolous topics such as bread-making and where to find resources on campus. Many logistical questions about campus services can be answered online or by a capable resident assistant. Newfield (2016) articulates the point that there are not enough first-year seminars. Universities struggle to pay professors to teach these courses so relatively few are offered (p. 10). Imagine a first-year seminar course that teaches students how to advocate for their beliefs. A spirit of activism around social justice issues may go a long way towards inspiring change on campus and in society. A course could teach students how to navigate a difficult voter registration process and why their voice matters.

**Why should others be concerned about it?**

The tremendous capabilities of the American higher education system, once used for research and discovery, are now being used to drive profit. Free-market ideologies have commodified the university so that students are customers waiting to be filled up with knowledge to use in the marketplace (Giroux, 2014). This view of higher education is a departure from what its traditional place as a vehicle for enlightenment. Society demands bold, progressive ideas that can change the course of history.
Neoliberals firmly believed that free higher education contributed to the student radicalism on campuses in the 1960s. A lack of family responsibility and threats to inherited wealth from activists caused great concern for the wealthy class in the United States. Students were free from the grips of the familial structure and did not accrue thousands of dollars in debt during this time period (Cooper, 2017). Neoliberals, intent on changing the funding structures for higher education, joined with neoconservatives in resisting the democratic movement on campuses. While neoconservatives were fully immersed in culture wars, neoliberals sought to transition higher education back to private funding sources (Cooper, 2017). Neoliberals set the course for reducing the value in real terms of grants provided to students and prioritized loans in federal policy.

**Preview of Chapter 3**

In the current era, vocationalism has infiltrated the university at the expense of the liberal arts. The forces of neoliberalism have profoundly impacted modern higher education in the United States. The values of the liberal arts are to use knowledge as a force to enlighten individuals to a new worldview and democratize society. The liberal arts, situated in higher education, provide alternative ways of knowing and understanding the world. A liberal arts education puts students on their paths to self-authorship through cultivating a sense of curiosity about the world. The liberal arts provides important tools for student development and mutual understanding. Simply, the liberal arts is not an institution; it is a way of life for those impacted by it. The values and traditions of the liberal arts, while instilled in higher education, provide a lifestyle for many years after graduation.

In American life, there was a time when a comprehensive, affordable, liberal arts education was offered to the masses through public institutions. In the 1960s, there was a
multitude of public funding for higher education and it was viewed as a public good. This public good helped society stay aware and involved in important social issues of the day. Since the 1960s, public funding support for higher education has waned and costs have been shifted onto students. As tuition and fees have increased in recent decades, students have primarily been responsible for bearing these costs. Higher education has transitioned to a private good where the benefits are received by individual students. Neoliberalism, an ideology that introduces corporate practices into traditionally public goods and promotes the individual over the collective, is responsible for the systematic defunding of higher education.

The introduction of neoliberalism into higher education has encouraged a rise of vocationalism and careerism within the university. The mission of higher education has shifted to developing job-readiness skills within students and preparing them for the workforce. Academic curriculum as well as extracurricular and cocurricular programming have been aligned with values that promote job training. Additionally, since public funding has been reduced in all aspects of the university, these programs have sought external, often corporate, sponsorships. The path forward for modern higher education, however, is not a return to the past or increased vocationalism. Higher education of the 1960s, while a beneficiary of public funding, often excluded students of marginalized identities and populations. A third university exists within the well-funded university of the past and vocational university of the present. Public funding for higher education must be restored with a recognition of the intersectionality in the present era.

Student affairs educators play an important role in changing the cultures of their institutions. They must work not only to overcome the influences of neoliberalism in their programs and initiatives, but to foster the spirit of the liberal arts within students. In their development in college, students are exploring ways to cultivate their identities and understand
society. This often takes the form of activism on college campuses. Students attempt to discover their place in society through seeking ways to change their campus climates. Student affairs educators should help guide students to ensure their activism practices both recognition of differences and redistribution. Without these two components, recognition of differences often displaces redistribution. The role of student affairs should be to guide students through their activism to promote the idea that activism needs to be inclusive of differing views and perspectives.

Student affairs practitioners, however, must be wary of the political dynamics of their institutions and respective roles. A delicate balance between advocating for students and maintaining their positions must be established for change to happen. The third university recognizes the political environment of the institution and attempts to change it by introducing decolonizing practices. Honest and open conversations about power and privilege in the institution will help overcome firmly entrenched neoliberal attitudes and beliefs. The introduction of alternative ways of knowing such as valuing dialogue and appreciation of experiences should be factored into a resistance of neoliberalism.
Chapter 2
Thematic Concern, Conceptual Framework, and Definitions

THEMATIC CONCERN:
Traditionally, the university offered an affordable liberal arts education to the masses. Higher education was viewed as a public good that benefited all of society. Beginning in the early 1980s, however, neoliberal ideologies invaded higher education and encouraged a public divestment. Subsequently, higher education has transitioned to a private good in which costs have been shifted onto the backs of students. As a result of divestment, the liberal arts have been devalued in the university. The role of the liberal arts, to produce critically-engaged citizens, is no longer prioritized by society. An uncovering of neoliberalism and reestablishment of public funds will resist the business mindset of the university and restore the liberal arts.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:
1. How can higher education harness the liberal arts to educate critically-engaged students?
2. What role has neoliberalism played in repurposing higher education for business interests?
3. How can academic and cocurricular programming be used to resist neoliberalism in the university?
4. In what ways can students use the values of the liberal arts to achieve self-authorship?
5. What role does the university play in restoring its status as a public good that benefits all of society?
**DEFINITIONS:**

*Constitutive:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Authorship</strong></td>
<td>The ability for students to define their own beliefs, values, and relationships internally (Baxter Magolda, 2014).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Neoliberalism</strong></td>
<td>An ideology that, “formulates everything, everywhere, in terms of capital investment and appreciation, including and especially humans themselves” (Brown, 2015, p. 176). Public goods that benefit all of society are converted to private entities for the relative few (Brown, 2015).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Higher Education Act of 1965</strong></td>
<td>The Higher Education Act was codified into federal law in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society programs. The law permits many of the modern grant and loan programs students rely on to help pay for college (Hegji, 2018). The law also addresses equity and access in higher education institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Personnel Point of View</strong></td>
<td>A founding document that lays out how student affairs work should be structured in the higher education institution. The text provided the foundation for student development in modern student affairs practice (Rentz, 2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Powell Memorandum</strong></td>
<td>A memorandum issued by Supreme Court associate justice Louis Powell Jr. that argued student activism in the 1960s was a direct threat to capitalism. (Ferguson, 2017).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reification</strong></td>
<td>The desire of a group to create a drastically simplified collective identity instead of lifting up individual voices. Dissidence and division within the group is discouraged (Fraser, 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First-Wave Neoliberalism</strong></td>
<td>The first iteration of an ideology that promotes militarism and social conservatism. Supply-side economics encouraged a divestment from public goods and reprioritized investments in the military (Steger &amp; Roy, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second-Wave Neoliberalism</strong></td>
<td>The second iteration of an ideology that promotes market globalism and welcomes corporations as partners. Public goods offload many of their core operations to private interests (Steger &amp; Roy, 2010).</td>
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**Operative:**
For the purpose of this paper, the following definitions will apply

| **Social Capital** | The ways in which the wealth and social classes of students affects their institutional choices and careers post graduation. |
| **Recognition** | The tendency for higher education to note and appreciate the differences of others. |
| **Redistribution** | A restoration of public funds to the university that lowers tuition and fees for students. |
| **Third University** | A higher education institution that combines the research university and liberal arts college to form a new environment that lifts up marginalized and minoritized populations. This institution is firmly rooted in antiracist and anti-neoliberal practices. |
| **Corporatization** | The influx of a business mindset into the university. The core functions of the institution are offloaded to outside corporations and private interests. |
**Vocationalism**

The belief that higher education should prepare students for a specific career or vocation after graduation.

**Intellectualism**

A state of higher education where students develop a love of learning and that is the motivator towards acquiring more knowledge.

**Commodification of Knowledge**

The era in which higher education has moved away from intellectualism and towards financialism. College degrees are only worth the potential earnings they provide to students in a neoliberal society.
ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

The Personal and Ethical Foundations competency is committed to well being and developing an understanding of society through lived experiences. The path to self-authorship is paved with the ideas and values of the individual (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). This intervention uplifts student affairs practitioners through contemplative exercises and rediscovering the values of higher education. The retreat encourages professionals to embrace their sense of curiosity and carry it forward into the following academic year. Personal and ethical foundations are constantly being developed and are essential to the goals of the retreat.

The Values, Philosophy, and History competency embraces the foundations of the student affairs profession and cultivates its values. Student affairs professionals recognize the history of the profession and use it to inform their work (NASPA & ACPA, 2015). This intervention tells the story of neoliberalism in higher education and connects it to student affairs. Student affairs professionals seek to uncover injustices within the institution and society. This competency develops these abilities within student affairs practitioners.

The Leadership competency encourages the idea that anyone is capable of being a leader regardless of positional authority (NASPA & ACPA, 2015). Throughout the retreat and work groups during the academic year, practitioners are provided with opportunities to develop their leadership abilities. Student affairs practitioners live in a state of constant change where transformational leadership is required to make a difference. An effective leader recognizes organizational hierarchy, but does not see it as a hindrance to creating dynamic and transformational change. A transformational leader operates within the system to make a difference for others.
Chapter 3

The Narrative

**Philosophical Positionality**

College students have historically low voter participation rates in elections. Some students believe their votes will not make a difference in the outcomes of elections. Generation Z needs validation that their vote will impact society. A unique opportunity exists in the university to transform students from passive observers into change advocates. In the American model of higher education, traditional students attend college full time for four (approximately) years. Universities have a responsibility to promote *self-authorship* in students during this period (Baxter Magolda, 2002). This concept of the student reaching an informed decision through internalized thought can be actualized through a civics-oriented curriculum in the university. Overtime, the central tenants of a democratic society can be eroded by an apathetic populace. In addition to broadening perspectives of students, civics in higher education must allow for the development of critical-thinking skills. Higher education should implement an immersive civics experience throughout institutions to encourage participation in American democracy.

Students lament that their views are often unheard by lawmakers. Across the country, we have seen active protests on a multitude of social justice issues including empowerment of women, officer-involved shootings, and LGBTQIA+ rights. These students, who engage in protests, have sparked a debate in American society. Students will need to act upon their views to enact a change in culture. The Pew Research Center (2012) estimates that just 45% of 18-to-29-year-olds voted in the 2012 presidential election (as cited in Trolian & Barnhardt, 2017, p. 141).
The energy and activism among the college-age demographic has the power to transform all levers of government.

The leadership skills developed through student organizations and other co-curricular activities are essential towards cultivating a sense of civic engagement after graduation. The student adds to their existing *social capital* through participation in a club or organization. The relationships acquired by the student are positively correlated with civic engagement. Social capital multiplies as the student joins more organizations (Bourdieu, 1986). There are, however, only a few leadership-building activities that will influence political involvement attitudes of students. Trolian and Barnhardt (2017) found that students who served as resident assistants or orientation leaders did not shift their political involvement attitudes. Instead, students who served as peer educators or members of religious groups did increase political involvement attitudes.

In my view the promotion of co-curricular involvement, while beneficial for students, is inadequate for inspiring a revitalization of civic engagement. A dynamic and multifaceted approach in the university will create a sense of civic duty. In addition to the views of student affairs professionals, it is vital that institutions welcome faculty perspectives. A confluence of professional views on engagement will usher in an era of civic learning on campus. It is insufficient, for example, to post flyers in university offices and email students as a means of civic preparation. A focus on civics should occur throughout the college experience rather than immediately before an election. Students should retain information about civics that can be used throughout their lives. Emails and flyers can provide aesthetic value to students but should be viewed as short-term reminders rather than long-term educational plans.

Some institutions are adopting a hands-on model to engage students. James Madison University, for example, made it easier for students to vote by adding a precinct to their campus.
The University of Houston-Downtown has encouraged students and faculty to discuss political issues in select classes (Anft, 2018). These actions are important first steps in a long process of engaging students in a productive dialogue. Institutions will need to develop a comprehensive action plan that can be implemented over several years.

There is incredible potential for an educated college electorate to swing elections. The university can play a positive role in increasing voter participation rates in the United States. The hyper focus of return on investment and vocationalism in higher education has prevented colleges and universities from developing meaningful civics programs. As resources have been diverted away from the liberal arts, civics education has suffered within the university (Anft, 2018). The United States government would be better represented if more citizens participated in the voting process.

**Liberal Arts Curriculum**

College students have low voter participation rates because they are disaffected from the government. The university community must work to change that belief. The university should study best practices for engaging students. Students will need guidance on how to articulate their opinions and achieve self-authorship. A shift to an active focus on voter engagement within the university is not without its fair share of critics. A change in civics curriculum is essential to inspiring a new generation of voters. Higher education must look introspectively at issues of careerism and vocationalism within universities to reach civics goals.

**Corporate Influences**

The corporatization of American higher education has contributed to a hollowing out of civic culture within the university. Students are bypassing general education requirements that teach about civics and government. Even if all students were required to take a course in civics,
the curriculum would not engage students in civic culture. There are many professors who value a comprehensive civics education, but the current university environment fails to reinforce the idea that students should become dynamic and involved citizens. If a theoretical approach is taken to civics, students will fail to apply concepts after they graduate from the university.

Society will regress because a new generation of leaders will not be inspired to act on their beliefs. The university should harness the interests of students and cultivate a desire for change in democratic society. A civics curriculum needs to be reinvigorated in the university. Students should learn how to advocate for their views in society. The curriculum should be transformed from educating students about basic civic concepts into addressing structural issues in society. In recent decades, neoliberalism has encouraged students to view the university as a private good. Students have become credit-counting connoisseurs where the aesthetic beauty of campus is prioritized over a traditional liberal arts education. A reorientation of the liberal arts in the university will repair the frayed view of democracy.

Public service would pave the way towards encouraging participation in American democracy. Williams (2006) asserts that public service would foster solidarity among participants. Higher education can help the United States transition from an individualized to collaborative culture. In a country where public schools are failing, communities are struggling with drug addiction and violence, higher education can be a powerful force towards enacting change. A criticism of loan forgiveness by way of public service is that the student must commit to working for a period of years to pay off their debt. The student is viewed as an indentured servant of sorts who has few options after college.

Public service, however, is a step in the right direction towards loan forgiveness. Realistically, it is hard to see the federal government passing loan-forgiveness legislation with no
strings attached. The United States is in dire need of graduates who are willing to serve in local communities. If loan forgiveness is good for the individual as well as the collective, the federal government should enact these policies.

The federal government will need to commit to providing subsidies for higher education to state legislatures. In my view, it is unlikely that the federal government will fully fund higher education in the United States. Increases in funding for higher education will be enacted through cost-sharing regulations where state governments work in tandem with the federal government. Public higher education in the United States is a patchwork of systems. The states will exert a majority of the control in the increased funding process.

Neoliberalism has forced working and middle-class students to choose higher education institutions based on cost. Full-service colleges are providing quality education for their students, but these are disproportionately upper-middle-class students. Public institutions, where working and middle-class students attend, suffer from a diminished sense of educational value. Neoliberalism has cheated the working class out of a quality education through a persistent defunding of higher education which strains resources in the institution. A restoration of public funding and democratic values to higher education will encourage a society that promotes transformative change.

**Higher Education as a Public Good**

There must be a willingness for higher education to resist staunchly corporate values in the university. The academic curriculum should assist students with recovering the means for engaging in citizenship and critical thought (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). There is a reckoning to be had in higher education that resists treating students as customers and administrators as employees. The profit aspects of higher education are so pervasive that it
overshadows the need for democratization. Administrators, faculty, and students must band together to revitalize the public discussion around the meaning of higher education. These groups must work together to actively resist the corporate forces within higher education that hinder its democratizing potential. Policies that favor standardization, exploitative hiring practices, and adjunctification must be called into question and resisted by the university community (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). The active resistance against corporatization in the university is part of higher education for students. Higher education, at its best, not only prepares students for the workforce, but encourages them to question structural problems in society.

In this regard, higher education protects democracy from authoritarianism because it empowers citizens. Higher education teaches students that there is a critical need for public services, economic equality, and safety (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). Higher education institutions must get involved with their local communities not only to demonstrate their relevance, but to showcase their potential to be problem solvers. There must be a sense of urgency in attitudes towards neoliberalism. A recognition that it has failed society and higher education is essential in reducing its impact on the lives of Americans. The activist roots of higher education need to be exposed to overcome neoliberalism in the modern era.

**Learning Through Dialogue**

The track that education should take, according to Freire (1970), is one that “embodies communication” (p. 79). Both students and teachers are co-learners in the subject matter. Problem-posing education allows for an open dialogue where teachers are permitted to change their opinions based on feedback from students. This view of learning recognizes that students are dynamic, and that transformation is healthy for
a democratic society. These students will then become engaged citizens who will overcome the oppression imposed by a static view of society (Freire, 1970).

**Vocationalism in Higher Education**

The American system of higher education is consumer-driven and dependent on capitalism. Students are consumers who pay a price (tuition) for accessing goods and services in higher education. Public colleges and universities in the United States allow corporate forces to dominate them at the expense of the student. Students (and their families) who have a greater ability to pay for higher education attend institutions that price out lower-income classes. This competition for money and resources means that institutions are focused on vocation rather than the development of well-rounded students. These tendencies, to focus on vocation and career, have led to a decline in intellectualism within the university.

**Interpellation**

Althusser (2014) asserts that *Ideological State Apparatus (ISA)* such as churches, parties, and families are part of the private domain. The family ISA is not repressive in nature, however, the university ISA reinforces a dominant virtue in American society. The student needs the support of the family to complete their education and thus achieve success in society. There is a clear ideological link between family values and control that is articulated in *The Student Personnel Point of View*. The document showcases ways for institutions to control and organize student behavior. Another objective of higher education is to, “provide a diagnostic service to help the student discover his abilities, aptitudes, and objectives” (American Council on Education Studies, 1937). These objectives in higher education prop up the state by preparing students for the workforce, being productive in society, and obeying laws. Essentially, the
student cannot be free in the university because they are closely monitored by the administration who is reinforcing the goals of the state and family.

The Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), is not immediately clear in higher education, but is a key component of maintaining an ISA. The academic and conduct policies in an institution reaffirm the ideology of higher education. They serve to repress the misbehavior of a student and regulate the institution. More broadly, higher education has also served as an ideological thinktank for another RSA, the American military and government. Knowledge production is viewed by the state as crucial to controlling the narrative in society.

The goal of conduct is to promote the growth of the individual and maintain order within the student body (American Council on Education Studies, 1937). The administration maintains compliance by carrying out these policies for the university community. Power has been afforded to the administration and is present during the conduct process. The leaders of the ruling class in the institution (the administration) have access to knowledge about every student. The American Council on Education Studies (1937) suggests that, “...a cumulative record of information about the student and making it available to the proper persons”, will streamline the educational process for students (p. 4). The administration has the power in the institution, but the power is subdivided further into those with access to information about students. This power, held by a few administrators, is combined with the power of the overall administration to form an ISA that mimics information-gathering operations of the government.

Althusser (2014) explains that ideology influences the way citizens live their lives. Ideology teaches a certain way to think so that it lives on in the mind of the populace. The student body is certainly aware that the administration is maintaining records of information about students. Students may hesitate to engage in activism because they know administrators
will record violations of university policies. Essentially, students do not even attempt to engage in activism because they know the administration will note this in their files. Record keeping, while impersonalizing student interaction with administration, can also serve the purpose of repressing dissenting voices. Information gathering on students can be a repressive force in an institution because it serves to maintain order and keep individuals in their place. It allows the institutions to keep educating students using a neoliberal framework.

The Student Personnel Point of View details a framework for interpellating students into the higher education mindset. Students must be successful in college in order to succeed in a capitalist society. Higher education provides the means for being a productive member of society who contributes to the community (American Council on Education Studies, 1937). Althusser (2014) explains that ideology transforms individuals into subjects of the ideology. Higher education projects an ideology that influences society in a multitude of ways. In addition to providing workers for capitalism, graduates are interpellated into a bourgeois system.

An analysis of positivist forces in higher education shows that institutions use power to segment the student population. Aptitude testing, diagnostic techniques, and occupational information are called for in The Student Personnel Point of View. The array of existing instruments should be studied and new ones created to assess students (American Council on Education Studies, 1937). These tools are used by institutions to project power and subjugate students. Higher education institutions have standards for admittance and some institutions are easier to be admitted to than others. Institutions gain information on the potential class status of students through assessment. Institutions seek to incorporate students into the ideology of success where students who are high achievers will enter the ruling class in society.
An understanding of neoliberalism in the university, a contributing cause to the systemic defunding of higher education, is not enough to reform the university. Higher education needs additional public funding through a redistribution process, however, misrecognizing constituencies in the university also prevents participation in the liberal arts experience. Grande (2018) theorizes the academy as, “…an arm of the settler state—a site where the logics of elimination, capital accumulation, and dispossession are reconstituted” (p. 47). The fact that higher education institutions were built on stolen land with slave labor cannot be overlooked in potential reforms. A restoration of public funding for higher education is only part of what is needed to reform the university. If funding is restored, but colonialism is not addressed, then we are reproducing the injustices that have always existed in higher education.

A radical view that incorporates redistribution and recognition practices will transform the university so it is welcoming to all views. Recognition politics takes hold in the university because it organizes issues into categories rather than entertains complex discussion about power and privilege (Grande, 2018). The surface-level understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues is insufficient for understanding how power flows through higher education. A complete refusal of the university would jeopardize the goals of achieving a more democratic society. The university should be reformed rather than refused because it still provides value for all students. A third university will take newly reacquired funding for higher education and use it for decolonizing purposes. The ability to gain public funding for higher education is a chance for the university not to go back to what it formerly was in previous decades, but transform it into a more inclusive place through means of redistribution.
The third university, “defines itself fundamentally as a decolonial project—as an interdisciplinary, transnational, yet vocational university that equips its students with skills toward the applied practice of decolonization” (Paperson, 2017). This third university exists within the first and second universities. The academic-industrial complex and critical thinking that exists within the first and second universities can be radically transformed to create a third university that is active in the decolonizing process (Paperson, 2017). The third university acknowledges that it is not perfect, but works towards a better, more inclusive experience for all students. A restoration of public funding combined with a critical analysis of higher education structures that oppress students is a university in transition.

**Formulation and Analysis of Thematic Concern**

In the university, activists may be creating power dynamics within their groups that undermine their desire to initiate change. If there is dissension within the group, individual members might be cast aside by conformism, intolerance, and patriarchy (Fraser, 2000). Higher education administrators make the mistake of assuming that all members of an activist group are unified in their demands. This is dangerous because those who lead the group may not represent the views of all members. Administrators should hear these students, but never assume that their views represent everyone in the group. The administration must be careful not to rush any changes and incorporate a variety of voices into the decision-making process.

Students whose access was previously restricted in higher education are still denied status in the university (Fraser, 2000). It is not enough to give access; these students must be supported so that they are full partners in interactions. Fraser (2000) demonstrates that, “…an institutionalized pattern of cultural value constitutes some social actors as less than full members of society and prevents them from participating as peers” (p. 114). The university should not be
brought back to what it was several decades ago; it needs to be modernized for the future. The golden era of higher education correctly provided a low-cost experience to the masses, but it did not include those who needed it the most. The liberal arts were offered to the masses, but access issues and privilege limited its ability to energize society.

Change in higher education will not occur on its own; students have to demand that it happen as well. Activism on college campuses in the modern era stresses a form of identity politics where the group must be in solidarity with each other (Fraser, 2000). Dissidence and division amongst members are discouraged because the collective speaks for everyone. Fraser (2000) asserts that many groups stress, “...the need to elaborate and display an authentic, self-affirming and self-generated collective identity, it puts moral pressure on individual members to conform to a given group culture” (p. 112). The identities of the members are reified into one collective identity that is drastically simplified and asserts power over the group. This reification process harms the ability of the group to create change and limits the overcoming of oppression.

**Inclusive Activism in the University**

The return of public investment in higher education is an attempt to equalize learning experiences among the social classes. The majority of working and middle-class students attend public universities. The liberal arts never disappeared, but public institutions are cutting it as if it were a relic of the past. Private, elite institutions understand the value of the liberal arts and have adopted a different view. Students at these institutions learn through creative means that are focused on individualized learning as opposed to the mass-customization model at public institutions. Public higher education is failing to keep up with societal trends and has engaged in self sabotage. There has been a systemic defunding of public higher education through the employment of neoliberal views and practices. Redistribution alone is not sufficient for restoring
higher education to the golden era. An intersectional approach should be taken so that equity and access are forefront in any redistribution efforts. This will ensure that higher education is accomplishing for students what it was truly meant to be in the United States. Higher education should be affordable and provide a quality education to all students.

Liberal arts institutions can begin to address the needs of working-class students by hearing their stories. There is an assumption in higher education that working-class students simply need financial aid. The institutional view is that financial aid is enough for this population of students to be successful. These students, however, each bring with them their own unique set of experiences that shape their development. Acevedo et al. (2001) explains that, “it is crucial, at this stage, to move beyond essentialism, which assumes a common Latina experience. Latinas must be placed in their varied histories, illustrating their positions within intersecting systems of power (p. 4). The testimonies of Latina feminists can be applied to the needs of working-class students in the university. If administrators and university stakeholders want to meet the needs of students, it is imperative that they are treated as individuals.

The university should recognize the needs of working-class students through focus groups that will produce detailed testimonials. The focus groups should be conducted by faculty and professionals across the university. The participation of faculty and staff will allow for varied perspectives on the forces oppressing working-class students within the university. The opportunity to participate in focus groups should be presented to all students and no student should be prevented from giving their testimony. The views of students may clash with each other during the testimonials. This is part of the knowledge process and will help policy changes be inclusive of all students. The telling of life stories and critical reflection of dialogue will help
the groups understand their differences (Acevedo et al., 2001). The primary role of the administrator or faculty member is facilitator in the testimonial process.

Problem-posing education involves challenging the patriarchal and white domination of our society. Some of our leaders, “are most committed to maintaining systems of domination—racism, sexism, class exploitation, and imperialism. They promote a perverse vision of freedom that makes it synonymous with materialism” (Hooks, 1994, pp. 27-28). American society will need to overcome its biases to change its model of education. Some may see an introspective focus on race and class biases as discomforting, but it is necessary for a society that values an honest discussion on transforming education.

The focus groups should be given guidelines, however, it is up to the students to discuss oppressive forces within the university. The forces of neoliberalism within the university should be limited; the project should not have hard deadlines. Students may be hesitant to share their stories initially but will grow more comfortable sharing their experiences as their struggles come about naturally through conversation. The stories that result from testimonials should be treated as knowledge that can alter the narrative about working-class students at the institution. The institution, through testimony, undergoes a transformation process that projects the views of students on powerful forces that set policies in the university.

A top-down approach can also assist with meeting the needs of this group of students. The administration must contemplate the idea of a university to critically reflect on possible changes for students. Oakeshott (2004) explains that, “the pursuit of learning is not a race in which the competitors jockey for the best place, it is not even an argument or a symposium; it is a conversation (p. 26). Education, on a macro-level in the university, should inspire students to learn through conversation rather than competition. Students should learn about the
experiences of others through dynamic conversations and reflection. The university is a community in which critical issues can be resolved through mutual thought and understanding (Oakeshott, 2004). The experiences of working-class students will be improved in the university because the entire community is aware of their concerns. The community will be enlightened and poised to act on the diverse needs of this marginalized group on campus.

Administrators should note the interval of time a student has to learn in the university. Oakeshott (2004) differentiates this period from any other time in the life of the student. The student is free from the duties of life and can explore areas of interest. This idea should be accounted for when students are required to work multiple jobs to afford their education. Working-class students face barriers to their successes in the institution. Administrators must do their best to eliminate these barriers so working-class students can thrive at the institution.

In trying to produce positive outcomes for working-class students, administrators may participate inadvertently in a negative feedback loop. The assumptions that administrators make in determining the needs of working-class students can produce negative outcomes. These negative outcomes, in turn, affect the learning of working-class students in the university. Biases are formed about working-class students when they struggle to learn in the university. This loop can be broken by intervention outside of the university. I am calling for a national network of student affairs administrators who possess the ability to review peer institutions.

Student affairs administrators should be wary of taking knowledge from working-class students. Immersion programs, for example, transfer knowledge from the subordinated group to the privileged group. The privileged individuals take the knowledge and use it for their own purposes (Poon et al., 2016). In higher education, the privileged group is the student affairs professional who crafts policies for the institution. The subordinated group is working-class
students who feel alienated from the institution. In order to avoid taking knowledge from the population, administrators must ensure their work improves the college experience for these students. This means that the final report on recommendations for students should be carried out rather than locked away in a desk drawer. The view of assessment should be to improve the lives of students rather than to prove the worth of a department or office. Administrators should be conscious of this issue when enacting new policies and revising existing ones.

The leadership skills that students develop as the president of a club or organization are vital to student development. The counseling and advising skills that students receive from professionals enable them to prosper at the institution. The view of a student as exclusively academic runs contrary to the missions of liberal arts institutions. A liberal arts institution, “attempts to develop the whole person by meeting the student’s ethical, social, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs” (Berg, 1983, p. 9). The needs of a student are substantial and cannot be accomplished solely in the classroom. Faculty may meet the intellectual needs of the student, but the neglect of other needs is detrimental to the education of the whole student.

The perceptions of student affairs administrators at liberal arts colleges is key to understanding the divide between faculty and staff. The recognition of differences in how student affairs professionals at liberal arts colleges conduct their work is key to understanding how support for students varies across institution type. A study of student affairs administrators at a variety of institution types was conducted at an annual conference of professionals. Administrators at liberal arts colleges participated in five focus groups in which they were asked to choose between two words that described the nature of their work on a continuum.

Student affairs administrators were then asked to rate the level to which student affairs work at their institution relates to the selected words (Hirt, Amelink, & Schneiter, 2004). Of
the forty-three administrators who participated in the five focus groups, 91% reported that their work was service-oriented instead of business-oriented. In words aimed to assess the environment at their institution, 67% of participants thought their work valued creativity over conformity (Hirt Amelink, & Schneiter, 2004, p. 100). Student affairs divisions at these liberal arts institutions value new ideas and see themselves as providing valuable services to students.

The access for working and middle-class students to liberal arts institutions has increased in recent decades. A ticket into an institution that socializes its students into the dominant class is insufficient for developing the whole student. These institutions must recognize the diverse needs of working and middle-class students so that they will be fully supported. Students must have access to methods of instruction that promote creativity and diversity of opinions regardless of class. Liberal arts colleges must also look at the inclusivity of the activism that occurs on their campuses. Student affairs professionals should ensure that they are creating conversations that allow for dialogue and open conversations. Students, however, should be open to hearing new perspectives instead of casting shame on a person who uses an incorrect term. Students who engage in activism should welcome others who are new to the cause. Activist students should seek to promote a systems-thinking view of oppression that recognizes the value of knowledge from all parties.

In higher education, leaders have lost sight of the value of a public good. The benefits of a public good accrue to all even as more students receive an education (Newfield, 2016). The failure to adapt to changing structures in the economy threatened the vitality of public higher education. Elite institutions, namely selective liberal arts colleges and universities, caught on to shifts in the economy and opted for mass specialization. Public institutions, however, failed to
catch on to monumental changes in the economy and maintained a standardization model of higher education (Newfield, 2016).

**Historical Context**

The activism that took place on college campuses in the 1960s created a class divide among Americans. Elite institutions accepted relatively few working-class students and participated in anti-war protests. Higher education, while benefiting from increased public funding, created a rift between various socioeconomic classes of Americans. The university appealed to students of higher socioeconomic classes because this was the dominant class of students on campus. Over time, the effects of neoliberalism worsened the standing of higher education among the public. Neoliberalism was perpetuated by leaders who sought to turn the working class against their own economic interests. A loss of public funding beginning in the 1960s disproportionately affected the working-class population and weakened the opportunity to transform lives.

The beginnings of student affairs in higher education saw an increased focus on student development. During the late seventeenth century, *in loco parentis*, first arose on college campuses as a means of guiding students through early adulthood. Matriculation greatly challenged higher education officials in this period (Rentz, 2011). There was little emphasis on completing degrees, however, close and meaningful relationships developed between faculty and students. The academic aspect of higher education was cultivated in this period as students not only learned the curriculum, but lived the values of the liberal arts. The eighteenth century gave way to an influx of technical training and vocationalism into higher education. The industrial revolution in the United States created a need for accountants, physicians, and other workers who applied technological and scientific concepts (Rentz, 2011). While higher education in the
United States remained male-centered and exclusive, it began to transition away from the liberal arts and towards technical training.

In this era, higher education began to adjust to the rapidly changing needs of society. The university dramatically expanded the academic curriculum by offering electives and creating graduate education (Rentz, 2011). While higher education adjusted to the economic needs of society, a debate sprang up over the role of curriculum. The practicality of courses that were designed treated students as workers. The role of the university was to educate students to enter a trade and succeed in the new American economy. A fierce debate, however, ensued as dissenting voices explained the impact new vocational training had on more traditional curriculum (Rentz, 2011). The sciences displacing classics was of great concern for advocates of a traditional university. In their view, the university began to shift away from its liberal beginnings to a more practical curriculum. The university in its shift away from liberalism costs society the expertise of those educated to see a holistic view of the world.

Higher education during this time began to open its doors to women. Women’s colleges developed and increased access to higher education for more Americans. The mission of these institutions, however, was limited in that women were prepared to enter domestic life (Rentz, 2011). These institutions introduced a multi-tiered system of higher education where men were taught to succeed in the marketplace and women at home. The enforcement of gender norms in higher education provided unequal experiences to students. Historically black institutions also developed in the years after the Civil War. These institutions provided higher education to predominately black men who were excluded from the university (Rentz, 2011). These institutions defeated the narratives perpetuated by racist voices that students of color were intellectually inferior and incapable of earning a higher education. The fear among white
individuals, that students of color would rise up against the majority, was palpable and contributed to funding disparities between institutions.

**Forces Shaping Higher Education and Student Affairs**

The Higher Education Act has been reauthorized nine times in its history. Throughout its storied history, various reauthorizations have proved contentious for Congress. The law is supposed to be reauthorized every 4-5 years, but has exceeded that timeframe in recent reauthorizations. The legislation expires after four years and has a one-year automatic extension. If Congress cannot meet that deadline, it passes short-term extensions of the law (Kantrowitz, 2018). The polarization of Congress in recent years and complexity of the Higher Education Act has unfortunately stifled not only reauthorization, but any additional new programs that support students.

The Higher Education Amendments of 1968 revised additional student assistance programs such as Talent Search and Upward Bound. Talent Search is, “designed to identify qualified youths of financial or cultural need with an exceptional potential for postsecondary educational training” (Higher Education Amendments of 1968). The Higher Education Amendments of 1972 moved beyond student assistance programs and codified a ban on sex discrimination in higher education. This component of the 1972 amendments is crucial towards preventing sex discrimination on college campuses in the modern era. Simply, institutions that receive federal financial assistance may not discriminate on the basis of sex. The amendments did carve out notable exceptions for religious-affiliated institutions and public institutions that have traditionally admitted only one sex (Higher Education Amendments of 1972).
The Higher Education Amendments of 1976 expanded upon the student assistance programs by providing an outline for training of staff and administrators. The 1976 amendments provide guidance on how administrators can avoid sex stereotyping and bias in their practices. The 1978 amendments attempted to divert grant-based aid away from low-income students. A subsequent increase in borrowing from middle and upper-income students occurred since loan interest rates were reduced (Stampen & Zulick, 2009). The Higher Education Amendments of 1980 and 1992 increased parental involvement in the funding of higher education. Notably, parents were now allowed to take out loans to help their students pay for higher education. The loans, later known as Parent Plus, cannot exceed the estimated cost of attendance minus other financial assistance programs (Higher Education Amendments of 1980). The goals of the Carter administration were to reduce student borrowing through a combination of increased interest rates, unsubsidized loans to parents, and income ceilings for student loans (Stampen & Zulick, 2009). The Higher Education Amendments of 1986 authorized institutions to research adult and nontraditional students. The amendments encouraged institutions to look at ways to refine academic curriculum to suit the needs of adult learners and their career goals.

The Higher Education Amendments of 1992 attempted to address the rising costs of a college education, but incurred obstacles because of a divided Congress. The Pell Grant program was in debt during this time and its purchasing power was severely reduced beginning in the 1980s. Additionally, college began to be viewed as a consumer good, “as a result of rising college costs and declining federal support during the 1980s, student loans had replaced grants as the dominate form of federal student aid” (Hannah, 1996, p. 507). The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 made further incremental changes to the law by promoting distance
education and slashing the student loan interest rate (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 1998). The most recent reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2008 attempted to introduce greater accountability and accessibility for institutions. The reauthorization of 2008 required additional reporting on college outcomes instead of specific requirements for institutional spending (Stampen & Zulick, 2009). Specifically, the reauthorization allowed for “due process” at the institutional level for unfavorable actions by accreditors and defines some for-profit colleges as “diploma mills” (Stampen & Zulick, 2009).

The shift from grants to loans has led to huge increases in student borrowing in recent decades. The original goal of the Higher Education Act of 1965 was to provide affordable, quality higher education to students. The shift to loan-based aid did not occur organically, but was rather a strategic choice implemented by the federal government and the Reagan administration beginning in the early 1980s. Neoliberalism, a governing structure that promotes markets over society, private goods over public goods, “formulates everything, everywhere, in terms of capital investment and appreciation, including and especially humans themselves” (Brown, 2015, p. 176). The reason that students have incurred thousands of dollars in debt is due to the government shifting their mindset from higher education as a good that benefits all of society to something that is for the individual. The government knows that the economy needs highly-educated citizens, but has moved away from higher education as a social good to one that is purely meant to produce human capital.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 was enacted in what is known as the “golden era” of higher education. This era promised a quality liberal arts education to the masses who were entering higher education (Brown, 2015). Higher education in the present day is, “eroding from all sides: cultural values spurn it, capital is not interested in it, debt-burdened families anxious
about the future do not demand it...states no longer invest in it” (Brown, 2015, p. 181). The impending reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is only a small step towards reducing costs for students and holding institutions accountable for increases in tuition.

The *Student Personnel Point of View* united higher education behind the theories of student development and education of the whole student. This document provided much needed guidance on the ways in which student affairs work should be structured in a higher education institution. In the spring of 1936, the American Council on Education (ACE) convened in Washington, D.C. to discuss how to best structure student personnel work in the institution (Rentz, 2011). One of the primary goals of the document was to help institutions think more broadly about the role of intellectual training in student development. In the view of the American Council on Education the recognition that students needed to develop socially in the university became just as important as academics.

The involvement of the United States in World War II limited the production of resources available to the general population. Various sectors of the American economy, such as manufacturing and research development, produced goods for the war effort. Higher education, in this period, also provided research capabilities to the war effort and suffered a decline in enrollment due to students joining the military. After World War II, however, the American Council on Education updated the *Student Personnel Point of View* in 1949. Fueled by funds from the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (the GI Bill) higher education saw an increase in the enrollment of veterans (Rentz, 2011). The 1949 version of the *Student Personnel Point of View* updated the central tenets of student affairs work to reflect a new global view of the world. Student affairs was not just a vehicle for administrative work in the institution, but a means for realizing democracy.
Higher education, essentially, became a tool for solving social problems in society and introducing democratic concepts to students. The 1949 version of the *Student Personnel Point of View* showcased the values that Americans held shortly after the end of World War II. The interests and values of individual students are taken into consideration in institutional decisions (Rentz, 2011). These two documents introduced the idea that higher education meets the student rather than establishes a predetermined goal. The student actively participates in their learning and receives the effort they put into their time in higher education.

In the mid-twentieth century, as student affairs work became more pronounced in the institution, the bifurcated model of the university came into full view. The development of campus activities and extracurriculars were seen as separate from the academic side of the university. These extracurriculars gave way to increased student activism on campus in the 1960s. Students were actively engaged in fights for racial, social, and economic justice during this period. Student affairs administrators frequently caught themselves in a difficult bind of advocating for students and controlling their behavior (Rentz, 2011). In this new era, student affairs professionals were asked to not only advise students, but assist them with navigating complicated webs of institutional bureaucracy. The university, as a whole, wrestled with the idea of student affairs as complementary or secondary to the academic mission of the institution (Rentz, 2011). As students were rising up against injustices in society, student affairs grappled with their standing and place in the university.

While student affairs was unsure of its standing mid century, the late twentieth century brought student development into view. The student services aspect of student affairs began to be superseded by an intentional focus on student development and learning. Students learn in the campus around them and all employees of the university are treated as academics (Rentz, 2011).
A focus on clearly identifying the role of student affairs was paramount to institutional mission statements. The goals of the institution provide guidance for student affairs on campus. The current era is one of interconnectedness via technological enhancements and student learning. The student affairs profession has evolved from a hands off approach to one where programming and services are intentional to student development.

**Equity and Access Issues**

The Higher Education Act of 1965 was part of the Great Society programs enacted under President Johnson. This passage of the law occurred at a time when there was significantly greater public funding for higher education than today. Congress should reauthorize the Higher Education Act, but it should be part of a much greater comprehensive vision for higher education. The implications for failing to reauthorize the Higher Education Act mean less funding for higher education due to federal appropriations not keeping up with inflation. The federal government should adopt a long-term vision for higher education and move beyond incremental changes proposed in the reauthorization proposals of both political parties. A grand vision of tuition-free public colleges and universities would impact higher education by reducing the need to increase costs for students. Private institutions would also lower their costs to compete with newly free public institutions. The Higher Education Act of 1965 did much to answer equity and access issues, however, the law is insufficient for addressing college affordability. Higher education administrators should get involved in activism around this issue so politicians reflect our values.

**The Powell Memorandum**

In the early 1970s, Supreme Court associate justice Louis Powell Jr. issued a memorandum that argued the activism on college campuses directly attacked capitalism.
American business supports higher education by contributing tax dollars and other funds to the university. Student activists were ungrateful to the capitalist system for its support to higher education (Ferguson, 2017). The era of civil rights produced generational shifts in the ways Americans interact with democracy and its potential to equalize society. The unrest of the 1960s and 1970s was frowned upon by American business because it was viewed as disruptive and antithetical to the core tenets of capitalism. The idea that students would question the value of capitalism was a direct threat to the values held by many business leaders. In the 1970s, the concept of corporations as citizens began to take off in society. The research previously done in higher education was meant out of curiosity. The research capacity of higher education slowly transitioned to a corporate model during this period (Ferguson, 2017). The activists of the 1960s saw higher education as a way to uplift minoritized populations and provide a sense of equality.

The influx of corporatization in the university changed the values of higher education so its resources were used to enrich profits. The memorandum also contributed to the development of a messaging machine meant to promote free-market ideals and resist the views of activists. In the university, this included the establishment of public relations departments, a thorough review of textbooks, and the desire to hire faculty who sympathize with corporate values (Ferguson, 2017). Powell also sought to establish corporations as a minority in American society. The activists who championed human and civil rights contributed to the downfall of the real change agents in society, corporations. This tactic, to establish corporations as victims of the activist movements of the 1960s, helped to reassert their dominance in American life. Democracy in the United States should prioritize the ability for corporations to operate with minimal rules and regulations rather than empower its citizens.
Shifts in Funding Structures of Higher Education

Privatization was exacerbated by a change in the funding structures of higher education. Beginning in the early 1980s, loans were made more accessible for students and collections were enforced (Newfield, 2016). Loans were promoted by federal financial aid policy over grant-based aid. In response to government deficits, Republican administrations let benefits rates for Pell grant aid fall in real terms. Pell grants historically had been used to fund students in higher education. Students were now encouraged to take out thousands of dollars in loans from loan companies (Newfield, 2016). The privatization of funding structures meant that corporations exerted a greater control over higher education. Public funding for higher education kept tuition costs down for students. Cost is now a factor for many students who attend higher education institutions.

Privatization produced devastating effects for working-class students in the 1990s and 2000s. The Clinton administration pursued a policy of tax credits for students in higher education in which the benefits went to higher-income families (Newfield, 2016). The tax credits encouraged a public-private partnership in higher education which dramatically increased the cost for students. The federal government moved from a policy of direct funding in higher education to subsidies for loan companies that raised costs for students (Newfield, 2016). An introduction of market concepts in higher education meant that private industry would dictate educational outcomes for students.

The shift of higher education from a primarily public to private good began in earnest in the 1980s. Politicians collaborated with business leaders to undermine public funding support for higher education. Antitax advocates shifted their focus from building support amongst the public to building alliances with politicians (Newfield, 2016). This meant that gaining control over the
political process was key towards cutting taxes. Polling, however, found that citizens respond favorably to tax cuts only when there is no other option. The public, in fact, was misled about the popularity of tax cuts. Citizens preferred spending on public goods over tax cuts (Newfield, 2016). Newfield (2016) explains that society has lost the will to fight for public goods. It was not so much of a conversion among the public, but a catering to special interest groups. Politicians decided that it was better to balance the influences of the public and special interest groups than fight for public goods.

*Corporatization Changes the University*

The era of intellectualism in higher education in the mid-to-late nineteenth century narrowed its central mission. Students began to establish greek-letter organizations, debate societies, and extra-curricular activities during this period. These organizations were a reaction to the intense focus on classical literature in the university. The American university, with its hodgepodge of ideas and values, had been infused with scientific concepts and rationality (Rentz, 2011). Faculty enjoyed the right to engage freely in research and report findings without blowback from university administration. A central goal of student affairs, however, is to educate the whole student both inside and outside of the classroom.

The focus on rationality stifled students from developing in other ways and prevented them from reaching self-authorship. Corporate influences, while not yet fully evident in the university, were introduced by way of scientific thought and inquiry. The goals of the university much in the same way as corporations in later years were to establish efficiency and conformity (Rentz, 2011). The development of extra-curricular organizations in this period freed the student from academic obligations and cultivated other traits.
The early twentieth century predated the formal structure of student affairs, but introduced deans who supervised student life. The demand for supervision of student events and activities became paramount in the early twentieth century and presidents sought to delegate student life issues. In addition to their teaching and research duties, faculty assumed the responsibilities of many modern-day student affairs professionals (Rentz, 2011). The impersonal nature that faculty had towards students in the age of intellectualism began to shift towards student development. Higher education during this time also became more secular and saw an increase in the number of students seeking degrees which gave way to the need for a greater administrative structure in the university.

The spirit of the liberal arts is to provide a force for democratizing society through civic engagement and participation. Student affairs, during this period, honed in on developing the individual student which is imperative for living and thriving in the liberal arts. The forces of a strong liberal arts curriculum, plentiful extra-curricular activities, and student affairs professionals who cared about the individual needs of students contributed to the overall impact of higher education in the early twentieth century (Rentz, 2011).

First and Second Waves of Neoliberalism

The United States after World War II briefly experimented with the idea that the individual could receive an affordable education that uniquely prepared degree holders for a career, but also instilled a common set of values (Brown, 2015). These values moved the United States towards an aspiring yet imperfect democracy. This system of higher education differed from what was offered by European nations to their citizens (Brown, 2015). In Europe, a select few, often elites with cultural capital, attended higher education. The majority of students after secondary school went on to vocational training programs (Brown, 2015). The doors to higher
education during this era also opened up to many diverse constituencies including women, African Americans, and immigrant students (Brown, 2015). It is not the degree itself that has disappeared from higher education, students can still earn a degree in the liberal arts, it is a deliberate shift in the mission and goals of the institution.

In the Reagan years, supply-side economics was embedded in many of the recovery programs for the recession in the early 1980s. President Reagan adopted these firmly neoliberal values as a means of boosting the economy and slashing government spending. The overarching theme of neoliberal economics is that government is inefficient and impedes economic growth (Steger & Roy, 2010). A reduction in the marginal tax rates for the highest earners in America exploded the deficit and did little to reduce economic inequality. The belief among President Reagan and many of his officials was that cutting taxes would increase economic growth and thus lead to sufficient revenues for the federal government.

These economic decisions impacted higher education through a reduction in funding. Since the tax base was lower due to cuts, there was less money flowing into higher education. Militarism, the idea that a government should prioritize a strong national defense, was pervasive in the 1980s. Government resources were diverted away from social programs that benefited the public and reallocated towards the military. Higher education not only lost funding, but was left out of the revolution of values in the 1980s. Simply, higher education was not viewed by the Reagan administration as worthy of substantial public investment. This view, among the most powerful officials in the country at the time, gradually took hold in the American public. The Kenyesian-style government that prioritized investment in public goods was chipped away by the tides of neoliberalism.
As neoliberalism took hold in the 1980s, it became deeply entrenched in American society by the 1990s. This second-wave of neoliberalism changed its values ever so slightly in the 1990s. In the Reagan years, neoliberalism had elements of militarism and an antiquated notion of family values (Steger & Roy, 2010). By the 1990s, President Clinton intended to update neoliberalism by ridding it of its militaristic tendencies and introducing market globalism. The digital revolution of the 1990s paved the way for the American economy to be viewed as an integral part of worldwide economic growth. The American economy was no longer on an island by itself, but an important driver of economic growth throughout the world.

Higher education, as an institution, was impacted during this era by a continued public divestment and influx of corporatization. While higher education had been dealing with budget cuts in the 1980s, the second-wave of neoliberalism in the 1990s welcomed the idea of partnerships between universities and corporations. Universities, faced with limited resources, were forced to offload many essential services and programs from their budgets. Corporations seized this opportunity to both take over operations on behalf of universities and introduce their values to administrators and students. Corporations functioning as a partner in the university undermine the core tenets of democratic values in higher education. These values resist the ideals of corporations and are seen as a threat to their involvement.

The current generation of students has never lived in a period when neoliberalism was nonexistent. The present era has fully immersed students in the throes of neoliberal values. The media apparatus has perpetuated neoliberal values through a promotion of individualism and competitiveness (Giroux, 2014). In regards to higher education, students are faced with ever-rising tuition and fees to pay for their college degrees. The public divestment from higher education has increased the debt burden held by students and reduced their ability to engage in
democratic virtues. The ability to engage in activism and protest has been reduced because students are consumed with debt. The bright spots, where students are resisting neoliberal forces in higher education, takes shape online and in resistance groups across campuses.

Current State of Concern: Value of the Liberal Arts Degree

There are broader implications for students who accept debt as a way of life. Williams (2006) asserts that the capitalist market is inevitable and should not be questioned (p. 164). In American society, the capitalist system has unevenly distributed wealth. The status quo remains in place because students are rarely encouraged to disagree with the market system. The student is caught in an endless cycle of stagnation. Students were promised a job that would allow for disposable income after graduating from college. The burden of student loan debt, however, makes it difficult for graduates to advance in social classes due to minimal savings.

Loan forgiveness and abatement, in my view, has several positive impacts on the future of higher education. Higher education is often criticized as aloof and removed from society. There is an ivory-tower view of education in rural areas of America. If citizens see higher education act as a beneficial force in their communities, the view will be forever changed. Service in communities allows theoretical concepts in higher education to be put to practice. Suddenly, higher education is relatable to the average person.

Loan forgiveness, in the form of federal service, encourages graduates to be engaged in social issues. Graduates see how their work can make a difference in local communities. The impact of local laws and policies will become more focused for graduates who participate in federal service programs. The convergence of residents valuing higher education and college graduates impacting local communities builds the momentum for a change in public policy.
The Democratic proposal, the College Affordability Act, would seek to create a federal-state partnership. This component of the bill attempts to address reduced public funding for higher education at the state level. States that agree to waive community college tuition and fees while maintaining investments in other public institutions would be eligible for grants from a $500 million fund (H.R. 4674, 2019). Additionally, the bill would address Title IX compliance by prohibiting the implementation of new Department of Education draft regulations. This bill would build upon the 2008 additions to the Higher Education Act, but does not go far enough towards addressing the tuition concerns of millions of students.

An Intersectional View of Higher Education

Officials should proceed with caution at the notion that the university should restore itself to the mindset of the Cold War era. This was a period in American history where access to higher education was restricted for marginalized populations. The state needs to restore public funding for higher education, but it should do so in a way that demands inclusiveness and relief for affected groups. The student debt crisis is gendered and affects the outcomes of women. According to the American Association of University Women (2017), “on average across degree levels women in college take on initial student loan balances that are about 14 percent greater than men’s in a given year (p. 2). Student debt is a distraction for women in a democratic society. It is hard to introduce change in society if the burden of student debt lingers for decades. Student debt exacerbates vocationalism in the university because students are worried about a future salary that is large enough to pay back massive amounts of student debt. Women with college degrees who work full time make 26 percent less than male counterparts (American Association of University Women, 2017).
In the United States, as students, we have been trained to take a passive approach to education. We are taught to consume information, regurgitate it on exams, and comply with authority throughout our educational journeys (Freire, 1970). We have been subjected to countless iterations of purported educational transformations. These programs, initiatives, and reallocation of resources will align us with the rest of the world. We will make students competitive in the global marketplace and they, in turn, can fix our society.

The system of education in the United States, at all levels, is obsessed with arbitrarily injecting massive quantities of information into the malleable minds of students. The banking concept of education encourages teachers to incorporate facts into their lessons. The students are containers, filled to the brim with information, while the teachers function as depositors of knowledge (Freire, 1970). This concept is the wrong approach to education in our society today. We fundamentally misunderstand how people interact with each other and how the human brain learns. In higher education, “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 1970, p. 72). Learning is therefore an active process that simultaneously encompasses the views of educators as well as students.

**Business Model of the University**

Higher education in its present state relies on income-generating prospects whereas previously education sought to instill a set of democratic values within students. Societal views of higher education have shifted in the decades since the 1960s. Public institutions opened up higher education to the masses in American society. Colleges and universities were affordable and benefited from increased state support. Brown (2015) asserts that a dramatic cultural shift
transitioned higher education from a focus on educational quality to return on investment. The value of higher education was reduced to economic risk and gain for students. Institutional values on developing the citizen and democracy were replaced by competition. As a result of the displacement of democratic values in the institution with economic gains, the liberal arts have suffered a devastating blow. Human capital has interpellated students as subjects in the market system. Students seek to acquire human capital during their time in higher education to succeed after graduation.

Higher education institutions have precipitated the decline of the idea of education for the common good by changing their academic requirements. Brown (2015) explains that institutions have compressed their general education requirements and shortened the amount of time to graduation for students. Students are trained to use this new vocational model of education in their careers after graduation. Neoliberalism, which promotes a free-market ideology, has crept into higher education through market competition. Institutions market themselves to students by promising success in a capitalist system that is unsustainable. As tuition increases and public funding declines, market pressures force institutions to make choices that disadvantage students. Students must pay higher tuition costs in an economy where the dignity and value of the worker has declined. As a result of this shift, students are saddled with thousands of dollars in debt and jobs that do not keep pace with living costs.

The American economy has changed dramatically in recent decades coinciding with the influences of neoliberalism in higher education. Newfield (2016) explains that American industry has shifted the focus from mass production to customized production. Universities have taken note of this change, but face declines in public funding and pressure from political leaders to spend less than their private counterparts. Students have endured a standardization of their
educational experience in higher education. Mechanized grading, reduced contact between students and faculty, and large lecture courses have reduced costs for institutions (Newfield, 2016). This standardization, though, has been to the detriment of students seeking a liberal arts education. Increased customization in the American economy requires greater specialization and training. Public higher education cannot do this because it has been focused on reducing costs.

The second trend, beginning in the 1980s, is a disaggregation of productivity from mean compensation. In the golden area of higher education, productivity rose with mean compensation (Newfield, 2016). Students were encouraged to attend college because they were prepared to enter the economy and would be rewarded for their increased education. In the past few decades, compensation has not risen with productivity and workers have been left with disappointing outcomes (Newfield, 2016). The defunding of public higher education and general apathy among political leaders contributed to worse outcomes for students. The view of political leaders, that higher education is not a place to invest and is ineffective, exacerbated funding woes.

The core tenets of neoliberalism are the deregulation of industry, limiting the power and effectiveness of organized labor, and encouraging a favorable financial climate. Neoliberalism produced a whole new way of living that harnessed an entrepreneurial spirit within the United States. The role of the state is to ensure that the market functions freely without interference from regulations. Harvey (2005) asserts,

state interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because...the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit. (p. 2)
The market is superior to governmental regulation and must be protected at all costs. Students only succeed when they build human capital in higher education. Those who do not accumulate enough human capital in a neoliberal society suffer economically. Liberalism which affords public education and social services to the masses is hollowed out by capitalism (Harvey, 2005). Higher education, instead, should empower students to gain knowledge for the sake of learning rather than to compete in a global marketplace.

**Vocationalism in the University**

A vision of a newly reinvigorated civics experience in higher education is not held by everyone. Conservatives worry that the university is losing a focus on traditional civics education. The concern is that methods used to engage students in civics will have a liberal bias. Opponents of a progressive version of civics argue that it neglects a focus on government structure and law (Anft, 2018). This view of civics questions the commitment a university has to diversity, equity, and inclusion. A new civics curriculum welcomes diverse perspectives and seeks to bring in new students to the political process. A conservative approach to changes in curriculum may portend a nationalist view of civics. Ultimately, modern higher education contradicts conservative ideology in that multiculturalism and globalism are embraced by the university.

The goals of higher education have unaligned with the values of the Republican Party. Brian Rosenberg, president of Macalester College (2018) states that, “the mission of higher education and the central tenets of a major political party have become so disconnected that it is hard to imagine, in our current moment, how they can be reconciled” (para. 6). If the university values diverse backgrounds and perspectives, a new civics curriculum should have progressive
leanings that incorporate marginalized populations. Additionally, a recalibration of civics in the university encourages greater voter participation rates among college students.

The elite class in the United States would proffer that Ivy League institutions are inherently better than public colleges and universities. These institutions achieved their golden status, independently, without assistance from the corporate forces of higher education. These institutions, however, predate colleges and universities in lower tiers. In the view of Labaree (2017), “…the oldest schools had already established a pattern of training the country’s leaders, locked up access to the wealthiest families, accumulated substantial endowments, and hired the most capable faculty” (p. 9). The Ivy Leagues were put on a path to prominence because there was little competition at the time of their founding. Newer public institutions competed for fewer resources and did not have access to the wealth acquired by Ivy League institutions.

The current success of the American university is due to a collegiate experience that entices prospective undergraduate students. Institutions have become quite adept at preserving the university enterprise through the offering of state-of-the-art facilities and inflated grades. This appeal to students helps the university stave-off competition and promote institutional strength (Labaree, 2017). This capitalist view of the university, however, comes at the expense of academic rigor and learning. If the university does not adequately challenge its students, it inhibits the pursuit of knowledge.

Is the university capable of returning to a state of intellectualism? One way to revitalize intellectual thought is to make higher education tuition free in the United States. There would be no rush to finish a degree and a university education may extend well beyond the traditional four-year model. Universities would refrain from increasing spending in the sciences at the
expense of liberal arts. Realistically speaking, this remains an aspirational goal for higher education. Instead, the federal government should solely sponsor research and development projects. There would be no need to compete for resources as all projects would have the opportunity to receive funding.

A decline of intellectualism in the university has larger implications for American society. It is a danger to democracy if citizens are not taught to think critically and engage in society. The Ivy Leagues crowded-out resources for developing public universities. To survive, public universities looked to solutions based on careerism and vocationalism. Leachman, Masterson, and Mitchell (2017) found that, “overall state funding for public two-and-four-year colleges in the 2017 school year…was nearly $9 billion below its 2008 level, after adjusting for inflation” (p. 1). As public funding for higher education was slashed, vocationalism has eroded the liberal arts within the university. We need to enact a two-pronged approach for public colleges and universities. The university should receive an influx of public funding to support research and development. As a society, we should move towards a tuition-free system of higher education. This approach will reverse the tide of anti-intellectualism in the university because students will be free from a corporate view of higher education.

In the university, student leadership and involvement strive to match the interests of students with activities on campus. Higher education must contemplate how activism within students can be maintained throughout the lifetime. If higher education can successfully manage to spark genuine interest around social issues, democracy in America will be revitalized due to the reignition of activism in younger generations. Instead of courses on frivolous subject matters universities should focus academic content on voter engagement, social justice, and other pressing issues. Students should not be discouraged from taking a lighthearted course, but the
choice should exist for activist students to learn about engagement. Professors and student affairs professionals could teach students how to register to vote, require attendance when prominent speakers come to campus, and encourage students to reflect on issues in our society. A semester or academic year can be a transformational period for student development.

**Divestment from Public Higher Education**

Higher education, in recent decades, has endured a systematic divestment of public funding and resources. The social contract, established with Americans during the New Deal and Great Society eras, has come under attack in the modern era. A multitude of public funding in the mid-twentieth century provided Americans with a quality and affordable higher education. This era of higher education, mass-produced across the country, placed the middle class on a solid footing. The chance to graduate from college with minimal debt propelled students into the middle class. The stress of graduating from higher education with thousands of dollars in debt was limited for many students in the twentieth century. This safety net, however, has been replaced by neoliberal frameworks in higher education (Giroux, 2014). Essentially, higher education, which was once seen as a public good, has been decimated to a private good paid for by individuals.

The obligations of citizenship and democratizing society have been replaced by a focus on individual freedoms (Giroux, 2014). The opportunities for students to use the values learned in higher education are limited by a neoliberal world view. Higher education provides students with ways to challenge the status quo, address social problems, and engage in critical thinking practices. Additionally, the crushing debt students incur from higher education maintains the neoliberal order in society. Students are encouraged to graduate from an institution of higher learning as fast as possible, otherwise, the burden of debt will increase for them (Giroux, 2014).
This occupation of space in the minds of students prevents them from engaging in activism and resistance practices.

**Commodification of Knowledge**

Students have been subjected to commodified knowledge in their higher education experiences. A focus on instrumentalist education meant to prepare students for the job market has displaced critical thinking. This new version of education is technical in nature and prioritizes incremental changes in private lives. The need for students to tie private issues with large, public struggles is increasingly disappearing (Giroux, 2014). Giroux (2014) argues that:

> The corporatization of schooling and the commodification of knowledge over the last few decades have done more than make universities into adjuncts of corporate power. They have produced a culture of critical illiteracy and further undermined the conditions necessary to enable students to become truly engaged, political agents. (p. 69)

The commodification of knowledge has cost students the true value of learning. Knowledge, while important for enhancing skills in the marketplace, is more than a tool for accumulating wealth. A commodification of knowledge zaps democratic ideals by making new generations indifferent to politics and civic participation. The environment of higher education has catered to business and commerce in recent decades. The introduction of business values into the university has altered its mission of producing critically-engaged citizens. The source of tension that exists in higher education, between market ideas and civil society values, is weakened by the domination of business interests (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). The structures within higher education are managed rather than led with the introduction of neoliberal values. Student interests are cast aside when corporate interests are raised in the university. The environment for students to engage in areas of participatory politics and social responsibility is limited because the university does not live these values (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004).
The university has not only lost its core mission of democratizing society. Its ability to mold and develop the experiences of students is reduced to vocationalism.

**Unique and Relevant Factors: Positivism in Curriculum**

The positivistic leanings of curriculum in the university should be reviewed if higher education is serious about supporting all students. The university can be viewed as a microcosm of economic, social, and political oppressions in society. Action research, employed in a university setting, will overcome the notion that knowledge should be objective and value-free (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003). Students should be encouraged to challenge pre-existing ideas about knowledge and employ action research practices. This begins with a shift away from large, lecture-hall courses to a more dynamic and democratic style of learning. The university should teach students to disrupt oppressive forces in society rather than comply with neoliberal tendencies.

The incorporation of intersectionality into participatory action research diversifies the perspective of scholars and officials within the university. The discovery of action research by scholars is often from marginalized populations who resist the positivistic standards of traditional research methods (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003). These new practices have the potential to change the university so that views counter to traditional ideologies disrupt dominant beliefs. Proposed changes are superficial if higher education does not confront problems collectively. Administrators should address problems head on and not shy away from discomfort to overcome issues in higher education (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003).

In supporting working-class students, higher education must realize that the lived experiences of these students are knowledge and that they matter to the institution. Too often, the history of these students is cast as inferior to institutional values. The dominant view is that these
students need to conform to the value system of the university. There should be an appreciation of the knowledge working-class students bring to the institution. Higher education should not alienate this group of students from the student body. They should be welcomed and embraced as equal contributors to the educational mission.

**Diversity in the Higher Education Institution**

Ahmed (2012) articulates that diversity work in higher education is difficult because it is not done easily by the institution. The institution must reach beyond itself and be open enough to question its current practices. The idea of promoting equality and diversity within an institution may face resistance by administration. Diversity practitioners must persist through this dynamic because their ideas are crucial towards overcoming structural issues within the institution (Ahmed, 2012). Neoliberalism promotes western values of individualism and crowds out other ways of knowing and being. Diversity work thrives in alternative ways of knowing and can help to counteract the forces of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism strives to protect the status quo which often means preserving white, heteronormative control in the institution. Diversity, when it runs through an institution rather than merely parallel to it, can help overcome these entrenched issues.

Neoliberalism encourages the belief that racist and hateful ideas are the fault of the individual. It is much harder for an institution to look at itself and view its policies that elevate racism. Diversity work in institutions notes that racism is reproduced by a failure to change policies and practices. The individual, while hateful, is not the sole cause of oppression within the institution. Together, we must recognize that students of color are marginalized in higher education. An understanding and appreciation of diversity is a good start for changing attitudes, however, it is insufficient for changing the culture of an institution. To truly overcome
oppression in the university, we must look within ourselves to change our ways. A revolution of values that are fiercely anti-racist and anti-neoliberal will change the university and put it on a path to welcoming all students.

**The Higher Education Act of 1965**

The Higher Education Act consists of four parts that institutions must be in compliance with to receive federal assistance. Part One includes provisions that prohibit discrimination along the lines of race, gender, and religion (Hegji, 2018). The Higher Education Act educates students and their families on funding sources for higher education. A key component of the law is that the Secretary is required to collect and make available online information about the cost of higher education institutions (Hegji, 2018). The Higher Education Act aims to be transparent about the cost and financial aspects of individual institutions. Students and their families can make informed decisions about what colleges are best for them.

An additional component of the Higher Education Act that addresses funding distinctions between public and private institutions is the maintenance-of-effort provision. In public institutions, states are required to, “maintain appropriations for the general operations of public IHEs” (Hegji, 2018, p. 3). In private institutions, states must provide financial aid that is equal to the average appropriation of public institutions over the preceding five years (Hegji, 2018). The federal government attempts to equalize learning experiences for students regardless of attendance at public or private institutions. The penalty for a state failing to meet the maintenance-of-effort provision is withdrawal of funds for the College Access Challenge Grant Program (Hegji, 2018). The ability of the federal government to withhold financial support from states ensures compliance with mandates.
In addition to requiring states to satisfy a maintenance-of-effort provision, the Department of Education offers competitive grants to eligible institutions. Institutions that have low educational and general expenditures may qualify for grants. This grant funding assists institutions that have a percentage of Pell Grant recipients that exceeds the median percentage of Pell Grant recipients at other institutions (Hegji, 2018). The Department of Education influences these institutions by requiring them to be legally authorized in their respective states to award bachelor’s degrees. These institutions must also be accredited by an agency that is recognized by the Department of Education (Hegji, 2018). The implications for higher education institutions that are eligible for these grants is enormous because they rely on these funds to strengthen their practices. Regional accreditation bodies weigh heavily on the job duties of higher education administrators and practitioners. These employees must achieve the standards set forth by these bodies because the consequences of not doing so could mean revocation of funds by the Department of Education in addition to loss of accreditation status.

**Funding Support for Predominantly Black Institutions**

The Higher Education Act also provides significant support for predominantly black institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Strengthening Predominantly Black Institutions program requires institutions that award bachelor’s or associate’s degrees to be accredited by an agency approved by the Department of Education and have an undergraduate student population that is at least 40% African American (Hegji, 2018). Importantly, the institution must not also be a Historically Black College or University nor a Hispanic-Serving Institution. These grants support low-income and first-generation students at these higher education institutions because the funds go to student services, instructional expenses, and the maintenance of facilities. (Hegji, 2018). The grants aim to enhance the experiences of students so
that they can thrive in facilities that are safe, secure, and promote the goals of these institutions. The grants are divided among eligible institutions according to a formula that factors in the percentages of Pell Grant recipients at the institution and graduates who pursue the next higher education level (Hegji, 2018). Student affairs administrators count on these funds for the improvement of existing facilities and student services.

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

There are also grants in the Higher Education Act specifically set aside for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The Historically Black College and University Capital Financing program, for example, provides insurance for bonds that were used to pay for repair and renovation of facilities (Hegji, 2018). The process involves a bonding authority raising funds in the bond market which are then lent to Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The repayments on the loans by the Historically Black College or University are then used to make principal and interest payments on outstanding bonds (Hegji, 2018). A portion of the loan is deposited into an escrow account in case borrowers are delinquent in repaying their loans (Hegji, 2018). There are institutions that have significant wealth through donors, endowments, and appropriations. This program helps even the playing field so that administrators at Historically Black Colleges and Universities can provide services that support the goals of students. The focus of the Higher Education Act on providing safe and modern facilities for students is essential for student success. Students need to have the resources available so that they can learn and excel throughout their time in higher education. The law, however, also provides for student assistance on the individual level. Title III of the Higher Education Act, which is focused on supporting higher education at the institutional level, attempts to ensure equity across higher
education. It should not matter which institution students choose to attend for higher
education; Title III ensures a basic standard for students at all institutions.

Title IV, however, shifts the focus of support from the institutional level to individual
students and their families. The Pell Grant program, “is the single largest source of grant aid for
postsecondary education attendance funded by the federal government” (Hegji, 2018, p. 9). The
Pell Grant program takes into account the Expected Family Contribution of the student. The
Expected Family Contribution is the anticipated amount families can contribute to the cost of
higher education (Hegji, 2018). Title IV also authorizes several programs that support low-
income students. The Talent Search program, for example, provides participants with resources
for gaining admission into higher education (Hegji, 2018). The program encourages students
to earn their high school diplomas, complete college applications, and prepare for college
entrance examinations (Hegji, 2018).

There are also programs to support students who want to continue beyond undergraduate
education. The McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program prepares disadvantaged
undergraduate students for doctoral programs through a variety of means. Research
opportunities, internships, and stipends are all awarded by eligible higher education institutions
to participants (Hegji, 2018). This program supports students so that they can achieve their career
goals and contribute to society. The program benefits the institution of higher education as well
because the investment made in students benefits society.

The Higher Education Act also authorizes Federal Work-Study programs
which are crucial for providing low-income students with income during their college years.
Federal work-study is open to qualifying undergraduate and graduate students who want part-
time employment while pursuing their studies (Hegji, 2018). The majority (about 75%) of the
appropriations for work-study programs comes from the federal government while a lesser amount (about 25%) comes from higher education institutions, private nonprofit organizations, or governmental agencies (Hegji, 2018). The program ensures that some funds are going towards community-service jobs.

**Student Loan Structures**

The government also assists middle-class students through a combination of loan structures. Direct-subsidized loans are available to undergraduate students who qualify for financial need. The federal government subsidizes the loans by paying the interest on it while the student is enrolled in an eligible program (Hegji, 2018). The government also offers direct-unsubsidized loans which are available to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. While the government does not subsidize interest in this program, the interest rates are attractive to borrowers because they are less than private loans (Hegji, 2018). The Higher Education Act prioritizes loans for when grant-based aid is not enough to cover the costs of higher education.

In addition to providing financial awards to institutions and students, the Higher Education Act attempts to ensure program integrity for all higher education institutions. This integral component of the law contains a program integrity triad. If a higher education institution wants to participate in federal financial aid programs, they must adhere to three requirements: state authorization, accreditation by an agency that is recognized by the Department of Education, and eligibility and certification (Hegji, 2018). The higher education system in the United States contains a multitude of institutions that provide varied educational outcomes. The Higher Education Act provides a baseline of standards in which all institutions who receive federal aid must comply.
Inadequate Funding Levels

The unwillingness of many state governments to adequately fund higher education has broken the social contract with its residents. The idea that a student can receive an affordable higher education is no longer the reality. Higher education, traditionally, has been an institution that reduces income inequality by preparing students to lead fruitful lives. Privatization has ravaged the institution and led to many states no longer seeing higher education as a priority (Giroux, 2014). The solution to bring more public funds into higher education is not only to reallocate from other public goods, but to increase taxes on the wealthiest individuals. States have blatantly refused to do this and have been in an era of cost-cutting.

The obligations of citizenship and collective responsibility in society are superseded by individualism. This attitude has taken hold in higher education so that it is primarily a private good for the individual. This divestment has not occurred organically, but rather is an attempt by conservative state legislatures to promote individualized views of freedom. The reduction in funding for higher education is not simply unfortunate, but is a coordinated attack on everything that makes it great. Critically-engaged citizens are able to identify structural problems in society and attempt to rectify them. A political environment that runs counter to making the world a better place seeks to harm citizens by making it harder to achieve what was at one time an essential good.

Power and Privilege in Higher Education

Power flows through students so that they are the vehicles of power (Foucault, 1980). Institutions project a dominant ideology onto students who are the subjects. Students, in turn, project power onto each other through competition and comparison. An example of this is a student gaining entry into a “reach” institution for college. They are pleased to be admitted to an
institution with academic rigor and high standards. Access to a competitive institution means that they have secured their place in a bourgeois society. The institution dominates the minds of students by dangling success (access to the institution) over them. Students then compare with each other the institutions they have been admitted to for college. Those who have not been admitted to their “reach” institutions feel powerless when others have gained admission. The assumption is that those who have gained admission have power over those who have not because their place in the ruling class has been secured.

Foucault (1978) asserts that the bourgeoisie is interested in power and not in an activity itself. In a capitalist system, only a few can reach the top and the subjugation is enhanced by higher education. Elite institutions want to weed through applicants because they are the vehicles of power for society. They sift through students so that those who meet the standards can be integrated into the ruling class. Everyone else is directed to institutions that support the working and middle classes.

The status quo of institutions reproducing class inequities should be transformed through a variety of ways. One method of transformation is to introduce counter-conduct into the higher education system. Foucault (1978) defines counter-conduct as an alternative offering of governmental direction. Counter-conduct is a departure from the power dynamics that attempt to control the lower classes. It is a chance to live in a society that is free from the ideology of the ruling classes. Counter-conduct can only exist if it does not reproduce the existing power structures that are already in place (Foucault, 1978). The bureaucratic structure laid out in The Student Personnel Point of View has served as a guiding principle for student affairs divisions throughout higher education.
Institutions should critically analyze their structures to change the culture of higher education. Giroux (1997) explains that education, broadly, refuses to understand the relationship between culture and power. Higher education should go beyond merely trying to explain cultural differences and instead look at how power influences culture. Students do not have to refuse the university in their own right; administrators and students should work together to change institutional culture. Giroux (1997) advises that, “radical educators have failed to develop a language that engages schools as sites of possibility” (p. 120). An institution that is transformed from being heavily influenced by corporate interests to domination by another ideology is insufficient.

The American Council on Education Studies (1937) has encouraged institutions to adopt a positivist view of higher education. These institutions have not thought about the ways in which power influences them. The focus on empirical evidence and data conveniently fits into the capitalist narrative that flows through higher education (Giroux, 1997). Institutions of higher education constantly assess students, staff, and faculty through a variety of means. Grades assess how well a student is doing in their field of study. Performance evaluations, tenure, and other evaluative methods assess how well employees are doing in higher education. If an individual is not living up to these measures, then they are perceived as inefficient. Their behavior must be corrected so that they can perform to the standards imposed by capitalism. In a capitalist society, everyone should perform to optimal standards or they will face difficulties in achieving success.

If an individual (whether student or employee) is not performing to optimal standards in higher education this could metastasize to a larger subset of the community. Soon, the entire institution is at risk of losing status in a capitalist society. A capitalist society is driven by money and power so that if an institution performs badly they will then lose their power. This behavior
should immediately be corrected so the institution can perform to the standards set by capitalism.

The Student Personnel Point of View has provided a framework for how the modern university exists within a capitalist system. The objective is to move beyond this framework into an institution that supports marginalized voices and contrary ideologies. The key for any university community is to recognize how power flows through their institution. A power analysis of curriculum, activities, and policies will suggest ways to improve the university. Transforming the university lies in a willingness among all parties to engage in dialogues to advance a more radical pedagogy. The Student Personnel Point of View has provided the building blocks for modern higher education and student affairs. Power in the institution must be recognized and debated for change to occur for all parties.

Higher Education Reproduces Class Inequities

Identity politics has displaced redistribution as a means to overcome oppression. Fraser (2000) explains that, “…they strip misrecognition of its social-structural underpinnings and equate it with distorted identity” (p. 111). Higher education, institutionally, has rightly identified oppression along the lines of race and gender, but has failed to factor in class. The government has created class inequities in society by diverting public resources away from the working and middle classes. The lack of attention to class factors has allowed for divestment in public higher education over recent decades. The systemic failure of higher education to address class has contributed towards increased costs for all students.

This is not to say that recognition of differences is unimportant though. The golden era of higher education might have been well funded by the federal government, but it was not opened to groups historically marginalized from the institution. The solution is to adopt a status model
where overcoming misrecognition is not a matter of projecting a cohesive group identity, but is overcoming subordination (Fraser, 2000). In higher education, public funding must be restored; however, identity should be taken into consideration as a factor in college affordability. Institutionally, there has not been an even handed approach to defunding higher education. There is more public funding for higher education in states that are wealthy. Institutions with high concentrations of first-generation and low-income students need more support than those with students who have more privilege. Historically black colleges and universities have lower levels of public funding than predominantly white institutions.

The policies to restore public funding for higher education should not reproduce inequalities. The federal government is in danger of reproducing oppression by funding higher education institutions unevenly. The policies that prevented marginalized groups from participating in higher education need to be recognized in conjunction with a class struggle. Fraser (2000) makes the point that institutional remedies should not stop at identity, but also seek to address institutional harms. The federal government should take both of these components into consideration when restoring public funding for higher education.

Society has prioritized human capital over leisure and that view influenced higher education. The displacement of redistribution harms students by increasing costs and denying them an affordable liberal arts education. A balance of redistribution and recognition is needed to address structural problems in the university (Fraser, 2000). Reducing the costs of higher education is essential, but insufficient for addressing subordination in higher education. Those who receive a redistribution of power in higher education should reflect those in higher education. A return to the golden era of higher education where knowledge was privy to white
males does not accomplish the goals of redistribution. The intended goals of a redistribution of resources is only effective if all voices are included in the conversation.

**A Third University**

The first university, which is made up of primarily research universities, receives appropriations directly from state and federal governments. The third university attempts to use these funds for a different purpose, not to colonize and perpetuate neoliberal policies, but to lift up subordinated groups in the university (Paperson, 2017). The second university, liberal arts colleges, critique systems of power but fail to move beyond an idealized vision of higher education (Paperson, 2017). The second university is deeply nostalgic for a time when the ivory tower of higher education was most apparent. The third university would use the tremendous research capability and critique of power of the first and second universities to form something entirely new. The third university is active in its pursuit to overcome colonizing forces and reform itself. External factors such as the availability of public funding and grants would be increased for the third university. Internally, the third university would seek to transform itself into a microcosm of society that roots out injustices.

Redistribution involves more than just dollars; it is a transformation of the power structures within the university. The third university would refuse to hire government and corporate officials who are entrenched in neoliberal schools of thought and practices. They should be partners in overcoming the university’s past record of oppression and injustice. Additional public dollars should reduce the corporate influence in higher education boards and accreditation bodies. It should be unacceptable for corporations to influence university policies through contributions. The university should not reward corporations and influential donors with powerful positions that set policies. An environment in which there is
more public funding, but an unwillingness to rid the university of corporatization fails the effort to establish a third university.

Newfield (2016) argues for greater transparency in administrative budgets and grant processes. Students should have an institutional role in decision-making processes because they pay tuition. A shared-governance model where faculty, staff, and students actively participate in policies not only increases transparency around policies, but allows for issues to be addressed by the university community. The result of increased costs becomes all too real because those who are the decision makers are also those who absorb the costs. Public funding would also return to the university, not just in terms of subsidizing tuition, but bringing back federal research and development dollars (Newfield, 2016). The bulk of these funds are going to corporations that use them to develop products to turn a profit. The funds need to be repurposed so that they flow to universities for educational purposes.

**Differences in Public and Private Higher Education**

The liberal arts institution aims to graduate well-rounded students who can serve as impactful leaders in their communities. The liberal arts college promotes a certain lifestyle; it encourages students to be curious about the world around them. The belief that institutions of higher learning can provide high-quality teaching and be hubs for scholarly research is prevalent throughout many liberal arts colleges. These institutions are bastions of student support services that spend tens of thousands of dollars per student. While retention rates are high at the liberal arts college, working-class students feel alienated in an academic environment that attempts to socialize them into the dominant class at the institution.

The conversation at elite institutions has shifted from access to inclusion. In recent decades, these colleges have opened their doors to students of working-class backgrounds. Once
the students arrive, however, they are not adequately supported at the institution. These students
do not have access to private and preparatory high schools and instead lean on public education
with the goal of attending a liberal arts institution. These students have been admitted to the
college of their dreams, but a sea of social class privilege and entitlement drowns them once they
set foot on campus. Wealthier students, with social class privilege, do not face the same
problems as working-class students.

The curriculum at a liberal arts college, while challenging to all students, can
disadvantage working-class students who may feel ill-prepared for their courses. Furthermore,
students of the elite class may gain access to teaching methods that are distinctly unique from the
rest of the student body. Barfels and Delucchi (2003) studied a private, co-educational liberal arts
institution in the Midwest and found three levels of curriculum. The college consisted of
1,800 students and 95% of the student body was white (p. 184). The first level was a middle-
class curriculum offered to students. This curriculum consists of any course that is not specified
as honors in the course catalog and is open to all students. The second-tier, affluent professional
class curriculum, is open to all students but is designated as honors in the course catalog. The
third curriculum is known as the executive elite class curriculum and encourages students with a
high ACT score to write an essay for the program (Barfels & Delucchi, 2003). In the elite class
curriculum, students who attended preparatory high schools have an advantage over working-
class students.

The culture of a liberal arts institution may be foreign to the working-class student. In
liberal arts institutions, for example, the effects of a politically correct climate have stifled
dialogue and debate on campus. Students worry that they will be called out for their word choice
and genuine self-expression. Students, as a result, may steer clear of contentious conversations
on campus and alter their vocabulary to fit the narrative of other students. In a study by Lane et al. (2015), a senior female student of color detailed an experience she witnessed of an administrator shutting down another female-identified student for using the term “minority” rather than “person of color” (p. 97). Inclusive language is welcomed among students at the institution, but a layer of language deemed acceptable by the dominant forces on campus, who decide the rules of political correctness, routinely shut down people of color and working-class students.

Additionally, a lack of education on issues of race, class, and gender has a silencing effect on some students at the institution. The student who uses an incorrect term can be perceived as racist, sexist, or homophobic. A value judgement is made on the student because they do not fit into the typical mold of progressivism on campus. The campus may claim to be progressive, but does it not welcome all voices (Lane et al., 2015). The perception that an institution is progressive and committed to the central tenets of social justice may be different than the reality faced by students. The study by Lane et al. (2015) confirms that students of color view the stated institution as less progressive than white students (p. 94). A black student in the study articulated the concern that, “there’s always that pressure that you can’t say anything stupid because then you contribute to the stereotype….There are a lot of things that are okay if White people do them because they are individuals. But if a Black person does it, that person is the whole race (Lane et al., 2015, p. 95).

The lack of support for working-class students should be addressed in several ways. Focus groups should be conducted to get a first-hand account of the experiences of working-class students. The groups should be made up of various subsets of working-class students. Specifically, the groups should be inclusive of different races and genders of students.
The feedback from students should be written down and presented to the president and board of the college. The academically rigorous nature of liberal arts colleges means that students are deeply influenced by academics.

Students should liaise with faculty to propose changes to the curriculum so it is inclusive of working-class students. Berg (1983) asserts that, “assessment must be done with students rather than for them if they are to learn self evaluation skills needed for productive living and continued self development” (p. 13). The students must participate in their learning processes to gain skills for living meaningful lives after college. Ultimately, empowering a diverse group of students to partner with faculty in deciding learning outcomes should be the mission of liberal arts institutions.

The divide between faculty and student affairs staff is most pronounced at the liberal arts institution. Faculty view student affairs as a profession that siphons off resources from teaching. This adversarial view of student affairs, however, is fundamentally misguided because it sees student learning as happening in the classroom only. In the interest of holistic support for students at the institution, student affairs staff and faculty members should have mandatory professional development hours in which a program is planned. A professor, for example, could invite a guest lecturer with working-class roots to campus. Student affairs staff could then coordinate the logistics for the event and work on marketing to students. Working-class students struggle to gain recognition in the university because society has not promoted the ideals of cooperation and collectivism. Bourdieu (1964/1979) explains that:

the frequent failure of university working groups stems, above all, from the fact that, as products of a system which develops the inclination toward passivity, students would need a quasi-miraculous determination to be able to create new forms of integration ex nihilo. (p. 33)
Students enter the university with the classist attitudes that are dominant in society. The university, in its current state, seeks to reproduce these inequities. The challenge is to overcome these inequities and produce a university that values the work of those who do not have power and privilege in society. The university should fundamentally change so that all lived experiences play a role in the educational mission.

The positivistic leanings of curriculum in the university, for example, should be reviewed if higher education is serious about supporting all students. The university can be viewed as a microcosm of economic, social, and political oppressions in society. Action research, employed in a university setting, will overcome the notion that knowledge should be objective and value-free (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003). Students should be encouraged to challenge pre-existing ideas about knowledge and employ action research practices. The university should teach students to disrupt oppressive forces in society rather than comply with neoliberal tendencies.

The incorporation of intersectionality into participatory action research not only reflects the diversity among working-class students, but enhances the perspectives of scholars and officials within the university. The discovery of action research by scholars is often from marginalized populations who resist the positivistic standards of traditional research methods (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003). These new practices have the potential to change the university so that views counter to traditional ideologies disrupt dominant beliefs. Proposed changes are superficial if higher education does not confront problems collectively. Administrators should address problems head on and not shy away from discomfort to overcome issues in higher education (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003).
The liberal arts education was all that was available to middle and working-class students at public institutions. A focus on building human capital and achieving market success has eliminated the true meaning of a liberal arts education. Students at elite institutions are free to indulge in the liberal arts because the networks will enable them to prosper no matter the knowledge gained. The consequences of the erosion of the liberal arts changes the mission of public higher education institutions. A change in mission impacts the teaching and learning of these students. Research is prioritized over teaching at public institutions (Brown, 2015). This is borne out by the fact that scholarly research creates value for faculty members in the market. This enables them to succeed in their field which has been heavily influenced by neoliberal factors. The teaching of undergraduate students is seen as taking precious time away from research which cultivates human capital in academic departments (Brown, 2015). Public institutions have devalued teaching by awarding tenure and promotion to faculty members solely on research capabilities.

The faculty at liberal arts colleges, however, have a greater focus on teaching because the neoliberalized structure of the institution is less persistent. Faculty are free to teach because the institution is not beset by neoliberal governance. The private institution is free to make decisions on its own without interference from the government that condones neoliberal ideology. Public institutions have suffered drastic cuts in public funding. To make up for lost state funding, public institutions have allowed corporations to introduce competition into the university. Fundraising, assessment, and corporate influences have all become paramount in a public university that must make do with less resources from the state.

The golden era of higher education when there was adequate funding did not result in equal outcomes for all students. Students from minoritized populations, including women, were
shut out from higher education experiences. The United States has made great strides in recent decades towards increasing access to higher education for these students. As students have gained access to higher education, however, they have suffered increased costs in the form of higher tuition and fees. A focus on recognition of identity and redistribution is paramount towards restoring the liberal arts. The forces of neoliberalism have made it so that recognition, while celebrated, is delinked from redistribution (Fraser, 2000). Recognition has eclipsed redistribution in many social movements.

The concern about inequality in society is focused on race and gender rather than those who hold the wealth in society. Fraser (2000) explains that a prioritization of recognition over redistribution is the problem of displacement. Recognition has displaced redistribution as the driver of social movements. Group identities, additionally, become drastically oversimplified because factions develop in the collective. When divisions occur, the group must work to become unified all at the expense of redistribution (Fraser, 2000). A restoration should include both a plan for lowering the price of it and a recognition of the diversity that exists in higher education. This is not to say that redistribution is more important at addressing the concerns about the cost of higher education. A conversation about redistribution should be supplemented by recognition.

The students in higher education today are vastly different than in the era when higher education was well funded. Institutions must be careful not to deny certain groups recognition or assume that there is a collective identity. The populations of students on the modern college campus are diverse and intersectional. The recognition of a financial need for students on college campuses must be accompanied with a recognition of cultural and social differences. The era in which there was ample funding for higher education sought to redistribute income from the
wealthy into the hands of the government to disburse to students. A dynamic approach that reforms the university involves a modern view of higher education. Access to higher education and a desire to be recognized are crucial for reformation, however, a lack of redistribution practices means that inequality in society will continue to worsen.

Activism in Higher Education

The degree of activism on college campuses depends on the passions of the student body. Those students who are engaged in the elite track of curriculum are asked to question the status quo in society. The oppression of marginalized groups in society must be overturned to have a more fair and just society. The students, however, participating in activism on liberal arts campuses are part of the elite track of curriculum in higher education which trains them to think creatively. Those in this track are often from privileged backgrounds which keeps activism exclusive to one socioeconomic status on campus.

The reification process, for example, encourages individual members to conform to the collective identity of a group. Discussions of divisions within the group and complex views of individual identities are discouraged because these conversations are disloyal. Fraser (2000) asserts that, “the overall effect is to impose a single, drastically simplified group-identity which denies the complexity of people’s lives, the multiplicity of their identifications and the cross-pulls of their various affiliations (p. 112). Activism on the campuses of liberal arts institutions is not truly inclusive if attempts are made to silence dissenting voices within the group.

The promotion of conformism and intolerance within activist groups calls into question the meaning of a liberal arts education. A culture in which debate is stifled does not encourage the education of the whole student. These groups may be reinforcing the oppression that they are seeking to overcome through simplifying their messages. Furthermore, since privilege is
prevalent on these campuses, the institution attempts to socialize these students into the dominant class. The silencing of voices on these campuses will be amplified in society once these students graduate and become leaders.

A quality liberal arts education aims to educate the whole person in all facets of their life. The goal is to produce a well-rounded person capable of introducing transformative change in society through their dynamic education. Students who attend elite liberal arts institutions come from different socioeconomic statuses and have varying levels of privilege in their lives. The elite liberal arts college, as an institution, is distinct from a large land grant institution in that students receive increased individualization in their education. Elite liberal arts colleges tend to have large endowments and relatively few students which allows for increased selectivity in admissions standards. Students from working- and middle-class backgrounds may feel out of place because the attempt of this institution to socialize its students into the elite class is at odds with their upbringing. Elite colleges, for example, assume that the values and privileges of their students align with the goals of the institution. A critical analysis of social and cultural capital at liberal arts institutions is needed for working class students to feel supported in their college journeys.

The role of faculty is unique on these campuses because they serve as mentors to this population of students in a variety of ways. In liberal arts institutions, faculty may dedicate their time to students for emotional support and other areas besides academics. Students reported that faculty broadened their perspectives, taught them how to act on campus, and supported them through disclosure of food insecurity issues (Allen & Alleman, 2019). These institutions reflected faculty who took on a more student affairs view of supporting students.
The effects of food insecurity on these students had negative consequences for their social lives. Students felt isolated because they did not have the means to go out to eat with friends. One student from the study, Matthew, made up the excuse that he had too much schoolwork to do and thus could not attend an event (Allen & Alleman, 2019). Students who shared their food struggles with peers felt a common bond around the struggle for access to resources. Food-insecure students have realized that they are not the only ones on campus dealing with this issue (Allen & Alleman, 2019). The ability to eat food off campus, however, is a privilege to build the social connections of students.

Beyond the immediate need for nourishment, lack of financial resources also played a role in the participation of students in clubs and activities on campus. Student employment, academics, and other events made it difficult for students to attend meetings and participate in club activities. Students reorganized their time so that work and academics were prioritized over other social activities (Allen & Alleman, 2019). It is accurate that access to elite liberal arts institutions for working-class students has increased in recent decades. There are, however, other factors that inhibit the successes of these students. Affluent students who can afford to eat off campus, own fancy electronics and clothes, leave working-class students feeling isolated at these institutions.

This population of students is not receiving the full benefits of a liberal arts education. That is consequential because a liberal arts education can do much to lift the working class out of poverty. Littrell (1999) sees a liberal arts education as providing students with, “the ability to analyze and logically organize diverse kinds of quantitative and narrative material” (p. 267). The reality is that, while privilege exists at elite institutions, the quest for a liberal arts education can be broadened to a variety of institutional types and sizes.
Working class students, who do not attend college full-time, often face barriers to acquiring their education. Child care and bills prevent these students from attending class and succeeding in their studies. They recognize the need for a liberal arts education, but face challenges in obtaining their degree. These students would not be able to attend college without working full-time jobs. Minor changes in the personal and professional lives of students can have dire consequences for their academic success (Littrell, 1999). The view among these students all too often is that college should provide you with vocational training. Littrell (1999) argues against this notion in that, “for many students the urgency of getting credentials, amplified by pressures at work, block the quest for the very education that offers whatever hope remains for upward mobility” (p. 270). These students will forfeit a chance to explore their full potentiality because society has conditioned them to view higher education through a credentialed lens.

Additionally, most working-class students at liberal arts institutions aspired for occupations that aligned with their intellectual abilities rather than careers that required more social capital. The more affluent students at liberal arts institutions disproportionately aspired for careers in law and politics which traditionally require more social capital due to the status of their families (Aries & Seider, 2007). Class-based identities, at least in theory, are more pronounced at liberal arts institutions than state colleges.

**Internships**

In my two graduate assistantships, I learned that the institution type influences the educational experiences of students. The liberal arts college environment impacted the strategic goals of my office and its mission. The liberal arts perspective permeated all aspects of the institution both academically and from a co-curricular standpoint. The ability to get a comprehensive education that values the liberal arts and prioritizes love of learning was fully
apparent. The idea of self-authorship, that exists in beginning stages of higher education, is essential for living the values of the liberal arts. An institution that lives these values is able to resist neoliberalism because the corporate ideals of efficiency and profitability are not core to its mission. Healthy budgets in a private institution reduce the need for it to seek other funding sources. In my experiences at a liberal arts institution, core functions of the institution are not offloaded to corporate interests. The influence of corporations is curtailed because the institution has considerable autonomy over its operations.

In a public institution, where my second graduate assistantship is located, the neoliberal values are much more prevalent. Public divestment has impacted the university and caused it to make significant changes to core operations. A strong fundraising operation is essential because those funds are making up for lost public dollars. In this institution, university-corporate partnerships are common and programming within student affairs is influenced. Student affairs practitioners must work with corporate sponsors to have the resources to put on programs and lead initiatives. Corporations have also partnered with the university to provide funds to construct new academic buildings and student spaces. Neoliberalism is much harder to resist in the public institution. In an era of limited budgets, it is essential for practitioners in these institutions to collaborate with each other and commit to a common set of core values.

Student development theories are useful models for learning about students. In practice, however, these theories have to be adjusted depending on student experiences and institution types. The resources and structure of an institution create differing issues for the student body. It is important to remember that, while each student is unique, institutions can face starkly different problems. A savvy student affairs practitioner is able to apply student development theories in a variety of different settings. They will tailor the theory to the current environment in which they
are working with students. While the goal of reducing neoliberal practices remains paramount, student affairs practitioners should recognize that it is accomplished over the course of many decades.
Chapter 4

Design

Purpose

In recent decades, market interests have dominated higher education and changed the quality of education provided to students. Public colleges and universities, traditionally seen as the great equalizers in society, have been reduced to market concepts (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). Educators must defend higher education against increased pressures from the private sector in an age of budget cuts. The intense focus on job training denies students the opportunity to receive a higher education that attempts to educate the whole student. Simply, higher education has shifted to a private good where the costs are borne by individual students. The value of higher education has diminished in society in part to the influences of privatization and an unwillingness to prioritize democratizing forces.

The democratization of society relies on educated and well-informed citizens. An intellectual curiosity about the world instills a sense of critical thought within citizens. This critical thought helps citizens uncover injustices and oppression within society. Higher education is a brief period where students are exposed to critical thought that can serve as a powerful force later on in their lives. If higher education is relegated to job training, students lose the chance to cultivate critical thought and pedagogy. The influence of big business in the university has cost students a quality liberal arts education (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). A reason why this happens is because corporate forces infiltrate the university and impact the academic curriculum.

Collaborative relationships among faculty, which serve to enhance the experiences of students, are broken down in the modern university. Corporations, in partnerships with faculty,
may wish to put restrictions on the ability for faculty to share research. H. Giroux (2004) and S. Giroux (2004) explain that, “...as the boundaries between public and commercial values become blurred, many academics appear less as disinterested truth seekers than as apologists for corporate values and profiteering (p. 258). The academic curriculum is influenced by the corporate forces that entangle itself in the university.

The commercialization of the university did not occur organically with minimal planning. This effort, to corporatize the university, happened over many decades undergirded by the forces of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is an ideology that promotes privatization over governmentalization, profit over well-being of the community, and ultimately money over people. Individual faculty and administrators cannot be blamed for the privatization of the university. In an era of limited budgets, they are forced to collaborate with corporate forces to keep the underlying fundamentals of the university going. If research is to be done, you must seek outside funds if public funds are insufficient. The concern is how the forces of neoliberalism can be uncovered in the university and ultimately resisted by faculty, staff, and others in the university.

The steps taken to avoid cheapening the education of students should fundamentally transform the university. Management is far different than leadership and it is displacing the values of critical thought and reflection (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). Leadership involves risk because the decision may not be perceived as “right” by corporate interests, but should always be aligned with the central tenets of a liberal education. Management so often adheres to outside (corporate) forces that have predetermined goals for higher education. When decisions are made for commercial reasons and not what is in the best interests of students, we must resist these forces.
The danger in permitting neoliberalism to continue its influence in the university is that academic programs that promote critical theory will be viewed as inadequate for answering the desire to cultivate job readiness skills within students. Eliminated. These programs are viewed as unessential to the cost-cutting views of neoliberalism (Giroux, H., 2004; Giroux, S., 2004). Simply, if academic curriculum is viewed at odds or tangential to the market ideologies perpetuated by neoliberalism, it is at risk of losing stature in the university. H. Giroux (2004) and S. Giroux (2004) articulate that second and third-tier universities are most susceptible to corporatizing forces because they are increasingly defined as vocational centers meant to train working and middle-class students to function in the neoliberal world order.

If society is to be democratized, however, the masses have to take charge of their destiny. Society cannot do this without making the critical concepts that exist in a quality liberal arts education available to the masses. The commitment of educators throughout higher education, to advance a quality education to students regardless of ability to pay, is essential towards overcoming the effects of neoliberalism. The students, regardless of the prestige of the institution they attend, must receive a quality, affordable higher education. The discovery of neoliberalism in the institution can do much for changing how it operates and its future path. Staff, who run the university, would benefit the most from a comprehensive education on how neoliberalism impacts the institution. Faculty, who experience neoliberalism in their research and teaching activities, are better able to identify its effects. The primary focus of this intervention will be generating awareness for staff members who heavily influence the universities short and long-term goals.
Intervention as a Solution

Higher education administrators should be well-versed not only in current issues affecting education, but the factors behind it. Budget constraints, a focus on career preparation, and vocationalism all influence social programming. The ideology of neoliberalism flows through an institution of higher learning and alters everything in its path. A program might do much to support students, but it is important to consider the purpose of it as well. There should be a balance between programs aimed at career readiness and those that introduce democratically-minded concepts.

This program, through a two-day retreat, aims to uncover neoliberal traits of the university. Student affairs graduate programs prepare administrators well to function within the system. The system is defined as how the administration prepares to deal with the status quo and fit the mold of the university. A fine line exists between fitting the mold of the university and introducing transformational change. Student affairs administrators must be wary of endangering their roles while introducing a transformation of ideas. Collectively, student affairs professionals can make a tremendous difference in changing their institutions to better support all students. Student affairs professionals should view themselves as being part of resistance forces within the university. While student affairs should seek to transform the university, it is recognized that political forces impede those efforts. Student affairs must straddle the divide between being part of the administration and creating change.

Meyerson (2004) explains that tempered radicals do much to create change in their organizations without alienating dominating forces. Student affairs can play this role in the institution by maintaining their positions of authority while using them to benefit students. The tempered-radical concept provides a way for professionals to articulate their personal values
while advocating for new ideas. It is a means for operating within the system while simultaneously remaining independent. Everyday acts, no matter how small, can go a long way towards creating transformational change. The actions of a tempered radical can cause others in the organizational hierarchy to adopt changes and make them permanent. The power that flows through an institution can be harnessed so that it is used to support students.

This two-day retreat provides a chance for student affairs professionals to learn from faculty about the history and effects of neoliberalism. Professionals will be encouraged to reflect on their programming catalog for the following academic year and contemplate ways to make adjustments. Student affairs must recognize that small changes can instill confidence that builds towards a larger goal (Meyerson, 2004). Professionals must go beyond event planning and look in depth at the funding sources and programming. The source of where funds are obtained can say much about the values of the institution. These are important factors to consider when seeking out resources for programs.

This retreat is a time for professionals to connect in a group setting to review programming and ensure there is consistency across departments. Allen and Cherrey (2003) explain the permanent white water characteristics that are familiar to higher education and student affairs. The messiness of the university, where the frequency and amount of time in between events that cause change is prevalent, is well known by student affairs. The hectic nature of the academic year gives way to a summer where reflection is paramount. Student affairs educators during this summer timeframe plan for the following academic year. This retreat is an attempt to reframe the discussion around collaboration and planning in a division of student affairs.

**Best Practices**
As state governmental support has declined for higher education, institutions are increasingly looking toward alternative funding methods. Tuition and fees have increased in recent decades as allocations from state governments have been slashed. Savvy institutional leaders are aware that this practice of increasing tuition and fees is unsustainable and are looking for alternative ways to fund higher education. Fundraising and corporate sponsorship are becoming the norm in generating revenue for higher education (Gansemerr-Topf & Englin, 2015). The core tenets of neoliberalism, however, indicate that increased corporate influence changes the mission of higher education. The university is forced to behave like a business and take directives from outside entities. In turn, this affects academic curriculum and university operations because corporations and wealthy donors tie conditions to their funds. The university may make decisions based on the views of a corporation rather than what is in the best interests of students.

In an era of limited and declining budgets, institutions face difficult choices about how to educate students. The public-versus-private dichotomy influences the way funds are spent in the institution. Typically, private institutions allocate more to instructional expenses, academic support, and student services than their public counterparts. Investments, primarily in public institutions, have also been made to move courses online and create larger sections (Gansemerr-Topf & Englin, 2015). Student affairs should understand the budgeting model used for the institution in order to do an assessment of values. The key to limiting the effects of neoliberalism in the institution is to understand how funding decisions are made in regards to the budget.

Student affairs offices within higher education institutions that primarily use incremental funding models have an opportunity to resist the forces of neoliberalism that would otherwise seek to reduce funding. Departments can advocate for additional funds beyond what they had
during the previous fiscal year (Gansemper-Topf & Englin, 2015). Entry and mid-level professionals can seek to convince senior administrators why their offices should receive additional funding. Institutions that use a revenue-centered management style of budgeting may have certain offices generate funds for the entire division of student affairs. Offices that are seen as important, but unable to generate sufficient revenue receive funding from these other offices (Gansemper-Topf & Englin, 2015). Under this revenue-generating scenario, it is essential for the entire division of student affairs to be united on the influences of neoliberalism in the university.

The offices that receive revenue under this model must be wary of the source of funding. Offices that are actively working to resist neoliberalism should not risk being undercut by differing values of funding sources. Transparency and initiating a spirit of collaboration are essential towards finding the values of the division. This process can be initiated through a two-day retreat that encourages dialogue and learning around these issues. A discussion should begin with a conversation around how power flows through an institution. Many student affairs professionals shy away from conversations about the ways in which power manifests itself in the institution (Harrison, 2011). Shared forms of leadership, including discussion and ongoing work groups, must be part of resisting corporatization of the university. Corporate influences encourage top-down authority structures and rigid management practices (Harrison, 2011). This retreat is meant for a division to articulate the vision of student affairs. It is a chance to develop a story for the division before it is reframed by corporate forces in a way that exudes neoliberalism.

**Action Research Frames Program Design**

Student affairs practitioners are developing their understanding of impactful programming practices while making changes to their routines. Carson (1990) explains that,
“...all action research has a common intention: the belief that we may develop our understandings while at the same time bringing about changes in concrete situations (p. 167). Student affairs educators are critically reflecting on their programs while initiating proposed changes. The shared knowledge gained from varying experiences in higher education and student affairs will inform program reviews and revisions. Each work group will be tasked with reviewing a set of programs for the division. Each group member will develop an understanding of individual perspectives. This will inform the work being done to review policies and a collective analysis will be achieved.

Professionals will also be applying the knowledge gained in a presentation on neoliberalism in higher education given by a faculty member. This knowledge will not only guide student affairs practitioners through the rest of the retreat, but serve as a springboard for the academic year. The retreat will enlighten student affairs to neoliberalism in higher education. The academic year will allow them to build upon that knowledge and enhance it based on their own discoveries. The program is designed to treat the experiences of student affairs educators as crucial towards understanding their work. Student affairs cannot detach itself and be objective in educational situations (Carson, 1990). The subjective nature of the work in student affairs is important and is a valuable when considering potential changes to programming. The student experience will influence revisions to programming going forward and be instrumental in resisting neoliberalism.

**Goals and Objectives of Intervention**

The urge to introduce programming and initiatives that prepares students for the workforce is prevalent in student affairs. The desire to provide tangible benefits to students who attend events and participate in programming is fully apparent. The work of student affairs
professionals should be impactful and provide benefits to students. All too often, however, students are encouraged to participate in events that will proverbially “check a box” on their resume or introduce them to job-readiness skills. Students should be successful in their careers after graduation, however, higher education is a vessel for more than vocationalism. In higher education, students are offered programs and services designed to prepare them for the workforce. This encourages students to take advantage of this programming and prioritize it over other initiatives. Programs in which the goal is not directly related to developing job-readiness skills are cast aside. A fundamental change in higher education is needed so that students are prepared for their careers, but liberal arts values are realized. This will be brought about by a shift in the values of higher education; it must return to its roots. A return to the roots of higher education poses questions about the role of student affairs. Higher education should provide a path forward for students to both prepare for the workforce and understand the world around them.

Traditionally, higher education has sought to engage students to further democratize society. It is essential that the liberal arts continue to play an active role where its value is noted, but students take away its democratizing components. Students need to prepare for their careers, but also note the structural injustices in society that inhibit the successes of all citizens. The tools of higher education provide more to students than a foundation for engaging in vocationalism. The notion that students are customers and student affairs professionals are workers is misguided in higher education. Higher education should challenge students to become civically engaged in society rather than simply adhere to their wants without considering their needs.

In the fast-paced nature of student affairs, this point can be overlooked by many professionals. This retreat will provide a foundational basis for student affairs professionals to
become educated on the influences of neoliberalism in the modern university. The summer is a time when these professionals can become students. A core tenet of the liberal arts is the belief that it can be used to uncover deep structural problems that permeate society. The understanding of these issues by student affairs professionals varies in the modern university. The academic curriculum of their student affairs graduate programs may have varied and drifted away from discussions of the neoliberal university.

The retreat is meant to help level the playing field so that all student affairs professionals can gain knowledge on these issues. If the retreat helps professionals notice neoliberalism in the university, it will have accomplished its goals. The liberal arts cannot secure students a job after graduation so it is no longer useful. This view is not only wrongheaded, it misses the true value of the liberal arts. This experience, for student affairs professionals, will help reframe the liberal arts. The liberal arts must be seen, not only as a degree that leads to a vocation, but a force to prepare students for a changing society. Without a comprehensive liberal arts education, society loses the ability to have citizens who can identify structural issues. Reframing the liberal arts allows student affairs professionals to begin to see why it is necessary to change the university and society.

Collectively, a division of student affairs should begin to resist neoliberalism by assessing the sources of funding for their programs. The division can begin to do this by crafting a mission statement that reflects the values shared by the group. An appreciation of the liberal arts can be inserted into the mission statement by emphasizing the collective rather than the individual. The retreat will assist professionals with developing a mission statement through dialogue and reflection. Secondarily, the division can begin to think about learning outcomes for
their programming that resist neoliberalism. Ultimately, this will streamline the experiences of students across departments within the division of student affairs.

During this summer retreat, student affairs professionals will engage in alternative ways of knowing. It is crucial that professionals develop alternate ways for students to engage in their programming. Leadership programming, for example, can be made more collectivized and less focused on invoking an authoritative approach to managing problems. Alternative ways of knowing are an attempt to introduce nonwestern ways of learning. Student affairs professionals connecting with colleagues over the summer can propel new ideas for students in the fall semester.

Through their participation in a summer retreat, staff will begin to brainstorm alternative ways of funding programs. It will be important to do an assessment of how the division is acquiring funds for various student services and programs. Once that is determined, the division can begin to research alternative ways of funding programs. The values of resisting corporatization and valuing the liberal arts will be essential towards rooting out neoliberalism. Professionals will also participate in written exercises that attempt to uncover neoliberal aspects of their positions. The goal will be to encourage self reflection as an individual to identify neoliberal aspects of their position. As a group, professionals will make an action plan to address these neoliberal aspects throughout the academic year. Offices will begin to set goals for themselves to achieve these objectives.

Additionally, professionals will establish a recurring timeslot throughout the academic year to engage in a lunch and learn session. This program will be open to all staff within the division of student affairs. At the retreat, a discussion will be opened up about a list of topics for the lunch and learn series. Ideally, the lunch and learn series will consist of faculty speakers
whose research is in neoliberalism, participation in workshops, and the ability to remain connected throughout the year.

Most importantly, staff will discover how to be mindful of the need to advocate for students and protect their positions in higher education. The delicate balance of supporting students while maintaining a seat at the table is ever present in student affairs. In the deeply political environment of higher education, it is imperative that new professionals recognize those realities. New professionals should be astute to political dynamics within the institution, however, they do not have to accept them. Experienced mentors can help new professionals make the transition from their graduate programs to the field. Amey and Reesor (2015) explain that, “becoming familiar with both the obvious and subtle ways in which decisions are made—who is involved and at what level, what the penalties are for ineffective decisions and the rewards for effective ones—is part of understanding your unit” (p. 33). The ways in which decisions are made dictates who has power in the institution. Specifically, student affairs professionals need to maintain their roles in order to see through their ideas for change.

**Learning Outcomes of Intervention**

Beyond applying skills learned at the summer retreat to student affairs work, administrators will discover more broadly how activism can create change on college campuses and in society. Staff will be encouraged to think of atypical partnerships and collaborations during the retreat with the goal of forming unified institutions. All too often, meaningful collaborations that enhance student experiences and drive professional development are passed by in the university. Staff will apply concepts learned in the retreat to their job duties, research projects, and other areas throughout the university.
Staff will also note how student activists can be guided so that they are successful in their pursuits. A well-informed student affairs professional can serve as a resource for students who participate in activism. A professional who is well versed in the politics of an institution is best able to assist students with navigating it. Nash (2010) in his decades of experiences as an educator asserts that, “...zealotry, when it becomes blind, intolerant, and even fanatical on behalf of any worthy cause, is almost always counter-pragmatic” (p. 13). Student affairs can engage with students in meaningful dialogues that attempt to reach an understanding. A learning outcome for the retreat is for professionals not to see student activists as hostile to the administration, but as partners in achieving change.

Activism can be a tool for student affairs administration to teach students about how society functions and real change is achieved. Enraging others through divisive and rash actions will anger those in powers and prevent you from achieving the change sought. An activist brings others in so that change can be achieved together (Nash, 2010). Student activists show incredible passion and potential to change policies for the better, however, the methods used may be ineffective in higher education. It is the place of student affairs to learn about the political dynamics of the institution so that they can educate students on how to proceed with activism.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

The liberal arts degree serves to enrich the student experience and enhance democracy. Student affairs professionals, through this retreat will discover how to assist students through the phases of self-authorship. Students are just beginning to learn about advocacy and their journey into adulthood. Student affairs professionals can do more than prepare students to enter a neoliberal society; they can help them resist it! The core features of the liberal arts which include developing a sense of self, learning about the world around you, and advocating for others is
paramount to self-authorship. In college, the path to self-authorship is complicated and students may progress through phases differently.

The function of student affairs is not to only prepare students for life after college in the traditional sense, but one that cultivates the value of the liberal arts. Students surely must be able to provide for themselves in their lives after college, however, fitting into a neoliberal framework where work is valued above all else is insufficient. Baxter Magolda (2014) explains that, “...shifting toward more complex ways of meaning making that enable managing ambiguity, is the core challenge of a college education that prepares graduates for productive lives as citizens of the larger world” (p. 26). College students should begin to recognize the ambiguity that exists in society and harness it to enact change. The liberal arts can serve as a vehicle to initiate these changes and uncover the ambiguous aspects of society.

Traditional-aged college students often enter the university in the external formulas phase where individuals accept the ideas of others as the proper way of thinking. (Baxter Magolda, 2014). In my intervention, student affairs professionals are encouraged to put aside previous, often neoliberal, notions of higher education. The external views that students are interacting with in the university can influence their views on the purpose of higher education. A firmly anti-neoliberal message will assist students with crafting their own views even if they have not made it into the next phase. The messaging around the purpose of higher education should involve more than career trajectories after graduation. While students are in this vulnerable phase, guidance that resists neoliberalism can initiate the next phase sooner rather than later.

Teaching and Learning Practices

In the retreat, student affairs staff are encouraged to draw on their experiences both personally and professionally. Engaging in dialogue and reflecting in writing both individually
and as a group will encourage self-discovery. Self-authorship, a concept where individuals follow their own formulas and values, is not fully apparent in college students. Student affairs professionals assist students on their journeys through self-authorship. The expectations that student affairs educators have for students should be reflected in their programming. This retreat attempts to educate student affairs professionals on ways to not only resist neoliberal ways of thinking, but to prepare students to become self-authored. As students move through college, they acquire their own unique set of beliefs and values. They transition away from following external authorities and instead think for themselves (Baxter Magolda, 2002). The resources provided at this retreat for student affairs professionals are meant to inspire authentic views within students that are firmly neoliberal. The curtailing of neoliberalism in programming should inspire student views that are truly their own unencumbered by an external ideology.

Analysis of structural problems within the university and society require critical reflection. Through writing and dialogue, student affairs professionals develop the tools to use with students in identifying these problems. Baxter Magolda (2002) explains that, “...partnership in the curriculum and co-curriculum is crucial to promoting self-authorship during college” (p. 8). A goal of the retreat is to teach student affairs professionals how to develop their skills to have meaningful interactions with students that promote the journey to self-authorship. The co-curriculum, which is articulated by student affairs administration, is the arena where students best see their sense of self. This is the chance for student affairs to transform the views of students.

**Purpose of Content**

In an era of decreased public funding for higher education, neoliberalism has asserted its dominance in the institution. The liberal arts is seen as irrelevant in the modern economy and its
funding has been slashed. Students who are part of Generation Z, born roughly between the late 1990s and early 2010s, have never experienced higher education without neoliberal tendencies. This program is meant to meet the present needs of students while returning higher education back to an era when the scourge of neoliberalism was less prevalent. Higher education must not only return to its golden era when public funding was widely available, but adopt a firmly intersectional view appropriate for the twenty-first century. This content is meant to inspire students to become self-authored individuals who can seek to change society. In this current generation, highly-engaged working relationships are ideal for collaboration and forging bonds (Tulgan, 2013). This retreat attempts to enlighten student affairs professionals to ideas and concepts that will build community.

As higher education has transitioned from a public to private good, public institutions have searched for ways to reduce costs. Often, this means that higher education institutions attempt to reduce instructional costs. Large course sections, often taught by adjuncts, reduce costs for the institution. Ultimately, this impacts the educational experiences of students at public institutions because they do not receive the same instruction as their counterparts at private and liberal arts colleges. The instruction at public institutions is far less individualized because it is difficult to scale the instruction found at liberal arts colleges to larger institutions.

The content introduced in the retreat is meant to provide an alternative way of thinking about higher education. The neoliberal environment in which public institutions operate must be overcome through discovery and changing practices. While the retreat encourages student affairs practitioners to become familiar with neoliberal concepts, it is also meant as an impetus for changing business-as-usual ways of programming. It is difficult for students at public institutions to experience the vastly different educational opportunities provided at private, selective
institutions. This intervention, however, will help even the playing field between public and private institutions. Programming provides a way for student affairs practitioners to reintroduce the values of the liberal arts that were firmly entrenched in higher education a few decades ago. The work done in student affairs can serve as a means to reignite liberal arts traditions and values. The liberal arts encourages learning through experience and development of self. Student affairs practitioners have the opportunity to cultivate these values within students through programming and initiatives. The bifurcated model of the university, academia and administration, can be challenging to unite for the student experience. Student affairs can serve as an impetus for reestablishing the value of the liberal arts.

**Program Organization**

Student affairs practitioners are pressed for time in their roles during the academic year. There is simply not enough time to be introduced to neoliberalism and transform programming efforts. The summer is a time for reflection and rejuvenation. In this period, the entire division of student affairs can come together and foster a spirit of collaboration and connectivity heading into the fall semester. The goal of the retreat, however, is not to run through a laundry list of items for the new year. The retreat goes beyond a surface-level understanding of neoliberalism and digs into how to go about reforming practices. The retreat is meant to empower student affairs professionals to resist neoliberal notions of student success and accomplishment. The retreat launches student affairs professionals into discovering neoliberalism, contemplating alternative ways of knowing, and reviewing funding sources. The foundation is set for student affairs practitioners to engage in a variety of ways during this retreat. Professionals will learn about the history of neoliberalism in higher education, how to spark advocacy, and ways to carry their skills forward into the coming academic year.
Program Proposal

Living Your Values: Reframing the Liberal Arts for Modern Higher Education

For a schedule of the retreat, see Appendix A.

For a budget breakdown of the retreat, see Appendix B.

To prepare for an informative and uplifting retreat, please consider reading the texts below. These texts will provide insight for the student affairs practitioner who is just discovering neoliberal aspects of the institution. The texts build on each other so it is best to read them in this order. Newfield (2016) describes the price of the privatization of higher education in the last few decades. Amey et al. (2015) discusses the political dynamics of higher education institutions and your place in it. Allen and Cherrey (2003) contemplates how student affairs practitioners can be leaders in driving change. Meyerson (2004) explains how individuals can go about enacting changes while functioning in an organizational hierarchy.

References

- Newfield, C. (2016). The price of privatization. (1st ed.). The great mistake: How we wrecked public universities and how we can fix them (pp. 18-34). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press


• **Tips for Mindfulness and Stress Reduction**

  For this session, I will bring in a faculty member (or outside researcher) who is an expert in stress relief and mindfulness. The daily stresses of student affairs practitioners should not be overlooked and are part of their experiences. They should not only learn to manage stress, but to thrive as a student affairs practitioner. The liberal arts is more than just academics, it is a way of life. As such, student affairs professionals need to be relaxed heading into the retreat. This session will help them to manage their stress so that they can achieve greatness. The fast-paced nature of the academic year can cause student affairs practitioners to operate according to their to-do list. This reality is firmly rooted in neoliberalism where the constant desire to be productive at the expense of wellness is ever present.

• **Discovering the History of Neoliberalism in Higher Education**

  Scholar activists are well versed in concepts that provoke institutional changes and broader shifts in society. They operate within institutional norms, but attempt to make change through teaching, research, and their students. The role of a scholar activist is to carefully balance their job duties with addressing structural problems in the university. Essentially, the faculty member straddles the divide between answering to a neoliberal hierarchy while planting the seeds for change. This person is best able to articulate the threat that neoliberalism poses to the liberal arts and vitality of the university. A co-presenter, who is part of the student affairs administration, would increase the relatability of the material.

**Session components**
A faculty member from an institution’s Political Science, History, or Philosophy departments who is a subject matter expert on neoliberalism.

**Topics**

- Neoliberalism In the Modern Era
- The History of Neoliberalism
- Shifts in Higher Education (1980s-present)

**Logistics**

The faculty member will be paid an honorarium for their services.

This session will be offered as a keynote address during the retreat.

Student affairs practitioners will break into groups to discuss the presentation.

Attendance of student affairs professionals at the retreat.

**Reflection Questions**

1. When thinking about the presentation themes, how has neoliberalism impacted your work in the university?
2. How can you resist neoliberalism in the university?
3. How can you reduce the impact of neoliberalism personally and professionally?

**Alternative Funding Sources**

This session will bring about a conversation in regards to corporate sponsors, alumni engagement, and collaboration across departments. Public institutions may need to take funds from corporations due to declining funds from state and local governments. Institutions, however, must be wary of the corporation in which it is accepting funds. In this retreat, student affairs practitioners will take an inventory of budgets and discover their values as an organization.
Session

- This session will be a roundtable discussion led by the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- The Vice President for Student Affairs will invite a representative from the Advancement and Budget Offices.
- Student affairs practitioners will engage on their departmental budgets.

Components

- The Vice President of Student Affairs will lead the group in a professional icebreaker.

Icebreaker (10-15 minutes)

- Pair-and-Share Programming!
- Professionals will partner with each other at their tables.
- Professionals will discuss the top three programs and services that are key to the work they do in their functional areas. Practitioners should discuss how these programs and services are funded in their units.
- Representatives from the Advancement and Budget Offices will explain their roles at the institution and job responsibilities.
- Professionals will then break into groups and brainstorm ways to review funding sources and seek out new ones.

- **Divestment/Program Review**

In this breakout session, professionals will be grouped by department to begin reviewing existing programs. Ideally, professionals will be given sticky notes to write down their comprehensive list of programs.
a. On a whiteboard or chalkboard, three columns will be drawn for “No Changes”, “Possible Change Needed”, and “Major Change Needed.” This will allow professionals to visualize the programs their office offers. In a group setting, this will give each office a much-needed opportunity to review programs and begin to think about alternative funding sources.

b. For the “Possible Change Needed” and “Major Change Needed” sections, the department will think of ways to reduce costs. If there is a way to move away from a corporate sponsor, how would the office make up for the funding? Is there another office that would be interested in collaborating on the program?

c. A representative from each office will type up a list of these programs and send them to the Vice President for Student Affairs and other senior-level administrators.

d. The Vice President for Student Affairs will initiate contact with Human Resources to begin writing a job description for a grant writer.

e. This grant writer will assist the entire division of student affairs with applying for grants. Ideally, this person will be knowledgeable about functional areas of student affairs so that they can easily match interests with grant aid.

- Advocacy/Activism

This session attempts to address the structural problems in higher education and society. The story of each practitioner can assist the division with advocating for themselves and students. This session is about finding your voice and learning from others through dialogue. We must advocate for ourselves in the political environment of higher education and society. The opportunity to caucus with an identifying group is of great importance towards articulating a
collective identity. The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) has offered racial identity focused caucusing at their national conference. At their annual conference, student affairs and higher education professionals from across the country gather to participate in caucus groups.

This caucusing idea can be adapted for divisions of student affairs. Depending on the racial identities of student affairs practitioners at a particular institution, the group may be relatively homogeneous. For example, the institution may have primarily white student affairs practitioners. The important work of hiring student affairs professionals of color into leadership positions is beyond the scope of this session. Many institutions are ensuring their divisions of student affairs are diverse and inclusive of all populations. Other institutions have more work to do to address this need. The caucus concept for this session will be adapted to meet the needs of varying experience levels in student affairs.

In this session, student affairs professionals will be divided up into three groups: entry-level professionals (less than five years of experience), mid-level professionals (five to fifteen years of experience, and senior-level professionals (fifteen years of experience or over) in higher education. Each professional will meet with their group to discuss advocacy and activism on campus as well as review policies. Please see Appendix C for reflection questions.

At the conclusion of this activity, professionals will come back together to discuss their answers to the reflection questions. As a division, the goal will be to form a collective identity to support students going forward. Professionals will be matched with others who have varying levels of experience in higher education. Each will serve in a mentoring capacity to the other throughout the academic year.
A professional will also be tasked during this group conversation with keeping track of suggested policy reviews and edits. Work groups from these policy-review suggestions will be formed for the academic year. The goal of each group will be to review the policy and propose suggested edits. The group will report back to the division on their findings throughout the academic year. An example of this could be identifying that existing documents throughout the division use gendered pronouns as opposed to “they/them.” The work group would be tasked with reaching out to all of the offices in the division and identifying documents that should be updated.

● **Revisiting the Value of a Liberal Arts Degree**

Support for the liberal arts is waning in the modern university. This session aims to get student affairs professionals engaged in the value of the liberal arts. A foundation of the liberal arts is to enlighten students to a worldview that seeks to democratize society. As knowledge is gained, the view of the liberal arts is that students will use it to address structural problems in society. Students who partake in activism during their college years seek to change campus culture. As student affairs practitioners, the value of the liberal arts can be harnessed to encourage students to bring that activist spirit into society.

Student affairs practitioners will be given journals to reflect on the below prompts:

1. How can the values of the liberal arts activate students after graduation?
2. How can we harness activism in the student body to change campus culture?
3. How can we introduce alternative ways of knowing that reflect the values of the liberal arts in our programs and initiatives?

● Professionals will spend approximately one hour on this activity. There will be another hour for discussion during the retreat.
These prompts will be revisited at the first lunch and learn program of the academic year. At each lunch and learn there will be a prompt for discussion.

**Lunch & Learns (throughout the fall and spring semesters)**

A biweekly lunch and learn series will be established for student affairs professionals to continue their learning throughout the academic year.

**Topics for the Academic Year**

- Living Your Values in Higher Education
- Character Strengths Assessment
- How do our values show up in the work we do to support students?
- Managing Stress in Student Affairs
- Understanding the Purpose of Higher Education: Addressing Vocationalism in the University
Implementation Issues and Concerns

This retreat requires support from senior leadership within the division of student affairs. It requires a shift in mindset from the status quo to a new vision for student affairs. The entire division of student affairs needs to be open to learning about a new perspective for programming. The summer months, immediately after the end of the spring semester, should be a time when most can attend a retreat. Student affairs practitioners also need to commit to following through on proposed changes to their programming. It will be essential for the skills learned in the retreat to be carried forth into the academic year. The momentum will need to be maintained heading into the fall semester. The summer retreat is meant as an educational period for student affairs professionals. Both senior leadership and the assigned work groups will need to ensure that deadlines are met throughout the academic year. The summer retreat is only the beginning for possible changes to the division of student affairs. Progress will be measured at the end of the following spring semester.

Funding

In the short term, I will identify several offices in the division of students affairs that could support the retreat with their unit operating budgets. Offices that would be naturally inclined to support such a retreat include: multicultural affairs, student involvement, women’s center, and service learning. The costs can be shared amongst these offices for the retreat. In the longer term, new ways of funding student affairs will need to be implemented. In the longer term, the grant writer hired for the division will assist with bringing in new contracts and grants. Their salary can potentially be paid by unrestricted gift income or state appropriations. If the public institution has unionized student affairs positions, additional details will need to be worked out to determine if the grant writer will be subject to collective bargaining agreements. In
the years ahead, the institution will need to determine if its budgeting model aligns with its new priorities.

Many institutions use incremental and decremental budgeting in which allocations are increased (or decreased) by an exact percentage year over year. In this model, however, the opportunity for critique is limited because it is assumed that the previous year’s budget was on target. Critical examination of budget priorities may not happen because all departments receive the same percentage increase or decrease (Varlotta, 2010). Fundamentally, this approach is at odds with resisting neoliberalism in the university because the budgetary model assumes that the status quo is correct. Zero-based budgeting, consequently, adopts a much more radical approach towards changing budgetary practices and resisting neoliberalism. Essentially, each departmental budget starts from zero and is set apart from the previous year. Goals and priorities are examined on a departmental level and requests for the succeeding year must be justified (Varlotta, 2010).

In a world of limited time, however, this can consume many leaders in student affairs.

This budget model may also play into the forces of neoliberalism because offices that can best articulate the return on investment of their programs and services may receive more funding. The division of student affairs is competing over limited resources. The division could set aside a percentage of the operating budget for zero-based budgeting, but again, large departments may eat up these funds. A realistic approach, where goals are implemented but budgetary relations are recognized may be a hybrid model. A division of student affairs may not have the wherewithal or motivation to completely upend their budgetary model. An effective way of shifting away from the status quo gradually may be to continue using incremental and decremental budgeting with funds set aside for initiative-based budgeting. In initiative-based budgeting, a small percentage of departmental budgets is set aside for proposals that align with divisional objectives and goals.
(Varlotta, 2010). This way, the entire division receives percentage increases (or decreases) each year in their budgets, but there is the ability to obtain additional funds that align with values.

In an era of decreased public funding for higher education, it is inevitable that budgets will be tied to the health of the broader economy and market fluctuations. Incremental and decremental budgeting adhere to this reality and make sense for the division. Rather than combine incremental and decremental with the zero-based approach, however, initiative-based gives each department access to their own funds. Simply, each department receives a percentage increase (or decrease), but a portion of their budget is set aside for initiatives. As a collective, the division can create a set of values for obtaining funds from this pool. This drives change within the division because each department can submit proposals to change their programs and services to a committee. If the department needs more time to submit a proposal, however, they still have most of their budget that can be anticipated through incremental or decremental budgeting.

**Program Marketing**

This retreat will be a professional development opportunity for practitioners in the division of student affairs. The attendance at the retreat will be mandatory for student affairs professionals, however, faculty will be invited as well. This retreat will be advertised through traditional modes of communication such as email and at division meetings. Information about the retreat will be communicated to department chairs for dissemination to faculty. Departments from select areas of the university such as history, philosophy, and political science will be invited to attend the retreat. While attendance at the retreat is mandatory for student affairs professionals, an announcement will be made about the new addition of initiative-based budgeting. Practitioners will be encouraged to develop proposals ahead of the retreat and present
them during it. Those who are ready to present their proposals will have priority in the review period by the committee during the fall semester. Departments that are ready to go with their proposals by the retreat will have access to their funds set aside for initiatives before other offices.

**Timeline**

This retreat will take place over two days in the month of June. This is a slow period in higher education where there is a bit of a lull period. It will also hopefully avoid conflicts that occur with professionals who take vacations in the summer months. This retreat is meant as a springboard for the fall semester. After the retreat, work groups will develop plans to review policies through the following academic year. Departments will have developed by the retreat or begin to develop proposals to access their initiative-based funds. The Vice President for Student Affairs or designee will work with Human Resources on a job description for a grant writer. The grant writer should be hired preferably before the start of the fall semester or soon thereafter. The lunch and learn series will happen during the fall and spring semesters. The following academic year will be a period of transition for the division.

**Potential Challenges**

This intervention requires the ability for senior leadership and those in the division to alter their way of thinking. Transformational leaders are needed in order to make the retreat and future plans a reality in the division of student affairs. Staff may view the retreat as a one-off learning opportunity with little chance to transform the goals and objectives of the division. Senior leadership must make the case that the retreat is educational and that there will be follow up during the academic year. The retreat is a chance to learn new information and plan for the road ahead. The lunch and learn series will help the themes of the retreat continue throughout the
academic year. Work groups will present their reviews of programs throughout division meetings throughout the academic year. Proposals for departments to access initiative-based funds will be ongoing throughout the academic year.

Another challenge might be that neoliberalism is deeply entrenched in society and higher education. Ideally, the state in which the university resides will increase their allocations. If this is not possible, however, the division needs to be more critical and reflective about where funds are being received. A grant writer should help to bring in new revenue for the division while paying attention to its values. Leadership at all levels is required to make this change to a more impactful experience for students. Divisions will have to make the case to the student body that changes to programs and services are worth it because it moves higher education away from neoliberalism. Students initially may not understand why programs that do not comply with the values of vocationalism and careerism are worth it. Student affairs practitioners will need to connect their programs and services with issues students care about in society. We will overcome the era of vocationalism by tapping into student concerns about societal issues. Student affairs will need to tie their programming to these issues so that it is relevant for students.
Leadership in Higher Education and Student Affairs

A capable leader in student affairs not only recognizes the changes that need to be made to the organization, but lifts colleagues up to have a voice in establishing the elements and guiding the process of needed transformation. Effective leadership involves building a consensus around goals and ensuring the completion of them. The leader does not always play a central role, but instead invites others to provide insight and reflect on potential changes. In this capacity, a practitioner leads from the bottom-up rather than top-down in a team setting. They bring colleagues along with them and are open to constructive feedback about their ideas. The leader knows that change must happen in an organization, but they are open to different ways of achieving their goals. In effective leadership, it is important to note that leaders are not always those who hold organizational power. Leaders can be seasoned or new and hold a variety of positions within an organization. A competent leader recognizes that the views of colleagues serve to enrich the idea for change and ultimately improve the institution.

Higher education operates in a deeply political environment in which change comes slowly. It is easy for leaders to get discouraged that their revolutionary ideas are not easily implemented and adopted by colleagues. Small changes in higher education should be viewed as big wins because the process for achieving them is complex and multidimensional. In higher education, leaders must face both organizational hierarchy and an environment of constant changes. Savvy leaders recognize this fact and are able to work through the hierarchy and build a consensus for their ideas by consulting colleagues.
Meyerson (2004) coins the phrase *tempered radical* to describe individuals who use their power within organizations to achieve common goals and changes. Simply, these leaders use the systems and structures of an organization to advocate for their ideas. The tension for these leaders is that their struggles for change rub up against the dominant culture of an institution. They may want to radically transform university culture, but they risk alienating themselves from their institutions and colleagues. Most importantly, their ability to initiate and lead through change is severely impacted by engaging in full-fledged radicalism. These leaders engage in acts of self-expression that demonstrate their personal values to the group. Small nuances such as the location of a meeting or who is invited to an event can make a statement.

The tempered radical is particularly astute at knowing the culture of an organization. Leaders learn this culture well and actively solicit support from members of it. These leaders adapt to the culture of the group by discovering how open it is to implementing change. Once this is assessed, the leader builds relationships with those in the group to bring them on board (Meyerson, 2004). The tempered radical never compromises their personal values, but is willing to tailor their methods to the dynamics of the group. The views of this style of leader should not be seen as uncommitted, but rather as realistic of the structures that are in place on the team.

A capable leader knows that any colleague in their organization is capable of creating change. One person or group can make a difference and spark the fire for the rest of the organization. This potential for change can often come at the bottom or middle of an organizational hierarchy (Allen & Cherrey, 2003). These individuals have ongoing dialogues with their teams and use meetings as an opportunity for learning. In student affairs, drive and passion for new ideas and change go a long way towards achieving goals. When these practitioners inspire others, real change can begin to happen in organizations.
Transformational Leadership in Intervention

This intervention will require student affairs practitioners to shift their mindset and engage in transformational leadership. This style of leadership is a departure from a status-quo mentality that is employed in many higher education institutions. It seeks for individuals to challenge their previous assertions and develop a new understanding of direction. In addition to higher education operating as political organizations, they employ corporate and business practices. This intervention moves away from that mindset by contemplating a review of programs and funding sources. Transformative leadership is the ability to develop an entire new way of knowing and understanding.

In a student affairs division, individuals should be open to reading new content. During this retreat, they will read materials in preparation for engaging in critical discussion. A complete review of programming offered in the division is necessary to begin the transformation of practices. Practitioners are instructed to not only review the offering of programs, but look at funding structures. This concept uses transformational leadership because it goes beyond surface-level changes to programs and reviews the values of them. The ways in which programs are funded showcases the implicit values of the student affairs division. An attempt is made for student affairs divisions to rethink funding from corporate sponsors.

For knowledge to transform programming practices during the academic year, leaders must find ways to build on the momentum from the summer retreat. Colleagues will begin to form a collective identity for their division by reflecting on questions posed at the retreat. The formation of work groups across the division will be announced at the retreat. These groups, composed of staff from across the division, will be tasked with reviewing programming of other offices. These groups will provide constructive feedback to offices on their programming
catalogues and initiatives. The transformation of a student affairs division from one that lives in
the status quo to one that embraces change requires steady, transformational leadership. During
the retreat, student affairs practitioners will be grouped by experience level in higher education.
The opportunity for them to caucus as a group and come up with a response to a series of
reflection questions will reveal a common set of values for the division.

A culture of compliance within an institution can often prevent it from making major,
structural changes. In student affairs, leaders are worried about complying with laws and
regulations. The burden of compliance takes hold and can consume the entire division (Roper &
Whitt, 2016). Suddenly, leaders are more worried about managing risk than implementing
dynamic changes. Compliance to rules and regulations can slow down the rate of change in an
institution. Leaders must search for ways to break through this culture by making time for
change. Clearly, mandates must be followed in higher education, however, they do not have to
hamper organizational efforts. Transformational leaders find ways to navigate around this issue
by remaining upbeat and removing burdens from one office to the entire division. The struggle to
be compliant has to be shared by all of those in the division.

Those who are not in positions of organizational power can create change through
implementing grassroots leadership. The grassroots leader encourages collective action in the
group and seeks to empower others. These leaders are often faced with limited budgets and need
to rely on excitement and enthusiasm for their idea (Kezar et al., 2011). This collective action
and empowerment can be accomplished in a student affairs division by listening to others and
forming a cohesive action plan. Effective communication is essential so that those who hold
organizational power can hear a collective message from grassroots leaders. Any professional in
a student affairs division is capable of starting a movement. The tools are with leaders who can build coalitions and work with others to make change.

**Positional Leadership**

As an entry-level student affairs professional, I will not be in a position of formal organizational power to make changes. I will seek to build relationships with senior leadership to convince them of the need for my intervention. This will probably mean that my intervention does not take the form originally intended. This is alright because there are ways to carry the themes of the retreat and subsequent academic year activities in different ways. The most effective leadership style to do this would be participatory. This style of leadership welcomes the views of others to the conversation. I would be willing to make changes to my retreat to ensure that it happens. The institution type can also influence the form of my intervention. Private institutions may have less of a focus on resisting corporate funding and more on opening up dialogues with others.

I will also need to use a charismatic leadership style to gain institutional buy-in for my intervention. There will be student affairs practitioners who have many more years of experience in higher education. I need to get them enthused about my intervention to make it happen. It may be difficult to get institutions to change their funding sources, but I can start with introducing ways of resisting neoliberal programming. The case must be made for preparing students for fruitful careers while not compromising the mission of higher education. I need to convince those in positions of power that we must dually prepare students for their careers and craft them into critically-engaged citizens who seek to rectify structural problems in society.

Through a tempered radical framework, it might be helpful to pose that a pool of funds be created for offices that implement initiatives. If each office takes a small amount of their budget
and puts it into a fund that uses an initiative-based budgeting model, the drive will be created for the division to implement changes. This will hold offices accountable for creating changes and seeing their new ideas through to completion. In my work with others, I can lead the division to change from a variety of positions.

**Role of Evaluation and Assessment**

Evaluation and assessment play formative roles in the implementation of programs. Evaluative methods such as a questionnaire, survey, or other metric describe what is and is not working in the program. The views and opinions of participants matter in program development, but it is not the only indicator for a successful program. Data helps tell the story of not only why a program or initiative should be funded, but what students are learning from it. Once a program is implemented, evaluation and assessment provide a way to explain possible changes that are needed to it. Assessment can be shared with senior leadership to show why continuing a program is necessary. Evaluation and assessment allow you to showcase the results of your program to different groups of practitioners.

A senior administrator may want basic details about your program such as how much money was spent, the number of students who attended, or what was learned. Middle-level administrators may want more detail about the program such as specific content or student opinions of it. Comprehensive evaluation and assessment allow you to give these various parties the data they seek on the program. Evaluation and assessment also permit students to have a degree of ownership over their experience in college. They can voice their views to student affairs practitioners through focus groups, surveys, and other means. Their voices are important and provide practitioners with useful information to revise and change programs. The iterative
process of running programs, assessing them, and making changes enhances the student experience.

Qualitative and quantitative assessment methods are firmly rooted in the principles of action research. Student affairs practitioners operate in an environment where the college campus is their laboratory. Student affairs can test out new ideas for programs, see what works at their institutions, and make changes if necessary. Data can ensure that my program is accomplishing the goals of reforming the programming methods and reinvigorating the liberal arts in the institution. Qualitative data can show that student affairs practitioners are learning about the concepts covered in the retreat and are implementing them in their practices. Students who detect changes in programming will be able to provide their feedback through qualitative methods.

**Evaluative Methods to Assess Impact**

I will evaluate the impact of this program through a mixed-methods assessment. Qualitative assessment, which helps tell the story of the program through feedback from staff and students, will showcase its degree of success. The benefits of this approach are that the impact the program is having on the student experience is noted. Qualitative assessment provides useful information on aspects of the program that can be changed in the short term and the areas of improvement in the long run. Quantitative data, in the long term, can show trends in the divisional budget. It will not be fully apparent how effective the changes are until the annual budget is reviewed over the next few years. Qualitatively, the assessment lets those directly involved in the program, staff and students, that their views matter. The neoliberal aspects of the institution, which include justification for funding programs and services, is satisfied through the quantitative assessment. The quantitative measures, to review the budget over a three-year period, will answer funding questions.
Pre/Post Assessment

This test will ask professionals to consider their knowledge in these areas using a Likert scale before the retreat. Attendees will also be able to rank the effectiveness of the retreat using a Likert scale after the retreat. Participants will also have the opportunity to answer open-ended questions after the retreat. This will assess whether anything was learned at the retreat and how it will be applied to their work. Please see Appendix D for a list of questions.

One-On-One Conversations

During the fall and spring semesters, I will reach out to student leaders from across the division of student affairs to participate in a focus group on the changes they have detected in programming and how it has impacted their experiences at the institution. These informal conversations will take place in a one-on-one meeting with their supervisor. Students will be asked open-ended questions to compare and contrast changes to programming. Close-ended questions will be asked to confirm if student leaders recognize that the changes happened. Please see Appendix E for additional details.

Work Groups

During the academic year, student affairs practitioners will be tasked with reviewing programming in other offices. In their work groups, they will be asked how they are implementing the skills learned at the retreat. This will come in the form of a survey sent via email to work group participants. Student affairs practitioners will review this survey and come with answers during a work-group meeting. Please see Appendix F for more details.

Summer Budget Review

Senior leadership and budget officials will surely want to know how the intervention is impacting the budget. During the following summer, the division of student affairs will
reconvene to review the budget of the previous year. This will be compared with the budget for
the following academic year. To get a decent sample size, this will be done each summer over a
three-year period. Student affairs professionals will see the impact divestment, funding changes,
and an influx of grants are having on the budget. This will increase transparency in the entire
process within the division. If there is an economic downturn, this will be controlled for in the
budget review process. Spending cuts due to a recession or budget issues within the institution
will be factored out of a budget review process. This is because a decrease in revenue may be
due to an economic downturn rather than intentional divestment.

**Limitations and Looking Ahead**

In my intervention, I was not able to address the fundraising aspects of higher education.
The advancement operations of the university must be considered when contemplating funding
changes. The values of the institution must be considered when institutions seek to raise outside
funds. Those funds may come from corporations or private donors. The funds that an institution
accepts does a lot to articulate its values and goals. The fundraising operations of an institution
should develop action plans for reviewing funding sources. This will help to ensure that the
revenues coming into the university match its values. The institution can use these funds in the
ways they see fit rather than for a specific purpose. In this way, the institution has more control
over how funds are used to promote its values. The institution can use these funds to change their
priorities and shift to an alternative mindset.

Additionally, I was not able to address admissions in my intervention. Admissions can
use the shift away from neoliberal practices to bring in first-year students. The institutional
values of creating critically-engaged and dynamic citizens cuts through the corporate idea of the
university. Higher education, in the modern era, has been reduced to vocationalism and job
training. Students who are activists or otherwise care deeply about social issues would be attracted to an institution that resists neoliberal frameworks. Admissions can assist with helping the institution stand apart from others and welcome in new students. Higher education in the modern era faces a constant pressure to balance the desires of employment after graduation with traditional liberal arts values. The institutions that can best articulate these two needs will fulfill their mission of preparing students for their careers and reinvigorating society.

In the current environment, higher education is facing tremendous fallout from a worldwide pandemic. The structural changes that were needed before this crisis have been brought to the forefront. It is neoliberalism, which advocates for divestment from public goods, that has contributed to this situation in society. This is a time when higher education should critically examine its practices and carve a new path forward. Unfortunately, some institutions will be forced to close as a result of severe budget issues brought on by this crisis. This pandemic will force higher education to change and it will be left to individual institutions to decide how they can thrive in the current environment. The higher education environment will grow even more competitive and institutions will need to attract new students who are both in disarray at the current state of society and unsure of what the future holds.

**Institutional Type Impacts Intervention**

In private institutions, student affairs practitioners are naturally drawn towards collaboration. Their roles require them to wear many hats and work in a variety of functional areas of student affairs. The relationships may already be in place to make institutional change in small, private institutions. In public institutions, however, additional relationship building may need to be done at the retreat. The scheduling and logistics of the retreat may also be easier at a small, private institution. Public institutions often have more staff dedicated to each functional
area of student affairs. It may be more difficult to commit to a date for the retreat and hold colleagues accountable during the year in their work groups. The influence of corporatization may also be considerably less in private institutions. Private higher education has more flexibility in terms of where it accepts funding than public institutions.

The influences of neoliberalism vary depending on the institutional type. While public institutions may engage in direct corporate partnership, private institutions may receive the bulk of outside funding from wealthy donors. In private institutions, neoliberalism may take more of an indirect role by imposing its values rather than direct practices. In both institution types, public and private, vocationalism and careerism can take center stage in academic missions. Public institutions have more direct involvement through corporate sponsorships and partnerships, but all institutions engage in the values of neoliberalism.

In terms of divesting funds from the university and finding new sources, public institutions may face more restrictions than their private counterparts. The structure of a public institution, such as whether it is part of a state system of higher education, may impact potential changes to funding allocations. Private institutions may have more autonomy and the administrative level to make these adjustments. Public institutions may have external factors that hamper their abilities to drive change and adjust their methods. In a supervisory role at the institution, I would be able to go ahead and make changes to the programming catalog of my office. The willingness to take bold moves could serve as a model for the rest of the division. In a role with senior leadership, I would have the authority to work outside the division and with other university partners to implement my intervention. I could speak directly with the fundraising operations of the institution and introduce strategic goals. The organizational hierarchy of higher education means that senior-level administrators have positional power to
influence others. In an entry-level position, I would still have power, but it would be relationship-based. I would need to leverage the power of relationships in order to implement my intervention.

**Goals and Objectives for Action Research Proposal**

I will seek to use relational leadership to work with senior leadership to implement my intervention. This may mean that the intervention has to be changed in order for the retreat and subsequent academic-year activities to happen. The goals of my intervention vary by institution type, willingness of staff to change their ways, and funding resources. If no substantial changes are made to the funding structures of the division, but colleagues are enlightened by the content of the retreat, it will be worth it. The content of the retreat may even be considered when the institution is contemplating further development of a mission statement. An overarching goal will be to get something implemented and have it take hold in the institution ensuring its permanency. Leaders can change, but this intervention will assist students for years to come in an institution.

I would also like to build upon my work by publishing a journal article. This will afford me the opportunity not only to be published, but to gain insight from those outside of student affairs. Faculty will be exposed to the research and learn more about the ways in which neoliberalism affects the liberal arts and student affairs. The article can be referred back to for reference and read at the leisure of faculty and staff. I would consider discussing these topics with the Vice President of Student Affairs or Dean of Students at my respective institution.

The time for change is now. The current crisis the nation finds itself in has beared the effects of neoliberalism for all to see. Some of the changes required by higher education will not be its decision. The decision will be made for higher education by the current environment. What
is in our control, however, is the ways in which we can seize this moment to improve higher education for students of all identities and restore it to its original mission with a new focus on serving minoritized and marginalized groups. In the midst of this current pandemic, we are seeing everyday people do extraordinary work in their jobs and communities. Higher education can help change our society so that our values are fundamentally shifted towards those of inclusion, mutual understanding, and respect. The values of the liberal arts, to be an engaged citizen and critically reflect on societal issues, are not gone from higher education. They need to be uncovered and reframed so that students can use them not only to solve this current crisis, but pave the way for a better future. The liberal arts flows through societies and changes them for the better. Higher education adds fuel to the powerful fire that is the liberal arts. While the flame is not extinguished, the fire is in desperate need of new kindling. Higher education and student affairs can provide this for society.
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### Appendix A

**Living Your Values: Reframing the Liberal Arts for Modern Higher Education**

*June 2020*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Day 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>Time</strong></th>
<th><strong>Session</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8am-9am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Light breakfast provided!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9am-10am</td>
<td>Tips for Mindfulness and Stress Reduction</td>
<td>How do we overcome the daily stressors in our positions? Learn how to</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>practice mindfulness and stress reduction to improve your well being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10am-11am</td>
<td>Icebreaker</td>
<td>Discuss your programs and services with a colleague! How are these programs funded?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11am-12:30pm</td>
<td>Discovering the History of Neoliberalism in Higher Education</td>
<td>Why has higher education changed over the past few decades? It’s more than just the students! Discover how the university has become a business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Keynote Address</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:30pm-1:30pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Break for lunch!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:30pm-4pm</td>
<td>Divestment/Program Review Part I</td>
<td>What needs to be changed in our programming catalog? Take a deep dive into your programs and initiatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Light snacks provided in the Main Room at 3pm.*
## Appendix B

### Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8am-9am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Light breakfast provided!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am-10:30am</td>
<td>Alternative Funding Sources</td>
<td>How can we implement changes to funding structures? Join us for a roundtable discussion with the budget and advancement offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30am-12pm</td>
<td>Advocacy/Activism</td>
<td>How can we meet the needs of today’s students? Caucus with colleagues that have your level of experience! Practitioners will be divided up into two according to experience in student affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm-1pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Break for lunch!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pm-3:30pm</td>
<td>Divestment/Program Review Part II</td>
<td>Continue your program review from yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light snacks provided in the Main Room at 3pm.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30pm-4:30pm</td>
<td>Revisiting the Value of a Liberal Arts Degree</td>
<td>How can we harness the values of the liberal arts to change society? Join colleagues for a writing session and discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorarium</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Honorarium for keynote speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>Light breakfast over two days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>Total lunch over two days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Snacks over two days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td>Journals for 40 professionals. A 12-pack runs for $20 each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies (Flip Charts, Markers, Pens/Pencils)</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Office supplies for a two-day retreat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1530</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Reflection Questions

1. How can I advocate for students while maintaining my role at the institution?

2. What previous experiences, personally and professionally, can meet the needs of today’s students?

3. How can I work with professionals in the other two groups to meet the needs of students?

4. Are there policies that should be updated or significantly changed?

5. How can I mentor professionals in the other two groups so that they will be better able to support students?
Appendix D

**Pre-Retreat Assessment**

**Directions**

Please circle your understanding of the following statements.

1. I am very familiar with how corporations influence the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I have found alternative funding sources for my programs and initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The liberal arts are essential for developing critically-engaged citizens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I am very comfortable with conducting a comprehensive review of programming and initiatives in my office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Retreat Assessment

Directions

Please indicate your level of understanding of the following statements. There are open-ended questions for you to provide feedback of your experiences at the retreat.

1. The retreat taught me how corporations influence the university.

2. The retreat encouraged me to discover alternative funding sources for my programs and initiatives.

3. The retreat enlightened me as to the effectiveness and need for the liberal arts in higher education.

4. The retreat encouraged me to review programming in my office.
5. What improvements would you make to the retreat?

6. How are you going to take your knowledge from the retreat and apply it to your programming?

7. How will you find ways to resist corporate influences in higher education?
Appendix E

Directions

Please circle Yes or No for the following statements. Supervisors should have students fill out this brief survey in your one-on-one meetings.

1. My leadership role on campus encourages me to develop my values as well as my abilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. My voice is important in the programming done by offices in the division of student affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. The division is encouraging me to become a critically-engaged citizen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. There are programming and initiatives in the division that encourage me to think about structural issues in society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
5. What changes in programming have you detected this semester compared to other semesters?

6. How do your values align with the liberal arts?
Appendix F

Dear Colleagues,

By now you have met with your work group and started reviewing programs! This is a great first step towards changing the culture within our division. Please fill out the brief survey below.

1. Please list the members of your work group.

2. What are the current programs that your group is reviewing?

3. Select one of your programs. Spend about 5-10 minutes with your group discussing the strengths and areas of improvement for the program. A table is provided below for you to brainstorm responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Areas for Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. What skills and concepts learned at the summer retreat are you applying to your program review work?