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West Chester University
Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs
THESIS



Inclusive Campus Recreation: Creating a Space Where
All Belong

Emelia Bebee

May 2021

Inclusive Campus Recreation: Creating a Space Where All Belong

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 Education

By

Emelia Bebee

May 2021

Dedication

For Mom, Dad, and Noah. For my Cohort. For my old friends and my new friends. For the woman I've grown into.

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis was the most challenging task I have ever had to complete. I am so grateful for each and every person who was a part of it.

I would like to thank my family. I would not be the passionate, driven woman I am without your support and influence. I love you.

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To my closest friends – you know who you are. Each of you was a pillar who constantly provided me comfort and always listened. I appreciate you.

Abstract

This thesis examines discrepancies that marginalize students, faculty and staff from utilizing or working in campus recreation facilities. More specifically, Campus Recreation departments lack strategies that ensure inclusion for all abilities, identity backgrounds and genders. This critical action research thesis considers the experiences of stakeholders and will integrate research that has been supported by seasoned scholars. In this thesis, a three-day diversity and inclusion workshop is proposed supplemented by monthly programming for faculty and staff that focuses on inclusion techniques to incorporate into departmental planning. Solid leadership of this programmatic intervention would focus on collaboration and dedication to lifelong learning. An evaluation plan is designed based on a sense of belonging survey from students, faculty and staff that help to understand feelings of acceptance and access to equal opportunities. Widespread application of this intervention signifies that colleges will prioritize their goals and values to strive to dismantle deeply rooted, systemic discrimination.

Keywords: Inclusion, Campus Recreation, Identity Development, Leadership, Equity

Table of Contents

List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Impact on Students & Professionals	1
My Own Journey: Student Athlete, Student Leader	2
My Identity Development Journey	4
Connecting My Experiences with My Thematic Concern.....	7
A Critical Approach to Identity Development.....	9
Looking Forward	10
Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks.....	12
Philosophy of Education	12
Purpose of Education	14
The Value of the Co-Curriculum	16
Role of Student Affairs Educators	17
Statement on Critical Action Research.....	17
How Did We Get Here?: A History of Critical Action Research.....	18
Core Principles and Steps	19
Why Critical Action Research?	21
Critical Action Research and the Thesis.....	21
Chapter 3: Literature Review.....	23
Historical Context: The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862.....	23

Impacts of the Morrill Act on Modern Day U.S. Universities.....	25
Relevant Factors from HESA Research.....	27
Identity Development.....	27
Human Capital	29
Sustainability.....	30
Current State of the Concern.....	33
Related Professional Experience.....	35
Effective Versus Transformational Leadership	36
Influential Leadership	37
Leadership that Fosters Student Success	37
Chapter 4: Program Design.....	39
Overview.....	39
Purpose.....	39
Theory to Praxis	40
Erikson’s Identity Development Theory.....	41
Chickering’s Seven Vectors of Development.....	41
Program Proposal.....	42
Program Agenda	43
Potential Challenges.....	45
ACPA/NASPA Competencies	46
Chapter 5: Implementation & Evaluation	48
Implementation	48
Timeline	48

Funding	48
Marketing & Recruiting.....	50
Adopting My Intervention: Leadership Theories and Models.....	50
Assessment & Evaluation of the Program	52
Roles of Assessment & Evaluation.....	52
Evaluating Successes of the Intervention	54
Limitations & Looking Ahead	54
Conclusion	55
References.....	56
Appendices.....	60

List of Tables

1.	<u>Table 1: Learning Goals & Outcomes</u>	40
2.	<u>Table 2: Pre-Materials</u>	42
3.	<u>Table 3: Workshop, Day One</u>	42
4.	<u>Table 4: Workshop, Day Two</u>	44
5.	<u>Table 5: Budget</u>	49

List of Figures

1. [Figure 1: The Relationship Between Epistemology, Methodology, and Method](#) 20

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, I will express the reasoning behind my interest in my thematic concern through personal experiences. In order to do this, I will briefly address my concern and why student affairs professionals should be concerned about my topic, offer insight into my personal experiences that framed my vision surrounding my thesis, and finally conclude with a general preview of my thematic concern. At the end of this chapter, I will reference identity development theories that relate to my positionality.

This thematic concern addresses the students that are marginalized by ongoing discrepancies and microaggressions that occur in Campus Recreation. This includes students who identify as different from the norm that benefits white, heterosexual, able-bodied men. More specifically, it singles out programming and predictable discrimination that occur within Campus Recreation departments. Oftentimes, this programming lacks sufficient strategies to create a diverse and inclusive environment for the department's stakeholders.

Impact on Students & Professionals

College campuses are places that are a home away from home for many incoming and returning students (Hoffman et al, 2002). Their college environment is filled with new opportunities and new people (Patton et al., 2016). Students find their group of friends in spaces that offer inclusion and acceptance (Schlossberg, 1989). Recreation facilities offer mental and physical means to stay healthy (Henchy, 2011). In order for students to utilize these facilities, it is imperative that recreation is geared toward welcoming every single student that is accepted to the university. Age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability and sexual identity only begin the exhaustive list of identity markers.

If simple acceptance to recreation facilities is not sufficient, students pay fees for the

programs and spaces that campus recreation has to offer. Even if they live off campus or out of state, they are withheld from classes until this, among other, fees are settled. The financial and community success of Campus Recreation is dependent on the patrons, in this case, students. Justifying fees for a department that has low attendance for fitness classes or equipment that collects dust due to minimal use is difficult. The university, staff, faculty, and the campus community suffer when

My Own Journey: Student Athlete, Student Leader

In this section, I will depict a timeline that explains my lifelong interest in sports and leadership. Since the very beginning, I was always an athlete. As a young child, I was a competitive gymnast for eight years. It was a grueling sport that encouraged self discipline and respect for others. As I grew older, my interests shifted and I found my way into a pair of ice skates. Even though the sport drastically changed, I learned similar lessons. I loved being active and being a leader on my team. As the years progressed and I matured, I was humbled by various leadership roles within my teams. Captaincy exemplifies that the one wearing the “C” on their jersey values discipline, mentorship, community, and support. These values followed me through secondary school all the way to my career as a college student.

Throughout my first four years of undergrad, I experienced a lot of “new.” Moving out, making new friends, finding my cohort, and being educated at a different level. Throughout all of these paths that I chose to follow, I was fortunate enough to have an incredible support system that includes friends and family. No matter how many times I thought I had my path figured out and changed my mind, they always showed me support. Because of this I ended up where I needed to be.

West Chester University (WCU) offered opportunities for me to build my resume, meet

people with similar interests, and grow as a person. Outside of academics, the possibilities were endless. I joined the women's ice hockey team and immediately fell into stride. As an incoming first year student, I was eager to begin the next chapter of my life. Even before I was a student at WCU, I knew that I wanted to continue playing ice hockey. In all honesty, I was nervous about meeting new people. Throughout high school and even in the early months of college, I struggled to break out of my shell. If there was one experience in my life that I will forever be grateful for, it is this one. The friends that I made and the opportunities that arose because of this team were incredible and I would not want to have made any other decision.

Really, it was ice hockey that defined me throughout college. Being elected to the executive board opened up opportunities that I otherwise would not have had the chance to pursue. This position brought me into another executive board position that has led me to the career path that I have found myself so passionate about. Being elected to the Sport Club Council (SCC) board was impactful for a couple of reasons. I held a fairly high ranking position on one of the top funded organizations on campus. This meant that I was responsible for all of WCU's 27 sport clubs. My duties included scheduling facility space, managing a budget that exceeded \$300,000, and creating sport club specific leadership seminars, in addition to hiring sport club supervisors. The other reason holds personal meaning, as I have always struggled to fit in and find my niche. Discovering who I was and who I wanted to be was a long and grueling process. It proves to continue to be this way. There were significant experiences that have made me into the person I am currently. I truly felt as though I had a purpose and a place in the SCC office. I was able to explore my interests and I was free to develop and implement ideas that I felt could help the organization and the students that it served. At the time, the idea that this work was my passion bypassed me without even a thought of its potential as a career.

The thrill and nervousness that came when I stood in front of thirty student leaders to promote myself had the ultimate payout. I had always dreamed that I could be a person who was confident enough to get up and speak in front of a large crowd of people. When I stood up, I was shaky and my palms were sweaty. Now, five years later, I think back to that afternoon filled with emotion, as I now routinely stand up in front of hundreds of incoming students and their parents for orientation. Overcoming my fears and taking major steps outside of my comfort zone proved to be crucial to tame the severe self confidence issues that I had struggled with for most of my grade school life. This position offered me opportunities that I otherwise would not have experienced. That includes leadership roles, skills I gained that I continue to refine and utilize in internships, interviews and my graduate assistantship, connections throughout WCU and beyond, and finally an education in higher education.

If someone told my 18 year old self that I would be an important liaison for the WCU campus community for sport clubs, I would have easily dismissed it. The path that my life has taken is surely not what I would have expected, but I have been graced with important life lessons. In my graduate assistantship working with sport clubs in Campus Recreation, I am fortunate enough to be able to interact with many people and constantly learn. I am beyond lucky to be able to train new employees and to be a role model for them, in the hope that maybe I can touch at least one person's life positively.

My Identity Development Journey

This section depicts my journey to understand my own identity development. It aims to unite with my personal experiences in order to understand what has lead me to my thematic concern.

I am a white, feminine identifying, 25 year old student. There are many other identity

markers that I resonate with, but this is me in my most raw form. These identity markers encompass who I am as a person. Until my undergraduate years, I would have most related to being feminine identifying and my age. Including my racial affiliation became more important to me as I entered college. The most apparent reason being that there is turmoil regarding racial and ethnic identities in our country. Being familiar with familial, ethnic and cultural roots helps to form frameworks to understand societal systems. I definitely did not just happen upon this realization, it was very much intentional. In the past five years, my knowledge about other people and how their identities affect their hopes, dreams, successes, and failures has greatly impacted my education and my views on society. My everyday experiences and interactions remind me how identities are pivotal in planning, decision-making and evaluating. My education was gradual. Beginning the journey to become a dedicated lifelong learner required many working parts. Understanding my identity was born out of society and its flaws. It was and continues to be a very personal journey that ultimately began from news articles and current events.

The year 2014 was an exciting one. I graduated from high school and packed up my belongings and moved about thirty minutes away to WCU to begin my first days of college. The most exciting year of my life was the tragic end for others: Michael Brown. Eric Garner. Young lives, whose murders were byproducts of structures of privilege in our country and the violence that too often follows when privilege is threatened. Shock waves were sent through our country. Society was paralyzed with fear for children and young adults, especially those who are racially minoritized. Gut-wrenching crimes resulted in lack of accountability to others that upheld systems of oppression (Carter, 2017). Just one year prior to these specific murders, the Black Lives Matter movement hit the ground running, advocating for and supporting victims of

systemic racism all over the globe (Sobo et al., 2020). Social media and cell phones illuminated the violence against people of color. Unfortunately, the list of names continues to lengthen. The Black Lives Matter movement was birthed out of concern for the lives of the victimized and because the increased publicity instilled fear in millions. This movement was pivotal because it opened another door, a door that brought into question identities. Who do you associate with? Which community are you a member of? Where do you make your home? What is your identity?

Although I digress slightly, this tangent is undoubtedly related to identity. Race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, ability are all markers, although not an extensive list, that make a person unique. The battle to achieve a certain level of internal understanding and a liberation, if you will, was intense and imperative. Specifically, I learned many important values and pertinent lessons relating to race and ethnicity in our society. The learning was important, but to be honest, these events created more questions than answers. Regardless of my inner turmoil, these thought-provoking questions drew me closer to clearer insight. I needed to allow my mind to be open and empathetic and to understand how my presence fit in specific situations. There are times where I need to actively advocate for folks and there are times that call for me to actively listen and simply be of support. Each person plays a role in society and understanding what yours is and where that fits in is very powerful.

As stated in the beginning of this narrative, when I entered college, most of my identity cores were not related to my race or ethnicity. I am from the United States (U.S.), as are my parents and close relatives, and I have white skin; therefore, I have very loose ties to my heritage and culture. Sure, Americans have a culture of their own, but personally I feel as though I follow traditions related to holidays and other special occasions because they are a choice. Exercising these traditions for most is due to their own cultural or religious standpoint. It is generally

uncomfortable for me to explain this feeling to others because I do not feel as though I have a strong religious or cultural affiliation. For example, I do not celebrate Christmas because I am Catholic or attend church. My immediate family and I celebrate this holiday because my father was raised in a Catholic household, and quite honestly because Christmas is a “norm” in United States society. Personally, I struggle with observing Thanksgiving and the fact that the U.S. celebrates Christopher Columbus Day when in the truth of it all, it is a national holiday to acknowledge a privileged, white man who exploited Native people. According to Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007), identities are three dimensional and that there are multiple cores of identity. Because I am white, I feel as though my racial identity never fully encompassed myself as a human being. I never had to talk about it, try to understand it, or feel that it was salient (Patton, 2016; Thandeka, 2000). Of course, being white is accompanied by privileges and how society labels me on the outside, but in personal identification, it is just a color.

Connecting My Experiences with My Thematic Concern

My education about race continued into my graduate experience, in particular there are three areas where I have learned the most about how race and whiteness shows up in Campus Recreation. When I began my graduate coursework at WCU, I learned about identity, leadership, and power. I learned about how whiteness can affect the work of a student affairs professional. I was able to relate my education to my workplace. I was made more aware about the inconsistencies that arose from privilege; who was hired and who was promoted were two glaring concerns. Hiring was done in-house and recruitment nights were mandatory to attend for potential new Campus Recreation student staff. This requirement negated any opportunity for students to find employment if they had any other obligations during that time. Most of the promoting was done in-house and did not reach outside candidates. Both of these practices

fostered a culture that was not welcoming for new staff, if they even received the chance to join the department.

Through my classes and building relationships with my professors and peers, I was able to grasp a reality of privilege that I had previously been unable to understand. Experiences from one of my peers played a major role in the development of my thematic concern. My involvement in Campus Recreation occupied most of my time as a student at WCU. My peer's experience offered insight to my clouded judgement of being privileged working in the department. They were treated with disrespect and were pushed to the sidelines because of a poor recommendation. They were not given the space or grace to succeed. The sadness and frustration that my peer felt because of the culture in the Campus Recreation department stuck with me. Their brilliant, bright mind was disregarded because of these professionals' unwillingness to set their biases aside to be a leader for my colleague.

In the five years that I spent supervising student staff, only one of them was of color. I always knew that the department was almost entirely staffed by white folks. My supervisee's experience was most likely entirely different than mine. As I reflect, I wish that I could have done more to hire students of color. Having a diverse staff allows everyone insight about different perspectives. Actually, spending more time focusing on hiring students outside of the department's comfort zone would have made Campus Recreation more successful with a more well-rounded staff.

As I near the end of my time as a student at WCU, I reflect on experiences that have impacted my professional development because of my gender and physical and mental abilities. I work in Campus Recreation, I am heavily involved with student athletes and I am constantly in environments that require physical ability. There are times when I reflect about my presence and

wonder how I play a role in the space that I occupy. Being able bodied allows me to be of assistance at a moment's notice. My graduate assistantship requires me to move gym equipment, fill up water jugs and carry them to fields across campus, drive a car to sporting events, and be able to quickly react to potential harmful situations. Oftentimes, I take for granted my ability to do all of these tasks with ease.

My feminine identity also plays a role in how I conduct myself in my place of work. Campus Recreation faculty and staff are predominantly male. I find myself to be more defensive of my own input and more eager to speak up first, so that my ideas are heard and considered. On the other hand, there are times when I keep thoughts to myself to see if they align with the group majority. Fear of rejection and not being accepted are feelings that motivate my conduct at work and in meetings. Since I am so aware of my gender in the workplace, it tends to dictate my actions and hold me back from my conceivable potential.

Each experience, whether it was my coursework, my personal encounters, or other perspectives, played a part in the development of my thematic concern. I learned about systematic discrimination and then was able to notice microaggressions and areas of inequity. I hope with this intervention I am able to have an effect on the culture and practices of inclusion within Campus Recreation.

A Critical Approach to Identity Development

In order to bridge my personal experiences with my thematic concern, I will use two identity development theories to offer critical reasoning. First, I will utilize Erikson's (1980) Identity Development theory and apply it to my transition to college life. Second, I will use Chickering's (1993) Development Integrity Vector to relate to my development of values and how they have affected my experiences as they relate to my thematic concern. I will later analyze

these two theories in Chapter 3.

I feel as though I am a person that values honesty and personable and meaningful interactions. In each space that I occupy, I strive to be a figure that searches for the collective good of the group. Intentional inclusion, understanding, and acceptance are important as I come closer to finding a job in higher education. Uniting people with one another begins with small groups of people, and I am constantly working towards being a person that allows room for uncomfortable conversations and educating those who are unfamiliar with shifts in societal norms.

I have established personal relationships that fluctuate between pulling me further from understanding myself and why we make the decisions we do and others that fulfill me and challenge me to continue the journey. Deciding where to direct my energy towards is a struggle, while also constantly redefining and sculpting my identity as the framework for the remainder of my life. There are different stages of understanding privilege and how to effectively utilize it. How people understand the social constructions of privilege and racism has been embedded in their personal identity development. For myself personally, I feel as though I have come to terms with my privilege and I understand how to acknowledge it. I have found that it is a part of my identity that I cannot change, but I am extra cautious when I am in delicate situations where it could be seen as a threat. All in all, my life is dedicated to constantly redefining and perfecting awareness of my racial identity, and to be honest, I am really excited to continue learning and growing.

Looking Forward

Using critical action frameworks, this thesis will aim to consider stakeholder experiences, integrate successful inclusion strategies and facilitate a community that is dedicated to lifelong

learning. A two day workshop for Campus Recreation faculty will be supplemented with regular monthly programming to ensure that each sub department continues to plan, address and adhere to continued needs of the stakeholders. Committees can facilitate surveys to be involved with community concerns and requests. In order for this intervention to succeed it is imperative that faculty encourage and exemplify strong leadership to negate discrimination. A dedication to collaboration between faculty and students increases the likelihood of the creation and sustainability of an inclusive recreation center. Widespread application of this research will communicate the intention of inclusivity and diversity in the department of Campus Recreation, as well as across the entire campus community. My thematic concern is important because there are students who are being left out from recreation programming and opportunities. My intervention will help Campus Recreation to grow and develop as a department through cultivating effective leadership and an inclusive culture.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks

To begin, I provide my philosophy of education. I focus on student affairs professionals and how they play an important role in student experiences in higher education. The professionals that work in Campus Recreation serve a special role as related to my thematic concern. The majority of this chapter covers my philosophy of education, personal insights regarding the purpose of higher education, a statement about Critical Action Research, and also presents the theoretical framework behind the thesis.

Philosophy of Education

This section discusses my personal philosophy of education and how it relates to my thematic concern. I begin with addressing how U.S. universities utilized capitalism to enroll their student bodies and how capitalism forged the path for the future of higher education. I then transition into the relationship between capitalism and privilege, and how they relate to higher education. Throughout, I build my philosophy by placing heavy emphasis on the current and historical effects of this relationship. Using scholars such as bell hooks, I acknowledge the United States' historical struggle with discrimination and education. After discussing the history of capitalism, privilege, and higher education, I note the effects that they have on students' college experiences.

My philosophy of education starts broad with the role that capitalism has in the U.S. Because of the repercussions of capitalism, there have been noticeable disparities in privilege, especially education (hooks, 1994). In turn, learning in the traditional classroom may not be effective for all students. This is why I believe that education is broader than simply attaining a college degree. It goes beyond the four walls of brick and mortar schools out into co-curricular experiences and opportunities that are out of the ordinary (Freire, 1972). I believe that education

is a pathway to intellect, experience, and lifelong learning (Dewey, 1986). It provides students with opportunities to be a version of themselves that is conceptually skilled and understanding of the society they live in. Capitalism does not allow students to experience a transparent and honest education (hooks, 1994).

Capitalism first presented in the U.S. with land dispossession from Indigenous tribes and continued to spread into the education system. Since the establishment of the first five universities in the early 1700s, the U.S. battled with its troubled history (Wilder, 2013). Privilege in each historical era of the United States determined who could attend college and who could exercise their right to vote (Bedolla, 2007). Historically, capitalism benefits wealthy, straight, white males. The U.S. has slowly evolved, but privilege within societal systems is still evident based on many factors, including education, income, and housing (Stoecker, 2016). For example, housing loans that helped families in the 1960s continue to benefit white Americans more than Black Americans (Taylor, 2012). White Americans have lower interest rates on loans that have left them either close to or entirely debt free; therefore, they are more financially stable. This allows them to have a greater influence on the economy. According to bell hooks (1994) capitalism “requires the mass underclass and a surplus of labor” (p. 29). hooks’ philosophy is timeless and shows relevancy by encompassing miseducative experiences (Dewey, 1986) and their implications in U.S. society. She connects the university with the action of deconstructing oppressive systems from a critical lens.

If we examine critically the traditional role of the university in the pursuit of truth and the sharing of knowledge and information, it is painfully clear that biases that uphold and maintain white supremacy, imperialism, sexism, and racism have distorted education so that it is no longer about the practice of freedom. The call for a recognition of cultural diversity, a rethinking of

ways of knowing, a deconstruction of old epistemologies, and the concomitant demand that there be a transformation in our classrooms, in how we teach and what we teach, has been a necessary revolution-one that seeks to restore life to a corrupt and dying academy (hooks, 1994).

My main concern is that universities in the U.S. are not fulfilling students' rights to receive an honest educational experience in the classroom and in the co-curriculum. Education systems are consciously and unconsciously reproducing power that has been passed down for generations (Stein, 2017). Until social inequities and discriminatory practices have been uprooted and replaced, it is necessary to provide the space to students to receive an education that offers opportunity to grow in a society that sets a positive example through educative freedom and honesty. Campus Recreation and other student affairs departments provide ways for students to be educated in a space that allows for non-traditional learning.

I strongly believe that education is a right that all human beings should have access to. Even if privileges and commodities are becoming more equitable and accessible, historical discrimination will continue to affect folks well into the future. Until there is equal access to education, specifically higher education, students will have to continue to learn outside of the classroom, making co-curricular experiences that much more important. I continue to discuss the effects of United States history on higher education later in this thesis. I support the value of the co-curriculum and student affairs professionals in the next section of this chapter.

Purpose of Education

This section outlines my personal beliefs on the purpose of education, specifically in colleges and universities. To understand the levels on which it serves its purpose, I discuss the importance of co-curricular experiences within the university. I relate them to Campus Recreation with research about how leadership education and student employment increase

opportunities for learning and growth in students.

The university in the U.S. symbolizes expansion (Stein, 2017). Students' minds are expanded through education, and the university is expanded through prestige, and the national is expanded through the reproduction of knowledge. Attending college is an accomplishment for any student who attends. First Generation students, legacy students, and athletes alike accomplish a huge feat when they are accepted. Walking across the stage at graduation signifies their entrance into society with a degree in a new knowledge set that certifies their ability to enter the workforce. The university is a place of excitement and accessibility to those who have resources to attend. It also serves to be an avenue for folks to pay their debt to society through economic growth (Foucault, 2009).

Higher education is an investment. The government and universities invest time and money into opportunities and assistance for students that generally ensures that they will graduate in four or five years with an undergraduate degree. Graduates are then expected to find a career path that will support the U.S. economy. In Craig Wilder's *Ebony & Ivy*, he breaks down the history of higher education to its core. He pieces together stories of genocide, slavery, and colonization to understand the history of higher education in its most uncut, honest form. Wilder reminds his readers that the academy was implemented to reproduce hierarchies that ensured wealth and prosperity to the white man, and discrimination and exclusion to Black and Indigenous folks. He goes as far as to say that "the academy never stood apart from American slavery – in fact it stood beside church and state as the third pillar of a civilization built on bondage" (Wilder, 2014, p. 11). The gravity of this statement is shocking due to the power and mobility that the church and state held in the colonial United States. Eradicating the power structures and inequities that have plagued higher education in the U.S. is a constant uphill battle

due to the principles that it was founded on.

The Value of the Co-Curriculum

Curricular and co-curricular experiences play a huge role in the development of undergraduate students, and scholars stressed the importance of engagement in the co-curriculum (Axelroth & Dubb, 2010). Employment is an avenue that students can take to help them develop diverse relationships and acquire a skill set that will help them succeed in their communities post-college. In a study conducted by Rossman and Troilian (2002), students were studied to understand how professionals can foster environments that encourage creativity, education, and development. Recurring factors in the literature included race, gender, and socioeconomic status. The research proved the importance of professionals showing compassion and understanding for underprivileged students who experience college.

Leadership Education. Leadership in different settings helps to develop training for student staff, full time staff members should exhibit characteristics that motivate and inspire. Especially when diversity and inclusion is the key topic, there was a heavy emphasis on transformational leadership. Higher education places a great deal of stress on the way that professionals lead. Senior directors that used their leadership in a way that inspired all students, no matter their backgrounds, were able to facilitate a work environment that stimulated collaboration and unification among their students.

Student Employment. Student affairs is constructed of many different co-curricular experiences. These experiences aim to provide more than one purpose, such as a providing employment opportunities. While student employment on campus can serve as a means for financial support, it is also an opportunity to learn about conflict-resolution, responsibility, and leadership. Since Campus Recreation is a student affairs department and not an academic

department, leadership is a key competency when professionals educate their staff. The ability to frame education as a welcoming experience depends on how the group views their leader.

Historically, higher education's purpose was a means to reproduce power and privilege (Wilder, 2013). Over the years there have been obvious changes to the education system, but the ghosts of the early United States still linger. It has become more and more important that students need support and guidance. Student Affairs in particular funds departments and programming for students to mitigate anything that may deter students from feeling marginalized. Academic Affairs works in concert with Student Affairs to provide educative experiences that will churn out students with the knowledge set necessary for their field of study at the time of graduation. Universities rely on these sectors to engage and enrich students, so that they will enter their post college career with skills to be a contributing member of society.

Role of Student Affairs Educators

In this section, I discuss the various roles and responsibilities of student affairs professionals. First, I address leadership in social change within the university, how staff members can assist students in their journey to employment, and how they can support their students through advising. To follow, I delve deeper into how staff members can support students using the Critical Race Theory. This framework offers strategies about how to support students' development of personal values and how to facilitate inclusive dialogue.

Statement on Critical Action Research

This section provides my statement on Critical Action Research (CAR). First, I explain the history of CAR, its core principles and steps, and I compare and contrast CAR to other research methods. This helps guide the reader through the programmatic intervention with the understanding that the themes in this paper are constantly evolving. I round out this chapter by

providing the benefits of using CAR as it relates to my thematic concern.

Reason & Bradbury (2001) define Action Research as a:

Participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practice knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities. (p. 1)

Action Research is derived from many disciplines with a multitude of fields of study. It emerged from groups of professionals from a variety of career backgrounds who were interested in creating a method of research that encouraged change within their field. The aim of Action Research is to explore effective practices of increasing the well-being of the folks living and working in their respective communities. According to Brydon-Miller and colleagues (2003), those who utilize Action Research in their studies have a passion to transform and evolve knowledge and practices that foster “larger-scale democratic change” (p. 11). Overall, Action Research uses an approach that encourages professionals to continue to review and evaluate the practices in their profession and use research based methods to modify them as necessary to ensure safe, happy, and healthy work environments.

How Did We Get Here?: A History of Critical Action Research

Industrial democracy marked the beginning of Action Research. Greenwood and Levin (2007) note that industrial democracy was the “first systematic and reasonably large-scale AR effort in Western industrialized countries” (p. 14). The lived experiences of production line workers in car factories gave rise to a newfound appreciation for their insight. Administrations

valued team based initiatives that aim to increase engagement and innovation in production lines. According to Greenwood & Levin (2007), Kurt Lewin conceptualized utilizing these lived experiences helps to figure out how to dismantle outdated practices, rebuild, and standardize them to best accommodate the goals and values of the organization. Lewin emphasized team and group dynamics to ensure that they can withstand development to continuously move towards change that benefits the folks working or participating in the community. Acknowledging the civil rights and the mental and physical health of workers in their job performance helped to continue redefining and rebuilding organizational change. Participatory Action Research evolved from highly institutionalized nations that were colonized by Europeans to test and challenge the development of knowledge in generally unpleasant and inequitable conditions (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Current professionals who are well versed in Action Research may reach out to their shop level workers or those that are in the frontlines who are able to see how a business or organization is run.

Since the world has turned away from production lines, Action Research is present in participatory action research, where researchers value community stakeholders. There is an increased awareness of communities where there are injustices in the social systems. Community stakeholders have replaced production line workers in more modern times to reach social equity. In the interest of increasing the well-being of those who are impacted by these institutions, accounting for individual experiences through positive and negative aspects of day to day operations continues to be of importance in Action Research.

Core Principles and Steps

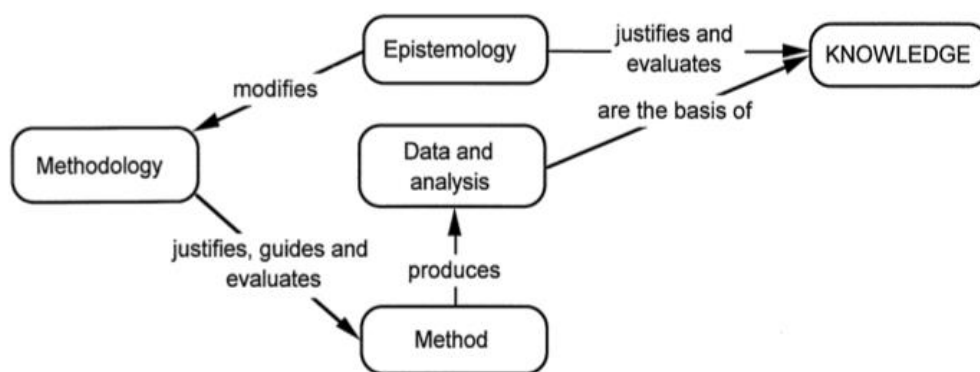
Kurt Lewin (1951) stresses the practicality of imposing theory onto practices. Creating and implementing theory provides the groundwork to begin authentic leadership and establish

effective working relationships with folks in the community. Stringer (2014) emphasizes the participatory component of approaching scientific inquiry as democratic, equitable, liberating, and enhancing. Conducting practices that are built on the foundation of theory allows for improvement. Theories that are born out of Action Research are not stagnant. They are constantly looking towards taking the next step in practices and theories (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003).

Generally speaking, Action Researchers are united based on mutual concerns about social injustices and inequities. Principles and concepts that guide Action Research include epistemology, methodology, and the methods that guide the research. According to a Carter & Little (2007), these three principles help guide qualitative research through inclusivity. Using this guidance helps to organize Action Research as an approach. Epistemology attempts to modify and justify the knowledge that is produced in the research. The methodology is the theory or analysis that further guides the study and provides basic justification for the methods of the project. Finally, the methods are how evidence or data is gathered throughout the research project. Carter & Little (2007) explain the relationship between these three concepts and how they help organize Action Research and produce knowledge. The relationship is fundamentally based on which methods they will use to produce knowledge and then how epistemology can continue to modify, justify and evaluate the data.

Figure 1

The Relationship Between Epistemology, Methodology, and Method



This relationship is beneficial because of the continuous reevaluation of knowledge which further reiterates the importance of knowledge through doing. When one thesis becomes stale or ineffective, there are easy ways to identify the flaws in the theory to make effective changes.

Why Critical Action Research?

As student affairs professionals are constantly evolving and adapting to current situations and new issues, it is essential to be engaged with societal shifts. Higher education and student affairs are constantly interacting with students from different backgrounds with a variety of needs. Action Research provides student affairs professionals the opportunity to collect data without the confines that other research methods may have. They have the freedom to combine knowledge from different stakeholders in the community. The defining characteristics of Action Research are the principles of collecting data democratically and empirically. Brydon-Miller et al (2003) explains how it ties the expert and local knowledge together so that there is an ability for the data to be interpreted and processes to be executed in ways that allow for the maximum benefit of local stakeholders. Critical Action Research combines Critical Theories with Action Research. Kemmis (2008) summarizes Max Horkheimer's definition of critical theory as a "form of theorizing motivated by a deep concern to overcome social injustice and the establishment of more just social conditions for all people" (p. 125). When Action Research and Critical Theories are utilized together they allow for variability in how research is conducted. Stakeholders and researchers share resources and are given equal opportunity to respond to social challenges and concerns.

Critical Action Research and the Thesis

In higher education, there are a slew of issues, injustices, and inequities that plague the university. Students attend college to further their education and gain insight and experiences to

set them apart from others. Unfortunately, not all students are treated fairly and higher education professionals need to intervene. The thematic concern is essential to addressing these concerns with a statement and answers as to how the issue can be alleviated. Creating access and opportunity for all students is crucial to bettering the society. Using Critical Action Research as a method of acquiring knowledge is important because of the quality that aims to continuously revisit and revise current conditions. Linking critical theory with Action Research ensures that researchers and professionals are constantly evaluating what works and what does not work in an organization or institution. Applying Action Research to the thematic concern supports constant restructuring of theories and allows the ability for researchers to identify where there may be flaws in systems. Ultimately, it ensures that folks in the community are taken care of. The psychological and physical well-being of the individuals and of the groups are taken into account. Diversity and inclusion strategies are constantly attempting to evolve with the current times to recognize where discrimination may be obvious or hidden within policies. Looking at equity with an Action Research lens reassures those affected that their supervisors or administrators are concerned with how their working conditions translate to their productivity and innovation. The most well-rounded attempt at achieving equity and justice lies within the framework of Critical Action Research.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In Chapter 3, I will review four main sections. The first will explain the historical context of my thematic concern, specifically dissecting the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 and its significance in how United States universities function. The second section will identify applicable factors in the literature, including identity development and sustainability. Third, I will address the current state of my topic and, finally I will conclude with my relevant professional experience as related to my thematic concern.

Historical Context: The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862

In this section I use the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 (hereafter the Morrill Act) to establish historical discrimination of folks in United States universities. I begin with explaining the purpose of the Morrill Act and how it adopted racist tendencies that have been carried through centuries of education. I discuss this historical event because it highlights flaws in higher education that date back to the 1600s. I then talk about how the Morrill Act has impacted higher education today in the United States. Grants and funding based on merit that was adopted years ago reproduces the discriminatory power that institutions utilize. Campus Recreation is a department that still feels the effects of discrimination, arguably from historical acts such as this one.

Since the first universities were established in colonized America in 1636, higher education served as a vehicle for students to engage with members of their community, gain knowledge and insight, and broaden their horizons for their career path (Wilder, 2013). Harvard established a reputation for slaveholders to learn effective business strategies that dehumanized Black slaves. In the beginnings of the development of higher education, one of the main purposes was to reproduce the wealth, knowledge, and privilege of elite slave owners in America

(Wilder, 2013). Slaves were used as a means for success for these early colleges. The very land that colleges and universities were built on was stolen from the Indigenous peoples of America and then these institutions were constructed by slave labor to strengthen the white man's master narrative. The Morrill Act was designed by the government to issue territories for states to colonize so that they would receive federal funding among other benefits (Stein, 2017). These land-grant schools were incentivized to use the colonized lands to build robust college programs, such as agriculture, medicine, mining, and military education. The programs would be able to churn out the "brightest" the colleges would have to offer to capitalistic and industrial America.

American colonizers built and created site of power that continuously reinforced the master narrative of the white, heterosexual, and able-bodied man as the ideal citizen. Power lies deeply rooted in higher education institutions because of its history of accumulation by dispossession. The Morrill Act was a driving force to enable "pioneers" to push across America in order to secure its economic wealth, autonomy, and the luxury of privilege. Stein (2017) argued that, "Indigenous dispossession in the decades prior to the 1862 Morrill Act was not specifically enacted so as to fund land-grant institutions, the resulting accumulation of lands by the US government was a prerequisite for the legislation" (p. 5). It is deduced with clear evidence that the successes of America solely "emerged through the very processes that subjugated and dispossessed Black and Indigenous peoples" (King, 2016). According to Patton (2016), the Morrill Act encouraged and financially rewarded higher education institutions that functioned off of the backs of the oppressed and "fuel[ed] the intersections of race, property, and oppression" that motivated capitalism and industrialism (p. 317). Wilder (2013) noted that the main goal of early higher education institutions was to serve as "instruments of Christian expansionism, weapons for the conquest of Indigenous people, and major beneficiaries of the

African slave trade and slavery” (p. 17).

Impacts of the Morrill Act on Modern Day U.S. Universities

The Morrill Act signified the spread of white colonization in higher education and impacted colleges and universities in ways that are still evident today. The university has been used as a business model since its creation and that has been reproduced for decades through capitalistic motives (Wilder, 2013). Students have continued to be viewed as dollar signs, or a means to accumulate money for America’s economy. Industrial America is still reflected in how these universities currently function. Cornell, Rutgers, and Penn State University are among the 112 commonly known land-grant institutions that flaunt top tier programs in agricultural, medicine, and engineering. These programs, similar to universities under the Morrill Act, entertain economists and capitalists because of the high return on investment that the institution receives. Students who graduate from top notch programs will indirectly and directly boost the economy, which of course includes their alma mater.

Over a century and a half later, the perpetual funds that the Morrill Act sought after universities to accrue are still apparent. The Morrill Act strategically created a vicious cycle that admitted moldable students, reproduced power-based privilege, and then churned them back into a society that only valued their worth by a dollar sign. American higher education continues to accumulate by dispossession.

Unfortunately, another glaring impact that the Morrill Act has left the U.S. with are the Doctrine of Discovery and treaties with Indigenous peoples. If the above issue is not enough, the U.S. remains in accordance with the Doctrine of Discovery. As a reminder, the Doctrine of Discovery identifies the difference between land “occupation” and “ownership.” Surprisingly enough, it is still used against Indigenous peoples in a court of law (Miller, 2005). In addition,

the U.S. is currently in violation of a number of ratified treaties with Indigenous lands (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). Both of these situations are a constant reminder of the implications that the Morrill Act and other laws surrounding cessation of land in the 1800s has on the nation today. They reiterate the values and principles that higher education was founded on a white supremacist democracy. Oppression and erasure through violence of folks of color in America is painfully tied to the creation and expansion of higher education.

Higher education is ultimately a means to disseminate a mass of information to a large number of students. The expansion of universities across the U.S. meant more possessed land to spread ideologies upon. The Indigenous peoples who occupied this land first were violently removed by colonizers under provisions of the Morrill Act. This land was repurposed to be sites of investment for the U.S.. Following the precedents set by the federal government, colleges and universities graduated professionals in agriculture, medicine, engineering, and militarization. These graduates – white, property-owning men – would continue to reproduce power structures that benefited those who were already privileged and discriminated against those who were not. This cycle is evident in the U.S. Constitution, laws, and common practices of institutions that include universities. The battle for equity is ever present in education, legislation, the judicial system, all the way down to basic social interactions, due to how deeply rooted systemic racism and discrimination are. Stein (2017) perfectly summarized the ripple effect that pertains to the Morrill Act that, “...land-grant institutions indicates, even this already-distorted democratic vision was shaped by capital, not only in the structure of funding but in the drivers and effects of the legislation” (p. 6).

The United State was and continues to be a white supremacist democracy that was founded upon the backs of the oppressed and invalidated; a demanding and devastating dystopia for those

who do not reap the privileges of their families who came before them. Overcoming the barriers to create inclusive and equitable spaces in higher education is a constant struggle due to the system that its ideals were founded upon. Campus Recreation is among many departments that are reevaluating this concerning issue. Rethinking the history of U.S. colleges and universities and how they admit, engage, include, educate, and employ their community is not simply important; it is necessary for the future of the nation.

Relevant Factors from HESA Research

In this section, I review relevant factors from higher education research as it relates to inclusion in Campus Recreation. I will identify identity development and sustainability. These three core concepts will build the foundation of my intervention, as they each bear on my thematic concern.

Identity Development

In Chapter 1, I used identity development theories to support my personal experiences and how they relate to my thematic concern. This section expands on Erikson's Identity Development Theory and Chickering's Seven Vectors of Development. These theories support my thematic concern because they help to clarify areas of identity that may cloud judgement or hinder leadership. Understanding identity is important in terms of acknowledging folks who may feel isolated, including those who feel isolated in Campus Recreation spaces and programs.

Erikson's Identity Development Theory. Erikson's Identity Development Theory (1980) depicts each life stage as predetermined. The variety of experiences that folks face in each stage have the potential to affect their personality development positively or negatively. Erikson (1980) describes identity uncertainty as "Identity versus Identity Diffusion/Confusion." The transition from high school to college is difficult for many students because they are in search of

their own identity. The Identity Diffusion/Confusion stage explains why students may struggle with finding their purpose on and off campus. Patton et al. (2016) summarizes Stage 5 as individuals who are searching for a purpose. When they have a clouded view about their role in life, they often feel “confused or insecure about themselves and their relationships” (p. 289).

Incoming college students may feel insecure because there is a transition in importance of relationships. Some students may find themselves shifting their attention to a new group of friends, rather than continuing to build connections with old friends. For example, this shift may be noted by finding a role for themselves outside of the comfort of their “safe space.” Campus Recreation is space on campus that is noteworthy. It can be a place where students feel comfortable or isolated. Acknowledging that there is a connection between spaces on campus and a major stage in identity development can help professional staff assist students who may be struggling.

Chickering’s Developing Integrity Vector. Chickering’s Identity Vectors (1993) are relevant to my thematic concern because they provides insight about how people develop their personality. Different life crises, such as academic experiences, job opportunities, or personal values, determine the maturation process of any individual student. Understanding this process for students to learn how to manage their emotions is relevant to ensure inclusion in Campus Recreation. Programs and services that are offered in Recreation Centers can confuse students who are in fragile states of development. Policies that are outdated related to gender, sexual orientation or ability level can affect students who have the tendency to feel more vulnerable.

Evolving moral beliefs and values is a specific vector that Chickering (1993) notes in theorizing identity. It is important that professional staff in Campus Recreation understand how their programs and intentions can alter the feeling of inclusion for the entire population of

students. Upholding values of inclusion and dependability can show students that they are accepted in all leagues, games, or areas. The evolution of discovering personal values encompasses Chickering's Developing Integrity Vector (1993) because it places importance on humanizing values and personalizing congruence. Students along this vector are able to acknowledge their personal values and apply them to their behaviors.

According to Patton et al. (2016), identity development is a fluid experience, not linear. Chickering (1993) theorizes that there might be progress or setbacks that are characteristic of development. It is crucial that in these stages values are constantly reflecting oneself, those who surround the person, and then, according to Patton et al. (2016) consciously applied as, "self interest is balanced by a sense of social responsibility" (p. 299). Each stage requires inward reflection that can be difficult. A variety of experiences can challenge the progression of emotional and skill development.

Human Capital

Wilder (2013), explains about the concept of human capital within university settings can create a messiness that is often difficult to untangle. This idea of educating people just for economic purposes is taking away their individual sovereignty. The mere thought of educating them to build economic capital is dehumanizing. Reverting to a time where higher education was highly sought after showed that there was headway being made to better the people who live in society. Currently, the power that encourages and hires individuals who have pursued a postsecondary education come from a business minded realm. Brown (2015) articulated that, "the market value of knowledge...is now understood as both its driving purpose and leading line of defense" (p. 187). Brown explained that when understanding the intentions of public universities, society can no longer expect that they are interested in the "investment in human

talent, better human relationships, democracy and peace” (p. 187).

Campus Recreation has the potential to reproduce this notion. Recreation functions off of student engagement. If the students are feeling dehumanized by initiatives taken by the professional staff, it defeats the purpose. The purpose being to provide a safe and inclusive space on campus for students to occupy. The control of programming should be in the hands of students. They should feel as though their needs are being valued and reflected in what the department offers.

Sustainability

This section will provide insight into place-based and community learning. The intention of my intervention is for it to be sustainable and transferable to all communities. This thematic concern is focused on Campus Recreation, although there is a hope that knowledge and strategies will be able to be practiced outside of the target space.

Place-based education provides opportunities for students of all backgrounds to gain experience outside of the physical classroom (Lester, 2010). The classroom is a place where there is structure and supervision. Education is very limited to classroom-based experiences because standardized tests dictate whether or not students are learning. Unfortunately, this can be a limiting factor for the majority of students. Effective learning does not only include mathematics and history lessons. Effective learning can be done in a soup kitchen, in a park, or venturing outside of the four walls of the physical classroom (Freire, 1972). Oftentimes, there is much more to learn from real, lived experiences. Textbooks and lectures serve their purpose in certain circumstances, but why not utilize opportunities within the community to introduce concepts and current events? Sitting at desks and taking exams are only two ways to teach students about pertinent real-world information. In fact, limiting education to just relying on

testing, very likely disadvantages many students. Wandering astray from standardized curriculums could benefit not just the students that are experiencing it but could benefit society.

Educational institutions pride themselves on prestige and accolades. There are institutions where acceptance rates are very low due to the fact that they claim to offer the best education and have the best opportunities for those that attend. But there are a majority of prospective students who do not have an equitable chance at even being considered at one of these schools. Generally, the big difference between top ranked colleges and low ranked ones are the access to social connections. Students who graduate from an Ivy league school are not necessarily more prepared than those who graduate from a community college. So, then how can a college or university ensure they are graduating students who are most prepared for not just their profession, but for reality? This is where place-based education can be a huge factor in student preparedness.

A Push for Community. When addressing social injustices, appreciation for one another and openness to new ideas should be stressed. To understand the gravity of oppression, learners should be encouraged to use lenses that include empathy and compassion. Place-based community engagement can be a useful tool. Connecting with the communities that surround college campuses can provide support for the town and lived experiences for the students. Lester (2010) explained,

Moreover, higher eds are place-based institutions themselves. They have a special responsibility for community problem-solving given their mission, location, resources, prestige, power and influence. By actively engaging in real world problem-solving, place-based, community-focused education with their local communities, higher education institutions can effectively utilize their vast resources—particularly their human resources of students, faculty, and staff—and significantly contribute to improving the

quality of life in America's communities. (p. 3)

Lester explained that if colleges and universities better structured how their students spend their time out in society, there could be significant changes that could be made to policies and surrounding communities with the help of these students. They are eager and willing to do everything they can to be better members of the community. They take pride in their school and so, if their learning experiences could include more community service, they can be better contributors to the common good. When they are contributing to the common good, they are becoming more active citizens, rather than simply cogs in the well-oiled machine of capitalism.

Expanding and supplementing classroom-based education with place-based education is necessary to fulfill these goals. Generally, higher education institutions encourage or require students to hold an internship position, engage in community service, and participate in co-curricular clubs and organizations. Events, programs and organizations can all fall under the co-curriculum. There can be justification that all of these experiences can help further progress the student's learning experience outside of the classroom. Diversity and inclusion training can be included in the co-curricular transcript because they facilitate important conversations. These dialogues help to engage students in a diverse society, collaborating with others, as well as addressing societal needs. Typically, Campus Recreation departments are the largest student employer on campus. The department is responsible for teaching students how to be reliable, approachable, and organized. Since there are many departments within Campus Recreation, there are varieties of people from different backgrounds. In addition to ensuring that the students are balancing their schoolwork and their job, the department as a whole has a duty to set a good example of how to be a person who holds the values of empathy and inclusion towards others.

A major concern for diversity and inclusion seminars are their sustainability. In order for

this intervention to succeed, attention to effective strategies is important. Since faculty members are the focus of the intervention, I can consider utilizing programs and spaces that support learning outside of the Recreation Center. Sustainability will come with the transfer of knowledge from inside the hypothetical classroom to outside spaces.

Current State of the Concern

The state of my concern will address current events that have played a role in the importance of inclusion. I talk about why institutions have set goals to push for better diversity and inclusion strategies. I reference the National Intramural and Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA) and steps that they are taking to foster more inclusive Campus Recreation facilities around the country.

When students are not in classrooms learning about their chosen major, they are immersed with community and campus experiences. Jobs, clubs, and organizations on campus provide the opportunity for students to branch out and make connections with others. Modern day higher education professionals understand the value of learning outcomes. Even co-curricular experiences, or experiences outside of the classroom, often establish guidelines and set forth expectations of their members that align with their mission statement or purpose. Co-curricular experiences ensure that students are gaining knowledge through engagement and involvement.

Recent civil unrest in the United States has ignited movements that set intentional goals for institutions and organizations to work towards achieving. Fostering environments that encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion is at the forefront. Knowledge is acquired through more than classwork, interactions with other humans allows for opinions to be heard, respect to be given, and forming understanding for others. Providing opportunities to meet folks who

identify differently encourages personal development because it is an opportunity to learn about a variety of cultures, families, languages, economic statuses, privileges, and much more.

NIRSA is the governing body for recreation across the United States. As per their mission statement, they are dedicated to the health and wellbeing of those who participate in Campus Recreation activities. They host monthly roundtable discussions that include caucuses for underrepresented students and faculty. These caucuses offer a space for those who otherwise are not able to express themselves with folks from similar backgrounds. NIRSA also keeps its members updated on legislature that moves recreation closer to inclusivity.

In Campus Recreation departments, there are often struggles and barriers to create entirely inclusive spaces. Many different identities are fighting for attention from a department that is most geared towards privileged folks. Those who often feel most comfortable in gym facilities identify as white, male, and able-bodied. Campus Recreation has a long way to go to be at a place where all folks can walk into the doors and feel completely confident with their identity. To find the root of this issue, it is important to go to the top of the power structure. Most of the administration fits the general white, male, able-bodied mold. Restructuring hiring processes so that the recreation departments can reach other applicants could be a start. Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings into hiring and orientation practices would allow spaces for those who may not “fit the mold” to talk about their differences and begin to understand the value of others that come from different life stories. Implementing these trainings would help Campus Recreation departments in higher education institutions move toward a more inclusive environment. When creating and building ideas surrounding inclusivity, it is important to investigate how higher education actually got to this point of polarization and discriminatory practices.

Related Professional Experience

In this section, I outline my personal experiences as they relate to my thesis. I dissect different leadership styles that include effective, transformational and influential leadership. I relate all of these styles to contribute to student success. In this specific case, I link them to Campus Recreation and the best ways to implement new strategies to ensure student engagement.

Diversity and inclusion at Campus Recreation is integral to the mission of the department. The intervention that I have chosen helps the department engage their student staff with diversity and inclusion language and techniques. Campus Recreation at WCU is home to five different departments. Facilities, fitness, sport clubs, intramurals, and outdoor adventure pursuits that are compiled of many different students and faculty at WCU. There are multiple facets of each department, but they all aim to be inclusive and bring diverse people together to achieve development, learning, and physical activity. Given the high number of student staff at the Recreation Center, it is necessary to organize a staff orientation in the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Generally, these orientations consist of training staff in CPR/First Aid, building protocols, and employee on boarding. Currently, there are no training sessions about diversity and inclusion, even though the Student Recreation Center services the thousands of diverse students and staff on WCU's campus. My intervention would include dialogue that facilitates conversations that would help folks understand their privilege, intersectionality, what it means to be anti-racist, and any internal biases that ordinarily are not spoken about.

To increase diversity amongst the Recreation staff, it would be important to build a group of student leaders to conduct outreach to students for equal opportunity to work. They would collaborate with departments across campus and research the best practices to hire, and more

importantly retain, diverse students. Implementing a committee that supports all students, no matter their race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (this, of course is not an exhaustive list), will help to gather a well-rounded staff. The diversity and inclusion training would include a brief education about the history of racism and discrimination in America. It would include sessions about how to be an effective leader and how those skills are transferable into society. Exposing students to education regarding inclusive dialogue would give them opportunities to ask questions and become comfortable with using language that most likely is new to them. With diversity and inclusion training and a diversity committee, there would be an opportunity to foster a well-rounded, inclusive environment at Campus Recreation.

Effective Versus Transformational Leadership

Defining different leadership styles is important to figure out how to best approach any audience or group of people. Student affairs professionals should be aware of effective leadership and transformational leadership. Depending on beliefs, goals, or current events, there can be different characteristics of what it means to be an effective leader. Because of the many different dimensions leadership had, conceptualizing the idea can be complicated. According to Northouse (2019), leadership defined is, “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 5). The process of leadership is understood as achieving a common goal. How to reach that goal varies based on different leadership practices. Describing leadership can vary, depending on the leader’s traits. It is necessary to understand the group of people who are expecting to be led and what their needs are because there are many ways to be a leader and there are multiple leadership styles that work effectively for some, but not for others.

Two leadership styles include effective and transformational. The characteristics of both

of these styles relate and differ. Effective leaders possess traits that help increase productivity by influencing their followers in a way that motivates them to work to achieve the group's common goal. If the leadership is effective, the group may continually be motivated to work constructively. Effective leadership can take characteristics from a variety of other leadership styles, depending on the audience. Transformational and effective leadership are both styles that can be successful if the person who is responsible for leading the group is able to learn about their followers and influence them and guide them to success. The difference lies in the constructs of each style or the specific traits that each style possesses. These two leadership approaches can be used together to achieve the best possible outcome for the group.

Influential Leadership

There is no right answer to which leadership style is best. Different situations call for an array of leadership characteristics. There can be multiple styles incorporated together to achieve effective leadership. Personally, using transformational leadership tactics are the most effective because I believe that leadership does not stop when the task is completed. When a group is led in a certain type of way, those experiences resonate with the individual or the group. Whether or not there was adequate guidance and motivation, determines productivity in the future. In my experience, when the leader continues to give purpose to the group and continues to enable them to act, there is a better likelihood that the followers will adopt the same influences.

Leadership that Fosters Student Success

In order to create a transformational experience for students, there are important elements of leadership to understand. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development outlines seven components of leadership that encourage success in students' intrapersonal, academic, and social development. According to Astin et al (1996), the Social Change Model is based on

interactions between the person's group values, individual values, and their society and community. These values can be broken down into seven components that include consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy, and citizenship. In congruence with my intervention and the Social Change Model, all seven components are necessary to develop and establish a repertoire of diversity and inclusion language and techniques in students. To complete the model, an equal relationship between the three values should be achieved.

Social change begins with education. The classroom is an opportunity to teach students about social justice issues in an effective manner. According to Nash (2010), finding the line between "engaging and enraging" can determine how willing folks are to consider their advocacy towards an issue. Educators who create open and safe spaces that encourage uncomfortable conversations often are able to transform common policies and practices. When leaders have this approach with advocacy, they can emphasize how the students' personal values relate to social justice. Astin et al (1996) explains,

The notions of leader as change agent and of leadership as collective action to effect social change suggest that a conscious focus on values should be at the core of any leadership development effort. We believe that any new program in leadership development should focus not only on the value implications of any proposed social change, but also on the personal values of the leaders themselves. (p. 16)

When folks are able to relate their personal values to the values of the community and the group, they have a moral obligation to fulfil the needs of others, in addition to their own. When striving for social justice, students should be equipped with passion and motivation to achieve equity for folks other than themselves.

Chapter 4: Program Design

In this chapter, I provide a broad overview of my programmatic intervention as a potential solution to my thematic concern. I then expand on the theoretical frameworks that provide the foundation for my program. They will be reflected in many aspects of the planning and implementation. The next section presents a detailed proposal of my intervention. I outline the two day workshop and break it down into sessions and activities. I also expand on the resources and expectations that will supplement my workshop. In the final section, I identify two ACPA/NASPA competencies as they relate to my thematic concern and its intervention and detail their application and development.

Overview

My thematic concern focuses on reforming Campus Recreation's inclusion strategies. My programmatic intervention addresses this thesis by providing a two day workshop for staff members. Over the course of the workshop, professional staff will have the opportunity to learn about inclusion strategies, address areas where their department may lack belonging for some students, and acknowledge their own personal biases. This will allow staff members to occupy a safe space where they can understand how oppressive systems affect Campus Recreation.

The program's goal is to address systemic oppression in Campus Recreation as it pertains to power structures. I will select activities that encourage thought and space for participants to engage with their colleagues. It will allow them room to learn how to provide an equal opportunity environment for their coworkers and students.

Purpose

In this section, I will specifically address my intervention's goals and learning outcomes. The table below includes goals and their respective objectives, content highlights, and learning

outcomes.

Table 1

Goals and Learning Outcomes

Intervention Goal	Address systemic oppression in Campus Recreation as it pertains to power structures
Objective	Educate staff members and graduate assistants about privilege and how it intersects with their leadership styles
Learning Outcome 1	Participants will be able to identify at least 2 ways that privilege benefits students in Campus Recreation as a result of attending this workshop
Learning Outcome 2	Identify 2 real-life examples of how Campus Recreation reproduces dominant ideologies
Learning Outcome 3	Create and implement a survey that assesses students' sense of belonging in Campus Recreation

Theory to Praxis

In this section, I will apply the theories and frameworks that I discussed in Chapter 3. I will integrate Erikson's (1980) Identity Development Theory and Chickering's (1993) Seven Vectors of Development to support the component of my intervention that helps participants understand identity and how it plays a role in leadership. Both of these theories are used because of how they relate experiences to identity progression. Since my intervention focuses on staff and graduate assistants, both identity theories are included to help the participants better understand and relate to their students. It encourages a higher level of emotional investment to

build better relationships.

Erikson's Identity Development Theory

Identity development theories work to clarify stages in life where individuals experience life as it relates to their identity. I use the foundation of Erikson's (1980) Identity Development Model because in order to create a community with many different types of people, professional staff should understand the personalities that they are serving. Undergraduate students are generally in Stage 5 of Erikson's model. This means that they are searching for a purpose. My workshop aims to teach professional staff how to be more mindful of others' developmental stage and how they can be more inclusive. I intend to use similar considerations when the professional staff and graduate assistants are participating, such as the "I Am From" activity. This piece allows the participants the space to get to know who they are working with, in hopes that they can be more intentional with their students.

Being considerate of the needs of others starts with practice. Day One of my workshop gives the group time to adjust to a new way of accounting for identity. Erikson allows staff to assume that most college students are in a stage in their life where they need more intentional programming to support their growth.

Chickering's Seven Vectors of Development

Chickering's (1993) Seven Vectors of Development provides similar foundational ideas. Chickering (1993) explains that people pass through seven stages of identity development. Each stage is characterized by deeper, meaningful crises. Crises include emotional attachments to relationships and developing values. My workshop attendees will include graduate assistants who are highly likely to still be progressing through these experiences. I will mostly focus on values in my workshop. Graduate assistants and professional staff alike can relate to specific

periods of their lives where their values became integrated into their behaviors. Especially in this situation, each team member is working towards the common goal of inclusion. My workshop will place inclusive values at the forefront. Chickering's (1993) seventh vector emphasizes integrity. My workshop highlights the significance of tightly interweaving inclusivity with actions, such as transforming Campus Recreation into an environment where every person feels a sense of belonging.

Program Proposal

This section will detail each working part of my intervention as it relates to my thematic concern. Below, I will include tables that include the program agenda and all material items that are necessary to the implementation of the workshop.

Table 2

Pre-Materials

Supplies	Space Requirements	Food/Drinks
20 Pens	15 Folding chairs	Aramark bagged lunches (2 days)
10 Padlets	1 table (food/drinks)	Water
1 Large Presentation Notepad	Projector	Coffee/tea
1 Easel	Projector screen	Coffee stirrers
	Laptop	Cream/sugar
		Napkins/cups
2 facilitators		

The pre-materials are adjusted for 15 professional staff, including one graduate assistant, and 2 facilitators. This program will need one, open space for professional staff to dialogue. There will be a small group that will need to be accommodated; therefore, I will request a space

that is comfortable for 15 professional staff and 3 facilitators.

Program Agenda

In this workshop, I will break down learning activities to cover the span of two days. For the majority of the time, the professional staff and the graduate assistants will be together during this workshop. There will be two sessions where they will split up due to differences in leadership responsibilities. Day One will cover content that will help participants achieve the first and second learning outcomes, as outlined in Table 1. Participants will be able to identify privilege and explain how Campus Recreation reproduces dominant ideologies as outlined in learning outcomes 1 and 2.

Day Two will focus on the second and third learning outcomes. Learning outcome 3 defines the participant's ability to create and implement a sense of belonging survey to distribute to patrons at Campus Recreation. I designed the workshops to include icebreakers and goal setting to begin each day in order to set personal boundaries and orient the learning to focus on community. Both days include a morning and afternoon session with a lunch break in between.

Table 3

Workshop Agenda, Day One

Activity	Time (minutes)
Welcome, Land Acknowledgment, Introductions, Guidelines, Goals	10-15
Session 1: I Am From Activity (Whole Group) <i>This activity involves written responses to prompts that encourage participants to share where they are from, good and bad memories that integrate their senses.</i>	45
Break	15

Session 2: Emotional Intelligence, Diversity Model/Identity, Implicit Bias (Whole Group) <i>This session educates participants about how they can become more competent in their own emotional intelligence. It reviews concepts such as empathy, self-regulation, and self-awareness. Recognizing personal implicit biases is also covered.</i>	90
Lunch	60
Session 3: Bias & Leadership (Graduate Assistants) <i>This session will intentionally address how graduate assistants can be better prepared for leadership roles.</i>	90
Session 3: Bias & Leadership (Faculty) <i>This session will intentionally address bias and how it can affect staff members' leadership styles in different situations.</i>	-
Session 4: Reflection/Focus Group, Decolonization Take Home Assignment, Closing <i>The decolonization take home assignment will include questions about the department's mission and vision statements. It will also prompt the participant to design a theoretical 5-10 year strategic plan that focuses on inclusion and reducing reproduction of oppressive power systems.</i>	30

Table 4***Workshop Agenda, Day Two***

Activity	Time (minutes)
Welcome, Warm Up Activity, Goals	15
Session1: Recap Day 1, Review Take Home Assignment (Whole Group) <i>Discuss the take home handout. Share responses and gather ideas from other participants. It is important to take into account responses from both staff and graduate assistants, as the different perspective is crucial to inclusion.</i>	45
Session 2: AAAED Training (Whole Group) <i>Title IV training. Additional online training required.</i>	60
Lunch	60

Session 3: Sense of Belonging Survey (Graduate Assistants) <i>Discuss sense of belonging surveys and how to create, implement, and analyze them. Brainstorm ways to most effectively reach students and gather responses.</i>	90
Session 3: Sense of Belonging Survey (Faculty) <i>Discuss sense of belonging surveys and how to create, implement, and analyze them. Use surveys from past years to analyze and brainstorm ways to address concerns.</i>	-
Workshop Reflection/Focus Group, Closing	30

Potential Challenges

Implementing a new program in a department that is fairly structured, I expect to have some push back from professional staff. Learning how to be intentional with inclusion strategies is important for the sustainability of the department. Professional staff will have to retroactively learn about their personal biases and about oppression that affects their coworkers and student staff. Given that Campus Recreation is generally a male dominated department, I anticipate some challenges in effectiveness of this workshop. Toxic masculinity might overpower the ability for some staff to acknowledge where they may have taken up too much space in the midst of others. The effectiveness of this workshop relies on active and genuine participation.

Another challenge I foresee is the longevity of this program. To dismantle systems of oppression and discrimination, the change needs to be powerful and constant. Creating an inclusive environment will not be birthed with simply one, two, nor three years. This workshop is only the starting point. Implementation of inclusive strategies should be repetitive and effective. Faculty members will need to continuously conduct outreach to their peers and students to ensure that their sense of belonging to the Campus Recreation community is carefully considered. I am less concerned about distribution of sense of belonging surveys and more

concerned that the responses will be forgotten in a file. In order to alleviate these challenges, I must integrate the explicit intent of inclusion into the mission statement of the department. In hiring new staff, a heavy emphasis will be placed on the commitment to inclusion.

ACPA/NASPA Competencies

In this section, I will discuss two ACPA/NASPA competencies as they relate to my thesis. I identify the importance of knowledge about diversity and inclusion and the ability for professionals to advocate for students.

As student affairs professionals attempt to navigate leadership, the ACPA/NASPA leadership competencies provide support. My thesis relies heavily on leadership and transforming the workplace for staff to benefit students. It is important to have knowledge and practice with foundational and intermediate leadership skills to teach student staff about diversity and inclusion. Acknowledging the students' backgrounds, privilege, and age can affect their willingness to accept new information. Personally, these competencies influence my leadership style in many ways. They serve as guidelines for what is important to educators and to their students. They provide an opportunity to grow and evolve, rather than simply finding a leadership style and becoming rigid in its beliefs. The two most important competencies to my thesis and to my intervention relate to sparking change in folks and encouraging them to take action in their communities.

At the Student Recreation Center, the department as a whole is formed of five subdivisions that are both diverse and similar. They each strive to create inclusive spaces and encourage physical activity with different experiences. Campus Recreation is employed by mostly student staff, who are both undergraduates and graduate students coming from all different areas and majors. Attempting to unite these students on just the basis of recreation is

not sufficient. In order for the department to run its best, there needs to be leadership that encourages the staff to not just follow and understand the value of diversity and inclusion, but to actually believe in it. The leadership should exhibit confidence in the students and themselves to be able to use their diversity education and transform their community beyond their workplace. In relation to my intervention, this competency should constantly be evolving to adapt to current times. In my intervention the student staff is the target population, but it is also important to hone in on the professional staff. An intermediate competency that is important is remembering that the professional staff should understand their influence when it comes to advocating for their students to guarantee their success. The professional staff should be able to understand when students deserve an experience that not only will help their workplace development, but their personal and professional development, as well. Implementing a diversity and inclusion training is an example of an expectation that students should have from their supervisors. When students are not fully educated about how to create an inclusive environment, it is a barrier to their success that professionals should advocate for.

Chapter 5: Implementation & Evaluation

Chapter 5 will outline the implementation plan for my program. I will include the timeline, marketing strategies, and how I plan to receive funding. The next section will discuss my approach on assessment and program evaluation. Finally, I conclude this thematic concern with foreseeable limitations of my intervention.

Implementation

This section details specific implementation plans. I include the timeline of events for my proposed two-day workshop before I address funding. I outline my budget for my program including personnel, operating expenses, and giveaways. Next, I discuss marketing and recruiting strategies. Finally, I use theories and models of leadership that I would adopt to inform my strategies to adopt my intervention.

Timeline

From start to finish, I anticipate twelve months of planning from the workshop. This time period will allow for organizers to hire graduate assistants and facilitators, collaborate with other departments and organizations outside of Campus Recreation, and gather the necessary funds needed to support this program.

Upon approval of this program, a three-month planning period is ideal. This would include a one-month period to create and distribute invitations to necessary participants, one month to gather the required materials, and finally, one month to finalize the workshop agenda (see Appendix A).

Funding

For my intervention to be implemented and gain traction, I expect to search for ways to fund my program. Since this is a department-based workshop, I will allocate funding for this

specific training. The costs of food and facilitators will be covered by Campus Recreation. The graduate assistantship will need to be approved and supported by the university. Upon approval, the senior leader of Campus Recreation will budget for the assistantship. In the case of lack of resources, the graduate assistantship can be a progressive position that starts at a 3 credit/5-hour contract. Once funds have accrued over the fiscal year, or upon financial recovery, the position will become a full 9 credit/20-hour contract.

Finding funds can be challenging, so I will collaborate with other departments to offset some costs. Since the Recreation Center is available to all students, I will email other departments and organizations to ask for their support in paying for incentives and facilitator costs (see Appendix A). Commuter services, athletics, residence life, and student leadership and involvement are just a few departments that I would solicit for funds and support. I would also ask dining services to donate meal passes to students who fill out the sense of belonging survey.

Table 5

Budget

Personnel	Cost
Graduate Assistant of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion <i>The graduate assistant will be responsible for heading the chair of the committee that focuses on implementing strategies to be an inclusive space for all students, staff.</i>	\$20,000
Leadership Coaching/Development Facilitator <i>This facilitator will conduct Day One of the two day workshop. This is inclusive of all expenses.</i>	\$2,500
AAAED Facilitator <i>This facilitator would conduct a session in Day Two of this workshop. This is inclusive of all expenses.</i>	\$2,500
Operating Expenses	
Meals <i>15 participants at \$25/person to get lunches catered for two days.</i>	\$750
Refreshments <i>This includes coffee, tea, cups, stirrers, napkins, plates, water and light snacks for two days. 15 participants at approximately \$7/person for two days.</i>	\$210

Giveaways	
Pens	\$6
Padlets	\$175
\$23,391	

Marketing & Recruiting

In order to construct an effective program, I suggest that this opportunity be mandatory to all Campus Recreation professional staff and graduate assistants. Intentionally targeting this population encourages staff to engage with students and be sensitive to their department's climate. Integrating this workshop into the beginning of the academic year, gives each participant the opportunity to build trusting relationships with their colleagues in the hopes that their yearly programming will reflect the workshop's learning outcomes.

I recommend that the Senior Director of Campus Recreation, or university equivalent, establish the intent of becoming a more inclusive department through this workshop. At the end of the spring semester, an email (see Appendix C) will be sent out to all professional staff and incoming graduate assistants. It will be marketed as an opportunity for personal and professional development that includes transferable skills, such as listening, adaptability, assessment, and leadership.

Adopting My Intervention: Leadership Theories and Models

This section addresses some of the challenges that student affairs staff face when integrating social justice into their programming. I explain different leadership strategies that support the success and adoption of my intervention.

Nash (2010) explains some of the challenges that educators face when talking about social justice in the classroom. Zealotry, or using an uncompromising approach to preach ideals,

is not the most appropriate approach to use when students are first being exposed to advocacy. Utilizing techniques that foster inclusive spaces to all groups of students is more relatable and helpful. In Campus Recreation, there are barriers to effective and transformative leadership. Oftentimes, diversity and inclusion is just assumed to exist in recreation without any actual engagement with the concept. It is important to note that Campus Recreation and Athletics professionals wear two hats. They work for student athletes, as well as for student affairs. This might cause a disconnect between their sport-oriented and student affairs responsibilities. Recognizing discrimination in spaces that are not inclusive may be overlooked. Harrison (2011), notes that leadership does not need to be hierarchical. Lowney (2003) emphasizes that no matter where the person sits in their institution's hierarchy, they have an opportunity to create change. Throughout student affairs, there exist hierarchical power structures. Campus Recreation can operate in a similar fashion. There are potential hierarchical expectations that are reproduced that student staff may find challenging to navigate their personal role, while also fighting for social justice.

Leading students in Campus Recreation is complicated. There are many different levels of leaders because the majority of the employees are students. The power structure is effective for students because usually, they are led by their peers. This relationship can be beneficial in some cases. With a relationship already established, less experienced staff members have more in common socially with the older staff members who are their supervisors. Using a transformational leadership style in this case is helpful because there is room for growth. Student supervisors can learn how to create an inclusive work environment and advocate to make Campus Recreation an area where all folks are welcome no matter their race, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background. On the contrary, the new staff members will

see the example that their supervisors set and understand the importance of inclusion at their workplace. Forming these habits and gaining knowledge on how to foster inclusivity is transferred to careers and everyday life experiences.

Through effective and transformative leadership, there is an opportunity to mold young students into leaders that will change society. For too many years, the importance of diversity and inclusion education in higher education settings has been left behind. Just recently has there been a shift in priority which has placed diversity trainings near the top of the list. Teaching young leaders how to influence a group or educate the ignorant may be the first step in eradicating social injustices. An equitable future lies in the hands of the students of today. It is now student affairs professionals' jobs to pass down leadership techniques and inclusive language to arm the rising graduates for the difficult battles. Effective leadership has the power to transform the world into an equitable and inclusive society. Utilizing leadership in Campus Recreation can inspire a shared vision, in this case, fostering inclusive spaces. With adequate leadership, students should follow the example that the staff sets.

Assessment & Evaluation of the Program

Assessment and evaluation of my intervention is explained in this section. I address the role that each contributes to successful program development, how I plan on evaluating how impactful my intervention was, and how successful it was in achieving its goals. I supplement the assessment and evaluation section with reflection questions following the workshop, a sense of belonging survey, and a sample meeting agenda.

Roles of Assessment & Evaluation

The purpose of using assessment is to evaluate the success of my intervention. In Chapter 2, I discussed the value of Critical Action Research. In order to develop a program that is going

to benefit the welfare of the target population, I need to integrate feedback of the participants. Pinpointing successes and flaws in the intervention help the program coordinator develop the program to better fit the needs of the community.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop I will administer a questionnaire that includes questions about the facilitators, foreseeable challenges, and how they will employ what they learned (see Appendix D). The professional staff and graduate assistants will jot down a few of their personal and professional short- and long-term goals. Further evaluation of the effectiveness of the workshop will include collection of a semesterly sense of belonging survey that will be administered to student staff and patrons (see Appendix E) (Loyola University of Maryland, 2019). Gathering sense of belonging surveys from students will involve creation, administration, and evaluation of responses. In order to collect as many responses as possible, the graduate assistant will set up a station with giveaways to incentivize students. They will have iPads to prompt students to fill out the survey. After they show their submission they will receive a meal pass from the dining hall. The Graduate Assistant for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will head the committee that includes each graduate assistant, or campus equivalent, from Campus Recreation.

In this specific case, I plan to integrate monthly staff meetings into the assessment portion (see Appendix F). This way the staff are not expected to attend extra meetings outside of their usual job responsibilities. The meetings will begin with check ins from each professional staff discussing their department's actions to achieve goals related to inclusivity. This kickoff will provide each staff member space to share their achievements and setbacks. It will also be an opportunity for the staff to offer suggestions or support. Building a community of support within the staff encourages a team dynamic that works together to achieve common goals. It sets an

example for the graduate assistants that they are also valued members of the staff. It also provides experience in program implementation, evaluation and assessment, working with a team, and responsibility to uphold the institution's goals to best serve their community. Each part of the evaluation will be able to be completed in a short amount of time, within the hours of the workday.

Evaluating Successes of the Intervention

Assessing the effectiveness of the intervention will involve compiling qualitative feedback from participants and data results from the sense of belonging surveys. I acknowledge that development may be slower due to evaluation methods. Assessment of the data will be done twice per year. Once after the completion of the fall semester and another after the spring semester. I anticipate a learning curve for the staff in the creation and execution process of new programs and policies.

Even though this intervention is targeting professional staff and graduate assistants, the overarching goal is to adjust the student experience. I understand that the data collected from assessment cannot be assumed that it is the direct result from my intervention.

Limitations & Looking Ahead

This final section addresses issues and populations of constituents that I may not be effectively reaching with my intervention. I close with how I intend to broaden the scope of my intervention and the impact of COVID-19.

My intervention is catered towards professional staff and graduate assistants. I believe that staff members are the foundation of creating an inclusive environment. My workshop would be difficult to broaden to include all students due to excessive numbers. The intention of this workshop is to utilize small group settings to build strong, trusting relationships. It would take a

great deal of time and money to provide access to this workshop for all students. As a tradeoff, I could offer this opportunity to Campus Recreation student supervisor staff or campus equivalent.

With my intervention, I believe that I am able to utilize this model across other departments. Campus Recreation is the focus of my work due to the struggles with inclusion, but other areas would benefit. The foundation of my intervention is understanding identity, building a strong team, and employing it to achieve a common mission or goal. As I continue my job search, I intend to broaden the scope of my intervention by sharing resources and knowledge with other areas on campus.

Conclusion

The impact that COVID-19 has had on the entire world has affected countless institutions and personal lives. In a way, it brought to light the U.S.'s troubled history of racism and divide. I acknowledge that this global pandemic will have a lasting impact on the economy, healthcare organizations, education systems, and more. Recreation, over the past year, has been limited due to restrictions and health safety concerns. The services that Campus Recreation provides are healing to students. With so many benefits, it is crucial to continue to foster inclusive and safer spaces for those who seek therapy from physical activity. My thematic concern and intervention addresses one small remedy to a greater problem.

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Appendix A

Implementation Timeline

- August – November
 - Prepare workshop agenda
 - Reach out to facilitators to begin scheduling
- December – February
 - Market open graduate assistantships/professional staff openings
 - Finalize dates with facilitators
- March – May
 - Finalize hiring processes and orient new employees to the goals, mission, and expectations of the department and their job duties
 - Send out staff invitations via email
- June – July
 - Gather supplies and contact food vendor
 - Compile resources and handouts
 - Construct workshop evaluation
- August
 - Host workshop
 - Begin looking at upcoming year
 - Create sense of belonging survey

Appendix B

Sponsorship Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

I am reaching out to you because Campus Recreation is hosting our professional staff inclusion workshop.

Our goal is to make Campus Recreation a more inclusive and safe space for our students. Through our two-day workshop we welcome professional facilitators to help staff members become the most effective leader they can. This education is all in the hopes that we can transform Campus Recreation into a department that welcomes all students, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation and ability.

So why contact you?

We are constructing an advisory board to assist us in making this the best experience possible. We believe that you can offer insight that would be beneficial to the success of this program.

If you are interested, we would love to have further discussion about our intentions and your role in this sponsorship.

Thank you for your time and let me know if you have any questions.

Senior Director of Campus Recreation

Appendix C

Staff Invitation

Good Morning Staff,

This email serves as a save the date for our inclusion workshop that will occur the Thursday and Friday before students return in August. Please block off these two days to participate in a two-day workshop from 9:00AM to 4:00PM. Graduate assistants, you are also required to attend.

Campus Recreation will be taking important measures to become more inclusive to our student patrons and staff members. Our intention with this workshop is to offer training and insight from professionals in order to provide the best experience for our campus as we can. This education is transferable, and we hope that you utilize this experience in many different facets of your professional and personal lives.

Day One will consist of leadership and discussing biases, while Day Two will include information about inclusive hiring and constructing sense of belonging surveys.

Both days will include group and individual reflection. There are sessions where professional staff and graduate assistants will separate into breakout groups to discuss different responsibilities. Lunch and refreshments will be provided for both days.

Regards,

Senior Director of Campus Recreation

Appendix D

Workshop Evaluation

<i>Please rate your responses on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree, 5 being strongly agree and 3 being neutral.</i>					
This workshop helped improve my communication skills.	1	2	3	4	5
This workshop helped increase my self awareness.	1	2	3	4	5
This workshop helped me develop a greater appreciation for the perspectives of others.	1	2	3	4	5
This workshop helped me recognize my biases.	1	2	3	4	5
This workshop helped improve my critical thinking skills.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitators effectively managed the sessions.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Please answer the following short answer questions to the best of your ability.</i>					
What would have made it more comfortable for you to participate in the sessions?					
How could this workshop be improved?					
How do you intend to employ what you have learned from this workshop in a professional setting?					

Appendix E

Sense of Belonging Survey

Having a sense of **belonging** means feeling a part of and connected to a community. A sense of belonging is a human need, just like the need for food and shelter. Feeling that you belong is most important in seeing value in life and in coping with painful emotions. Some find belonging with friends, with family, with an athletic team, campus club or organization, in a religious community, or even on social media. Our goal is to have everyone at [redacted] experience a sense of belonging as a part of this community.

This questionnaire is designed to help us understand some of the possible ways that the Department of Recreation and Wellness has impacted your sense of belonging at [redacted] so that it can be improved for the future.

Department of Recreation and Wellness Student Sense of Belonging Survey

1. In what role(s) do you interact with the Department of Recreation and Wellness?

*Please select all that apply

- Basecamp
- Building Supervisor
- Club Sports
- GroupX Instructor
- Intramural Sports Referee
- Intramural Sports Supervisor
- Lifeguard
- Member Services/Welcome Desk
- Operations Assistant
- Outdoor Adventure Experience
- Personal Trainer
- Rockwall Attendant
- Other (please indicate)

2. Overall, I feel a sense of belonging at [redacted] University

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. Overall, I feel a sense of belonging working in the Department of Recreation and Wellness.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. As a result of my role with the Department of Recreation and Wellness...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I feel more "at ease" or more connected on campus (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I developed relationships on campus or will find it easier to do so (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe there are supportive resources available to me on campus (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that my cultural identities/customs are accepted/welcome on campus (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can really be myself on campus (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that a staff member at the university cares about me (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. What, if anything, about the Department of Recreation and Wellness helped you to feel more connected/a deeper sense of belonging at _____?
6. What about the Department of Recreation and Wellness could be improved to help develop a sense of belonging/connection?
7. What type of programs or services could _____ provide to help increase your sense of belonging here?
8. What else would you like us to know about your experience of belonging to _____?

Thank you for your participation in this survey. If it would be helpful for someone from _____ to contact you about ways to get more involved, please enter your email address below.

The Department of Recreation and Wellness encourages the whole person to be active, healthy and inspired.

Appendix F

Sample Meeting Agenda

Campus Recreation Professional Staff Meeting

1. Program Updates/Check Ins (professional staff and graduate assistants)
 - a. Facilities
 - b. Fitness
 - c. Sport Clubs
 - d. Intramural Sports
 - e. Outdoor Adventure Pursuits
2. Meeting Agenda
 - a. Conferences
 - b. In house events
 - c. Career Fair
 - d. Voting
3. Reservation systems
 - a. New hires
 - b. Student recruitment event
4. Closing Remarks
 - a. Setting goals/intentions for upcoming month