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Improving Campus Racial Climate: A Reimagining of Student Organizations

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the

Department of Educational Foundation & Policy Studies

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Science

Higher Education Policy & Student Affairs

By

Elissa J. Wingfield

May 2021

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this master's thesis to every student who isn't sure who they are and doesn't know what to do with their life. I see you.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my lovely friends in the HEPSA program – my HEPSA “gals” – Lezlie Blair, Jordan Burick, Abbie Demcher, Delaney Logan and Heather Mitchell, for supporting me, validating me, educating me, and comforting me at my worst. You all truly saved me throughout this process. And to Dr. Jackie Hodes and Dr. Orkideh Mohajeri- who helped so tremendously to make me a better writer and a better Student Affairs professional. Thank you all.

Abstract

This thesis addresses racial and/or cultural student-led organizations, cultural and racial identity development and its impact on campus racial climate. I look at the relationship of campus racial climate, and how it impacts undergraduate student participation, comfort and success both during and after graduation. I explore the research and data from studies conducted with minority students regarding their personal experiences and their own racial development. With this research I propose a reimagined relationship between student organizations, their partnerships, programming, and faculty. This issue is of importance to all members of society, regardless of their educational choices following high school. These individuals will still live, interact, and work with each other, making an empathetic and understanding relationship of the utmost importance.

Keywords: Campus racial climate; Cultural organizations; Racial identity development; Intersectionality; Microaggressions.

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Chapter 1

Campus racial climate is an underlying issue – a subtle but vital topic that has an impact on students, specifically African American and other minority students. As we attempt to understand any situation as it relates to the world, we must also attempt to understand our personal position in the matter as well. The conversation regarding cultural student organizations and their impact on campus racial climate begins by examining campus racial climate, the history of race in the United States, and the development of racial identity in higher education. In this chapter I will highlight and define key terms relating to my thematic concern, as well as their importance to higher education. I will also discuss my personal identity development through my undergraduate experience, a brief overview of my thematic concern and corresponding themes, and my motivation behind the importance for not only this intervention, but overall social change.

The literature on campus racial climate defines it as the overall racial environment of a college campus (Ceja et al., 2000). Race and racism, even at their insidious forms, affect the structures, processes, and discourses of the collegiate environment (2000). A positive campus racial climate can lead to important, positive academic outcomes for students of color. If the racial climate of an institution is negative or non-supportive, it is closely tied to poor academic performance and high dropout rates among African American students (Ceja et al., 2000). It is for this reason that I believe focusing on improving campus racial climate is so crucial.

An institution that has a poor campus racial climate can have lasting effects on not only the individual student but has the potential to affect the community at large. The lack of student attrition - not just for minority students but students from any background - results in cumulative negative effects on broader society: higher total incarceration rates, higher rates of

unemployment, lower academic preparation among future generations, lower levels of civic participation among U.S. citizens, and lower tax revenues (Museus et al., 2008). These side effects on society further validate the vitality of focusing on improving campus racial climate at an institution.

In this thesis, my concern is for all students of color and therefore I will share information on Latinx, Native, and African American students. However, the majority of my resources and literature will focus primarily on African American students. This focus is due to the substantial history this population has had with discrimination in the education system, as well as police brutality, and white supremacy.

African Americans and Higher Education

Since its conception, the United States has been seen through many lenses. Those living outside of the nation see moving here as a great opportunity for themselves and their family. For its inhabitants it is home, and for some it is also hell. Over the course of this nation's history, the United States has experienced massive amounts of change - wars, internal strife, and other significant events that succeeded in dividing the population. Slavery, Jim Crow, and the civil rights movement had a significant impact on the African American population in the early and mid-1900's. Increasing access for African Americans to higher education was seen as a major solution to the problem of racial inequality (Allen, 1988). In the ten years following the Civil Rights movement, there was a dramatic increase in the enrollment of African American students at predominately white institutions. However, this momentum did not last long. It is reflected in the dilution of higher education's commitment to African Americans and other minority student groups (Allen, 1988). However, it is vital to acknowledge and begin to understand the devastation African American people had to endure after they were set free, the systems that

were created with the intention to exclude them, and the remaining affects that have trickled down through the generations, regardless of current socioeconomic status or wealth.

There are three critical factors to consider when we discuss campus racial climate: racism, microaggressions, and sense of belonging. Below I will provide a brief definition of the each, before sharing why this issue resonates with my identity development.

Racism and Microaggressions

The significance and vitality of campus racial climate is due to its close relationship with racism and microaggressions, as well as how they affect students. There are several definitions of racism that are used to study and discuss microaggressions and campus racial climate. For the purpose of this examination of race and its effects on the community, I choose a definition of racism that is defined as a “system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians, and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms and color” (Ceja et al., 2000). While a student of color might not experience an act of racism towards them every day, they may frequently experience microaggressions at the hands of their peers or their professors. Microaggressions also determine the campus racial climate at an institution, at least in part. They are defined as an unconscious and subtle form of racism, and can be used to undermine a student's performance and achievements (Ceja et al., 2000). By reimaging the relationship between student organizations, I believe we can create an opportunity for measurable change in racism and microaggressions.

Sense of Belonging. This ideal is generally referred to as the feeling of connectedness, that one is important or matters to others (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). Belongingness is vital to the success of students; students who do not feel like they belong rarely stay in college (Strayhorn, 2018). Studies have shown that a students’ sense of belonging is greater if - and

when - they socialize with peers who come from backgrounds that differ from theirs (Maestas et al., 2007). This thematic concern and corresponding intervention are dedicated to the notion that by providing cultural organizations with the opportunity to collaborate, it will increase sense of belonging amongst themselves and their peers.

My Racial Identity

As a female student who identifies as African American, I understand that the process of nigrescence, or becoming black or developing a racial identity (Patton, 2016), does not always come easily. This intimacy of knowledge drives my passion behind my thematic concern. Cross' theory of Nigrescence (1991) contains a Racial Identity Attitude Scale – Black (or RIAS-B), which has been used to examine the relationship between black identity constructs and numerous variables, including academic achievement. College is a critical developmental period in which students are actively exploring their identities and trying to define themselves (Jourdan, 2006). Social identity as well is central to student development. For minority students, this development includes their racial identity – how they see themselves in the world, as well as their realization or acknowledgement of how the world sees them. Studies have shown that students who were more racially socialized – meaning they interacted with more than one race - tended to possess a deeper understanding of their racial identities (Anglin, 2003). This finding supports the importance of racially socializing African American youth during their identity development.

My own experience with race and racial identity is one that has taken many years to fully develop and make sense to even myself. My first thoughts of race and the idea of “blackness” start with my family. My immediate family covers a wide spectrum of shades that many African American families can relate to. My father is a deep chestnut, while my mother is much fairer skinned. For my entire childhood my mother dyed her long hair a fiery red, which further

accented her light skin and freckles. The shallow part of me took pleasure in the fact that my mom was black, but she didn't look black. Her side of the family was also a lighter shade than my father's and we spent most of our birthdays and holidays with them. From a young age I was presented with the idea that African American people could range in shades of brown. Growing up in the 1990's my first memories of trivial things such as media, fashion and music overwhelmingly preached the same message: the women were thin and being black was good if you were light skinned. My older sister, who is my only sibling out of the four of us who is light-skinned like my mother, used to hate going into the sun. She claimed this was due to her not "wanting to get darker". Hearing this as an adolescent only further perpetuated the idea of light being better.

My time in school began like many other children, by going to kindergarten. My family was the only black family in an all-white, private, Christian school. A few months into my first educational experience my parents moved our family to an area ten minutes away. My older brother was given permission to attend the predominately African American high school in our school district instead of the private school myself and my sister attended. As a result, my parents believed that he wasn't truly learning – a parent/teacher conference led them to believe the teachers were not taking the students education seriously.

My College Experience and Race

When I matriculated into college I left behind a diverse high school, one whose diversity I didn't truly understand or appreciate until I was removed from it. My institution tried – but not very hard – to be diverse. I moved into a residence hall where my floor was comprised of 60+ mostly first-year females, only four of whom were women of color. I became fast friends with one of these women, and in turn we befriended the white roommates who lived in between our

respective rooms. The four of us spent most of our time together, and it was rare that we weren't together. However, after the winter break our group narrowed down to a trio when my only black friend transferred.

During the first few weeks of the fall semester, I enrolled in a mentoring program sponsored by the multicultural center. I was paired with a graduating senior, another woman of color who was meant to give me guidance and be someone I could talk to. As I recall our conversations, there never was a time when she commented on the lack of diversity at the institution. I mention this not to say that I believe she should have – I'm sure she was more concerned with making sure I was doing well in my classes – but perhaps if she had it would have opened up the space for a larger conversation. I cannot begin to speculate if I would have been ready to have that conversation, and if it would have had a significant impact on my development or racial identity.

Preview of My Thesis

My thematic concern is fueled by the hope to create change not only at the higher education level, but to create the opportunity for students to safeguard the ideals of community, storytelling, and anti-racism beyond graduation day. The purpose behind student-led organizations is to teach students leadership and communication skills by meeting for a common purpose, such as a Black Student Union. Students take those experiences and put them towards their life after graduation or when they leave the institution. Student organizations have proved to be a resource for students, as well as an opportunity for leadership opportunities. The marketability of participation in student organizations and activities has created a larger conversation surrounding co-curricular transcripts; a way for students to show potential employers the ways they've invested in their education beyond the classroom. My intervention

fits in perfectly with this new initiative, as it focuses on collaboration and educational content created by professionals.

While the structure of my intervention is comprised of a collaboration program involving cultural or ethnic student organizations, there are also learning outcomes that come from additional programming. These programs speak to important topics such as equity and inclusion, sustainability, anti-racism and more. Students in these organizations will not be responsible for curating this content. However, they will be responsible for determining the public speaking professional who presents this content and when. Critical Action Research, or CAR, is known as a form of research done within the community of the researcher. While I project that the intervention will take approximately 18 months, and like many other CAR studies, it is an intervention that will be analyzed, tweaked, and will continue again. I will utilize Critical Race Theory as a lens to emphasize the centrality of race and racism in my intervention.

The evaluation and assessment component of this critical action intervention will take place before, during, and after the program, itself. The initial assessment will be to evaluate need for the intervention, based on the student's perception of campus, their experience with campus racial climate, racism, microaggressions, as well as intersectionality and sense of belonging. The assessment taking place during the intervention will be to evaluate each program offered by the student organizations participating in the intervention. The assessment will be offered at the end of the program, and will evaluate the learning outcome, student knowledge, overall enjoyment of the program, likeliness of recommendation to others, and demographic characteristics of the students.

Significance of My Thematic Concern

Minority students face constant challenges, albeit subtle or otherwise, that their white counterparts will never experience or be privy to. African American, Latinx, Native and Asian students who attend a predominately white institution, or PWI, often feel isolation and falsely believe that what they are going through is a singular incident that only applies to them. White students may not be unaware of the challenges their African American counterparts face, as well as the challenges of their Latinx counterparts, Asian counterparts, etc., that exist solely because of their race or culture. There is so much history behind all our individual actions and how we have come to be, and by sharing this history, I believe we can acknowledge pain and move forward, instead of staying stagnant.

There must be an outpouring of support for change from the significant university leaders therein. Much like how the world is changing, students are changing as well. Social media innovations have made it possible for people to connect in ways that our parents and certainly grandparents never could have imagined. Because of social media, young people can see the racial and social injustices taking place across the nation. Many are lending their voices to social justice causes, even if the causes don't affect them directly. This act of solidarity helps to strengthen the community; it acknowledges that the vicious actions disproportionately affecting minority and poor communities will not be tolerated moving forward. Student led demonstrations are examples that pinpoint the ways in which institutions have failed to support students (Arellano & Vue, 2019). Students need support from their institution – the faculty, staff and entire community – to stand united on the journey for the greater good.

While many schools claim to stand for diversity, by choosing not to stand with its students who stand for equal rights, they have effectively shown that this is not entirely true. The racial climate on a college campus is crucial to the support and development of minority

students. Student Affairs practitioners are devoted to the success of all students. This means they must pay explicit attention to campus racial climate, and not just once a year. This thesis proposes an intervention that help Student Affairs professionals move towards this goal in a concrete manner.

Chapter 2

In this chapter I will be discussing several theories that pertain to higher education, as well as Critical Race Theory and Sense of Belong, which pertain specifically to African American and other minority students at the higher education level. I will give a brief overview of what I believe to be the purpose of higher education, before discussing the key components for student success, which include equitable access to resources and support from faculty and staff. In addition, I will highlight what I believe is the role of Student Affairs professionals in these components, as well as the alignment of Critical Action Research in the matter of campus racial climate.

My Philosophy of Higher Education

It is my belief that the institution of higher education should be run by the philosophy to help all students become life-long learners. Included in this philosophy are the notions that students require the opportunity to create positive experiences in order to grow (Dewey, 1938) and that student involvement is a direct result of the physical and psychological energy the students invest in the college experience (Astin, 1999). I believe the higher education institution is a vessel through which students learn new information and pose questions about the world and their place in it.

John Dewey asserted that some experiences can be educative, while others can be mis-educative (Bassey, 2009). He defined education as growth and educative experience as continuity through renewal (2009). Dewey (1938) argued that positive experiences lead to growth, and growth means potentialities are being cultivated (Dewey, 1938). Dewey, a founding philosopher of the concept known as experiential learning, believed that curriculum should be relevant to students' lives (Miettinen, 2010). I believe it is vital for students to be educated

through the creation of positive experiences and overall growth. Dewey (1938) also theorized that students are affected in their learning by internal factors and by their environments (Dewey, 1938). This is a reflection and an acknowledgement of what students are processing mentally, as well as what they are processing physically (Bassey, 2009).

In addition to Dewey, I believe Astin's (1984) theory of involvement speaks to my thematic concern. Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that students devote to the academic experience. It is not what the individual thinks or feels, but what the person does and how they behave that make for a successful academic experience (Berger & Milem, 1997). This theory speaks to the persistence of wanting to be involved in student activities, which leads to overall student success and retention.

The Purpose of Higher Education

I believe the purpose of higher education should be to not only educate students but to provide them with an environment that promotes self-authorship (Baxter-Magolda, 2014). For this environment to be successful, it must operate on the assumption that knowledge is complex and socially constructed, meaning that every day understandings mediate our lives (Riley, 2010). College campuses are often comprised of different populations of students; I believe it is vital to the student experience for university faculty and staff to be welcoming and accommodating to these students and their different backgrounds. Our social relationships and how we perceive different phenomena are affected by our social constructs (Riley, 2010). It is important that student affairs professionals recognize this occurrence, and support students accordingly.

In addition to learning and self-authorship, I believe higher education is a place for students to immerse themselves in new experiences, whether in a classroom or out. These outside experiences – such as students clubs and organizations – can have a positive impact on student

development (Patton et al., 2016). I believe that providing students with the opportunity to become involved in co-curricular activities has the potential to expose them to new experiences and different people. By creating an environment that is welcoming and diverse, we foster the ideal that cross-cultural communication and partnership is a priority. This is important because creating interracial interactions exposes students to new perspectives and may improve their collegiate experience (Karouti, 2015). By implementing programming for African American and minority students, students are provided with critical knowledge to help them succeed.

The Role of Student Affairs Professionals

Higher education professionals have been tasked with many objectives. Students are entering a new phase of life where many changes are occurring, and institutions are looking for ways to improve or support these changes. Continuing to reevaluate and reimage the student-administrator relationship is vital to acknowledge social and environmental changes in the community and the world we live in.

For the purpose of this thematic concern – and above all else - it is vital that student affairs professionals aid in the growth of students' mental capabilities and mindset through learning. The role of student affairs professionals is essential to create opportunities for cross-racial engagement among the student body. For some higher education professionals, increasing diversity is the solution for improving student life and campus climate. Researchers argue that increasing diversity or creating more inclusivity does not necessarily result in equal student outcomes (Glenn et al., 2008). If there are no systems or programs in place to support students from varying backgrounds, then they are not being properly acclimated or set up to succeed.

Student involvement is high on the list of priorities for student affairs professionals, as it leads not only to student success but also retention. Studies have shown that African American

and minority students who are retained at an institution statistically learn the skills needed to manage the college-level courses, and therefore are more traditionally successful (Strayhorn, 2010). First Year Experience programs are aimed to improve student retention rates and persistence by increasing student involvement across campus, creating an inclusive social community, and supporting increased academic rigor during a student's first year (Chaffin et al., 2019). As the programs have evolved and adapted to fit their local campus environments, they have been found to increase thinking and student engagement – if done right.

Beliefs about College Students

I believe students require different resources based on their experiences and their needs. They also require assistance from others in order to seek and attain these resources. Minority students carry a unique experience with them to their higher education institution, and these experiences might be the kind of “culture” that universities consider to be different than what they have to offer (Strayhorn, 2010). Because of this, I believe students need a support system that will work to educate themselves, alter their tactics, and provide them with solid, relevant information. The support students receive from an institution could be the deciding factor in student retention. Campus racial climate is a significant factor that attributes to the low degree completion rates for racial minority students in comparison with their white counterparts (Museus et al., 2008), and as such it is vital to ensure that there are systems and people in place to improve their sense of belonging.

College students fall into varying categories. Some have entered an institution directly after high school, being what we would call *traditional* students. While others may be older, having chosen to enter the job market directly after high school, are finally financially able to afford such a large expense, and often have families to support. We call these students *adult*

learners, and they often require different resources and options for learning that would not be necessary for a traditional student. These needs range from childcare, to help creating a more flexible schedule that better suits their work schedule. And then there are international students, who have left their home countries behind to seek out other opportunities not available to them otherwise. Increased enrollment of these students – and others – requires student affairs professionals to continue to adapt and alter programming and other resources in order to reflect this change.

The Importance of Higher Education

It is my belief that institutions are tasked with educating students and preparing them for their next step in life. That is a huge amount of responsibility. It is during the collegiate experience that students are expected to absorb information to make them better – and to then share that information with others. New graduates have learned the newest information in their field, with the intention of using that information to make their mark and earn a living. College graduates bring a fresh perspective to the workforce, along with newly learned ideals and information. Creative industries thrive off the diversity of thought and the diversity of their workforce (Partington, 2019). The widening access to higher education is therefore essential to these industries, as this is primarily where their workforce comes from. It should be noted that this widening access does not necessarily mean the consequential learning and teaching would reflect this diversity (2019), however I believe it is crucial that staffing and curriculum reflect this diversification.

It is the responsibility of the institution to educate itself on what their students need beyond the classroom. This includes their assumptions regarding diversity, student organizations, and an institution's campus racial climate. Creating diverse learning environments requires

student affairs practitioners to consider their campus racial climate in every aspect of their work, because campus climate reflects the larger society (Karouti, 2015). These diverse learning environments are discovered through critical action research, which seeks to dissect and scrutinize social living and learning communities and ways to improve them.

Critical Action Research

There are many forms of research and ways to collect data. Critical Action Research, or CAR, is a form of self-reflective enquiry and observation undertaken by participants in social situations (Kemmis, 2008). The very name and definition of CAR speaks to the urgency of the subject matter, as well as the need for change or improvement. This research is immersive and requires the researcher to be self-reflective with the information provided to them. It is social, meaning the participants are a part of their community. With that comes a sense of responsibility to keep the information confidential, as sharing it could lead to a breach of contract and the research would be compromised. Researchers who choose to utilize the critical action approach do so because they are invested in the community and its members.

One of the founding fathers of the Frankfurt school of critical theory, Max Horkheimer, described critical theory as one that is deeply motivated by a deep concern to overcome social injustice and the establishment of more just conditions for all people (Kemmis, 2008). It is for this reason that critical action research has such a presence in this thematic concern, as well as the thematic concern of my peers. We seek to create social change, and this social change can only happen if we immerse ourselves in the community and critique it from within. CAR bears so much weight in higher education because it is the only form of research which seeks to dissect as well as reconstruct. Researchers seek to explore existing conditions to identify particular perspectives, social structures and practices, not only for the purpose of acknowledgement, but to

identify ways to change these negative attributes from happening again. Instead of highlighting the good, it highlights the bad. The purpose of this is to turn the bad into something better. These changes and transformations will occur not only in the individual, or self, but changing the circumstances of the surroundings of the self in order to prosper (Kemmis, 2008). Action research can be used as a pathway to understand how a researcher's unique identities are situated in the context they are investigating.

From critical action research there are four sub-categories of research (see Table 1). Participatory action research (PAR), black participatory action research (BPR), educational action research (EAR) and business action research (BAR). These four categories successfully acknowledge the different communities of people and the research conducted in each one. The lens used to look into each community are vastly different, and as such require their own type of research model, as well as publications and related practices.

A critical action study at Seaside College determined that white normativity created a deficit-based approach to student success, which in turn resulted in a decreased sense of belonging for students from racially minoritized communities. In this situation, white normativity manifested through deficit-based language, campus ecology and hiring practices (Johnson, 2020). The study grounded itself in theoretical frameworks such as critical race theory, cultural matching theory, and Harper's (2010) anti-deficit achievement to examine racism and power structures at the institution. Through the course of action research, critical areas relating to campus climate and the passive nature of learning were identified. Students found it difficult to approach teachers, citing intimidation as the main cause of this sense of discomfort. Studies conducted with African American students at PWI's have shown that these students experience microaggressions at the hands of their professors, as well as their classmates and peers. These

microaggressions have the potential to harm a student's mental wellbeing, draining their energy and causing racial battle fatigue (Morales, 2020).

Realistically, campus racial climate does not begin and end with the students. It also involves the professors and other professionals who help these students daily. It remains the responsibility of the university to hire and train employees who will understand, respect, and honor the vision of the university and the students whom it serves. It is also the responsibility of the faculty and staff to help guide students on a path of growth and understanding. This understanding comes from more than textbooks and exams. It comes from real life experiences with other individuals who broaden their horizons and help them to see past themselves.

Critical Action Research will be the frame upon which I build my programmatic intervention. Its attention to the experience and meaning-making of the community – in this case, college students – is a critical element which I take up and weave through my program plan. In addition, the cyclical nature of the process innately provides for evaluation and adjustment, and this will also be a key factor in my intervention.

Table 1

Four Traditions of Critical Action Research

<i>Tradition</i>	<i>Features</i>	<i>Practitioners & movements</i>	<i>Publications</i>	<i>Related practices</i>
Participatory action research (PAR)	Research with and by communities who do not have professional research training that emphasizes their participation in the whole process of research and action	Public Science Project (US), RefugeeYouth (UK), women living with HIV/AIDS (global), Zapatistas (Mexico), Highlander Center (US)	Horton 1998, Fals-Borda & Rahman 1991, Cammarota and Fine 2008 and many non-academic publications ('grey literature')	Critical PAR (CPAR), community-based participatory research (CBPR)
Black participatory research (BPR)	Puts control over the research process in the hands of people of colour	Civil rights movement (US), #BlackLivesMatter, Girijan Deepika (India), Food Sovereignty Alliance (India)	Drame & Irby 2016 describe pioneering work in US government/state schools. International School of Bottom-up Organising (Latin America)	Shares values of much PAR and feminist action research
Educational action research (EAR)	Education-related research carried out inclusively with the intention of achieving greater social justice	bell hooks (US), Stephen Kemmis (Australia), Susan Noffke (US), Melanie Nind (UK)	<i>Educational Action Research</i> (journal)	Patient involvement, participatory health research
Business action research (BAR)	Research and organizational learning that is undertaken within the capitalist economic system with the intention of improving ethical outcomes	Peter Reason (UK), Hilary Bradbury (US), Yoland Wadsworth (Australia)	<i>Action Research</i> (journal)	Management organizational development, feminist action research

Chapter 3

In this chapter I will highlight key events in U.S. history regarding the role of enslaved African American people in higher education, race relations between African Americans and whites, Natives and whites, and historic landmarks such as *Brown vs. Board of Education*. I will then review vital core concepts that fuel my thematic concern, such as Nigrescence and Sense of Belonging, as well as the power and privileges abused by white people at the disadvantage of African Americans and other minority groups. Lastly, I will summarize my para-professional higher education experience and how it shapes my thematic concern.

Historical Perspectives

For the purpose of this thematic concern, I have chosen to focus primarily on African American students, their needs, their development, and their history. I believe this population has been placed at a disadvantage due to their continued mistreatment by whites, which includes racism, microaggressions, and other social injustices. Additionally, I will briefly review the history of the Native population and the U.S. education system.

A key term that is relevant to each section of U.S. history is white supremacy. White supremacy is a social construct that is fueled by racism (Honey, 1999). It has shaped generations of white people. It was often used to undercut movements of solidarity and rationalized the destruction of black rights (Honey, 1999). I will examine white supremacy and how it has fueled each monumental movement in our history.

While it is important to recognize and acknowledge the sale of an estimated 12 million African people in the transatlantic slave trade (Schroeder et al., 2015), it is also important to focus on the many ways in which white North American citizens – not just slaveowners – benefitted from these sales and the subsequent abuse. For over 250 years, slavery legitimized

whipping, rape, mutilation and even murder to control enslaved people and their labor (Patterson, 2001). It is from the labor of enslaved people that cotton and other agricultural goods were exported from the U.S. markets, aiding in the nation's financial gain (Honey, 1999). The liberties that this financial gain provided the white population of this nation have been thoroughly documented and have played a significant role in the disenfranchisement of minority populations.

The Enslaved

It is important to my thematic concern to acknowledge the impact of slavery, as I believe white supremacy still affects our nation and cross-racial relationships. The transatlantic slave trade is a part of U.S. national history due to its magnitude, as well as the systemic and institutional racist hold it continues to have on this nation (Leffler, 2015). I will address the ways in which slaveowners took their financial gain from slavery and began to build the United States and its education system.

In the early 18th century North Carolina slaveholders used slavery as a means to fund education (Wilder p. 100). Many slaveowners with successful plantations left money in their wills which they dedicated for the construction of schools, while some left a portion – or the entire acreage - of their plantations to build schools on (p. 100). In Pennsylvania alone, Governor Thomas Penn gave The University of Pennsylvania 2,500 acres that enslaved Africans had worked on for decades (p. 119) and instructed the board to invest his money in real estate to provide a steady income for the college.

It was through these financial actions, as well as the legal plans implemented after the demise of these various contributors, that kept white supremacy in control of the construction of the United States and the education system. The assessment of the economic, religious and

intellectual underpinnings of this nation (Leffler, 2015) that I will highlight are based on the principles of white supremacy and the central role of North American universities in support of these ideas. Slaveowners Dorothy Saltonstand and husband John Frizell gave Harvard hundreds of dollars during their lifetime (Wilder p. 86), thanks to their fortune from the slave trade in Barbados. The relationship between slaveowners and institutions went beyond donations and land offerings.

The use of religion in the recruitment and continuation of colonial reach was essential. Christianity was key to not only maintaining control of resources and power, but to do so with minimal conflict (Leffler, 2015). White supremacists used the guise of religion to emphasize and justify their actions. Princeton was founded to support religious freedom, which made the school very appealing to Southern families (Wilder p. 105). It was not uncommon for traveling reverends and ministers to receive slaves as gifts (p. 86). Puritans and Pilgrims made peace with slavery (p. 115) and neither the church nor schools moderated the horrors of slavery (p. 130). In some parts of the nation, the one population that was left out of these religious teachings and ideologies were enslaved people. After the 1712 revolt in Manhattan white New Yorkers rejected religious trainings of Africans, stating that “negroes have no immortal soul” (p. 87) due to their daring to disobey their masters and attempt escape.

The first five colleges created in the British-American colonies, established between 1636 and 1746, all benefitted enormously from the slave trade (Leffler, 2015). In their infancy, having access to enslaved people could be the difference between success and failure (Wilder p. 135). College administrators from numerous universities stationed in the north traveled to the south, seeking out donors and wealthy businessmen who were interested and financially capable of using their fortune to fund schools in the north (Wilder p. 99). The College of Philadelphia –

who merged with the University of the State of Pennsylvania in 1791 to become the University of Pennsylvania (Kleiser, 2017) - directed Provost William Smith to appeal to wealthy residents of South Carolina (Wilder p. 98). The school sought to make social connections with the residents, in order to gain their trust and partnership for donations (p. 98). Administrators from Yale traveled to the Caribbean on numerous occasions, on a mission to find donors and scholars (Wilder p.99).

Many men who graduated from Harvard sought to build their careers in the British Caribbean trade, and went on to build their fortunes by entering the Caribbean and African slave trades (Wilder p. 89. These men – in turn, donated to Harvard, to pay homage to the university that helped provide them with the knowledge to be successful. The reach of white supremacy also entered the halls of government. College officers intentionally sought out and publicly supported slave traders and slaveholders to be governors (p. 98).

Since the abolishment of slavery, many universities have begun to explore the history behind their founding. Notable universities, such as Brown, Emory, Duke, Harvard, Yale, - and many others, have established courses, tours, brochures, plaques and websites in dedication of their deepened interest towards their school's history and involvement in the slave trade (Leffler, 2015). While not every university may have benefitted in the same way from the purchase of people of color, the acknowledgement and commitment from a university to educate its faculty, fans and student body should be intentional and continuous.

Segregation in the United States

After the abolishment of slavery, former enslaved people then had the difficult task of making a life and home for themselves. However, they were not provided with many opportunities to do so. Laws were passed which enforced racial segregation, or separation based

on skin color. Segregation in the U.S. began north of the slave states (Honey, 1999). Throughout the two hundred and fifty years of slavery, several states changed their opinions on slavery and changed their policies, changing from a “slave” state to a “free state” (1999). The northern free states who changed their policies in favor of freedom from slavery between 1789-1821 were the first to impose systematic exclusion of African Americans from better housing, jobs, and schools (1999). This form of exclusion continued to prohibit African Americans from voting, as well as serving on juries or any other activity to exercise citizenship rights. By excluding African American people from these civic acts of service, the federal government openly supported segregation (1999). Segregation encompassed the entire nation, and while some states were more accepting of African Americans, it was not constant or consistent.

Jim Crow

As we examine segregation, we must acknowledge the implantation of Jim Crow and its place in North American history. Through Jim Crow - the state-sponsored, constitutionally protected system of racial discrimination and segregation - it deliberately disadvantaged more than 10 million African American people in the south and parts of the border states (Honey, 1999). The term Jim Crow came to be used as slang to refer to segregation (Patterson, 2001) and was often referred to as a physical person. The laws and customs of Jim Crow created a coherent system of segregation through violent struggles of power (Honey, 1999). By creating laws meant to enforce the separation of African Americans and whites, the power of segregation effectively replaced slavery as a system of social control (1999).

The name Jim Crow came from minstrel shows in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. White actors in blackface portrayed a stereotypical black character meant for comedic relief (Patterson, 2001). The actor in blackface would portray a dancing, docile and happy

simpleton from the era of slavery. The Jim Crow image and persona placed a façade over the African American people. White people used it to validate white supremacy, by implying that African American people were genetically and socially inferior to whites (2001). U.S. Presidents, university professors, and the mass media – including motion pictures – constructed white supremacy as a good thing, and integration, or social equity, was a bad thing (Honey, 1999). For African Americans living in the U.S., Jim Crow meant hard work at low pay, which was often undergirded by pervasive racism and violence (1999). This social control came in the form of laws separating African Americans and whites in education. Although African Americans paid the same taxes as whites, they got almost no funding for their schools. This inequality towards African Americans in the United States during this time sets a precedent for the trials people of color would come to face in this nation.

Brown vs. Board of Education

One of the most historic moments to take place in the fight for racial equality is *Brown vs. Board of Education*. The landmark decision handed down in 1954 (Kluger, 2004) changed the landscape for the U.S. public education system. The lawsuit is technically comprised of five cases, which raised the same question, and consolidated under a single title: *Brown vs. Board of Education Topeka*. The purpose of the lawsuit was to eradicate the Jim Crow laws in the United States, which provided “separate but equal” housing, schools, restaurants and other public services (2004). This system of segregation cut African Americans off from avenues of opportunity, and in most cases consigned them to inferior social, economic and political status (Bell, 1980).

Thurgood Marshall, an African American attorney who took the case to the Supreme Court, argued that the universities and services that were deemed “equal” for African Americans

were in fact subpar to their white counterparts (Kluger, 2004). As a member of, and attorney for the NAACP, Marshall had been fighting against racist school practices in the United States for years (Patterson, 2001). Chief Justice Earl Warren identified the decision by the Supreme Court to overturn segregation laws in the U.S. marked a turning point in America's willingness to face the consequences of centuries of racial discrimination (2001). Newspapers and other media claimed the decision was the greatest victory for the Negro people since the Emancipation Proclamation. For many people living under Jim Crow law, this news gave them hope for a better future for their children (2001). At that time, white officials in heavily African American populated counties in the south authorized little or no high schooling for African American children (Bell, 1980). The decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* marked a turning point in this nation's willingness to face the consequences of centuries of racial discrimination, a practice which can be traced back nearly to the settlement of this country (Kluger, 2004). However, this stepping stone for African Americans would be one of many in the journey for true equality and fair treatment.

The Native Population

As mentioned before, the Native population in the United States have their own history with lack of access to education and the white supremacy therein. Native Americans were initially not allowed access to higher education, and many presidents of Ivy League schools welcomed the idea of less Natives in the United States (Wilder p. 157). Those who eventually gained admission to an institution were few and far between; in the first 200 years of its existence, Dartmouth graduated fewer than 20 Natives (p. 114). While the Native population shrunk, the European immigration expansion into the United States opened new land to settle

(p.17). Additionally, the military compensated soldiers with the promise of land (p. 155), further shutting out Native people from proper access to housing and education.

The Carlisle School. The Carlisle School is an example of the white supremacist rule that was felt by not only African Americans, but the Native people as well in the United States. The Carlisle School was opened in Carlisle, Pennsylvania by Capt. Richard Henry Pratt in 1879 (Malmsheimer, 1985). His vision was to remove native children as far as possible from their families, strip them of all aspects of their traditional cultures, and to instruct them in language, religion, behavior, and skills of mainstream white society (Fear-Segal & Rose, 2016). Pratt's objective was to prepare native youth for assimilation and U.S. citizenship. He believed that tribal people could – and should – be assimilated into the advancing white civilization (Malmsheimer,1985). His goal was to recruit students from every Indian agency, to universalize his experiment while simultaneously obliterating all Native culture (Fear-Segal & Rose, 2016). This blatant attack on Native culture, one which was federally funded (2016), signaled the governments new and growing involvement in Native education.

For Native communities, the Carlisle School initiated processes of diaspora, dislocation and a deeper rupture of their community (Fear-Segal & Rose, 2016). The majority of students did not assimilate into white society as Pratt hoped, but instead returned to their communities and home reservations (Malmsheimer, 1985). Only 758 of the 10,500 students graduated from the school, as some found the school to be traumatic and begged to be sent home (1985). Unfortunately, there is still much to be learned about the Carlisle School, due to the lack of records and accounts from the students themselves. Stories that have been passed down through generations are guarded for safe keeping (Fear-Segal & Rose, 2016). And many writings that have been found were official school publications, supervised by a white teacher or editor

(2016). Regardless, the intention and the history behind the Carlisle School speaks to the radical methods taken to initiate a geo-spatial cultural dislocation of Natives and their culture.

Factors from the Literature in Higher Education & Student Affairs

In this section, I have selected five factors from the literature that are particularly relevant to the thematic concern: Racial and Cultural Identity Development, Intersectionality, and Microaggressions, Campus Racial Climate, and Student Organizations. I outline each below.

Racial and Cultural Identity Development

Racial and Ethnic Identity Development and Cultural Identity Development are crucial to my thematic concern, as my concern pertains to African American and other minority students. Students' identities are developed not in relation of absolute distinction from others, but through parodic copying/emulation (Partington, 2019). However, this copying and emulation is not the totality of our personalities, who we are is constantly changing, even if only in the smallest ways (2019). Identities are performative – never formed but always in production (Partington, 2019).

African American and other minority students have an additional lens that they are seeing and processing the world through. The Racial and Cultural Identity Development model introduced by Sue and Sue (2003) is comprised of five stages that articulate the phases of development for non-white students (Patton et al., 2016). One of these stages is dissonance, in which individuals' experiences contradict with their white worldview (2016). This contradiction causes individuals to question the dominant – white – culture and express a growing interest in learning more about their own particular race or ethnic background (2016). This dissonance is followed by resistance and immersion, in which individuals consciously explore their own racial or ethnic identity (2016). I believe this development significantly impacts students' lives and is therefore a journey that requires support and understanding.

Cultural Identities are the aspects of our identity that arise from our belonging to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, and national cultures (Hall & Du Gay, 2006). In this sociological conception, identity bridges the gap between the internal and the external between personal and public worlds (2016). Darder's Theory on Critical Biculturalism centers around the relationship of cultural and power. He argues that culture is not a timeless set of traditions and practice, but rather a system characterized by social stratifications and tensions (Chung, 2015). Bicultural students are not those who have two cultures; they contend with the power dynamics and exist and function in two distinct sociocultural environments (2015).

In addition to racial and cultural development, I turn to Cross' theory of Black Identity, specifically his model of Nigrescence (1991). This model is articulated in stages in which students are coming into – or, “becoming” - black (Patton et al., 2016). Part of this is an “in between” phase, in which students connect themselves to elements of black identity – clothing, language, music, hairstyles, etc. (Patterson et al, 2016). Both models introduced by Sue and Sue and Cross speak to the complexity of development for African American individuals. They label this development in stages, supporting the theory that minority individuals require time and support to process their identity.

Intersectionality

To review power structures in higher education I chose to highlight elements that inform my thematic concern. We use intersectionality to understand students of color and their lived experiences, which include dealing with microaggressions and sense of belonging in relation to campus racial climate.

Since its conception by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the term intersectionality has become the key analytic framework through which feminist scholars in various fields talk about

the structural identities of race, class, gender, and sexuality (Cooper, 2015). This framework highlights the complexities of lived experiences while discovering relationships between identity and intersecting systems of inequality (Patterson et al., 2016). The birth child of critical race theory and critical race feminism, one common use of intersectionality is as a problem-solving or analytic tool (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Theories of intersectionality and sense of belonging both create spaces for marginalized voices to be heard and respected (Cook-Sather et al., 2018). Both also honor the complexity of identity and the necessity of collaboration in higher education. It is my belief that if we are to comprehend and create programs to address and support minority students, then we must first attempt to understand how the aspects of their identity affect their life.

Sense of Belonging

Sense of Belonging represents a unique important mental health concept that is different than loneliness and alienation (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). It is the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment (Hagerty et al., 2004). It is the experience of feeling valued, needed, or accepted (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). Research has shown that a students' ability to find a sense of belonging in college is positively associated with their intent to persist to degree completion (Museus et al., 2017). For students of color, this experience is linked to the racial climate at the university and is more important than school context in shaping sense of belonging (Ma, 2010).

Microaggressions

According to contemporary race scholars, African Americans are particularly likely to encounter subtle and covert forms of prejudice and discrimination (Chavous & Leath, 2018).

Findings indicate that racial stigmatization in the form of racial microaggressions, as well as overt interpersonal discrimination, isolation and exclusion from campus activities, are common experiences for African American students in college. Microaggressions are subtle, stunning, often automatic and non-verbal ‘put-downs’ of African Americans by offenders (Morales, 2019). This unconscious and subtle form of racism (Ceja et al., 2000) specifically affect African American students because students who have encountered a microaggression from their professor are less likely to attend faculty office hours (Morales, 2019). Students who experience microaggressions are also less likely to seek academic support, for fear of confirming racial stereotypes about their intellectual abilities.

Research shows that African American women face a variety of challenges at predominately white institutions related to their higher education experience, including a lack of a support system, financial challenges, and microaggressions that threaten to undermine their academic success (Chavous & Leath, 2018). Additionally, students who experience microaggressions are also less likely to seek academic support, for fear of confirming racial stereotypes about their intellectual abilities (Morales, 2019). This fear is known as stereotype threat (Morales, 2019). Many black students learn of these stereotypes early on in life. This knowledge leads to students learning how to “be” in predominantly white environments, in order to not call attention to themselves for protective purposes (Morales, 2019).

African American students who participated in studies surrounding campus climate provided a tactic known as “beasting” which is a self-affirming strategy where black students openly challenge racial microaggressions by emphasizing their own value and that of black communities (Morales, 2019). They do so by using counternarratives, which are known as the stories of people who are not often told. These people often belong to underrepresented or

disadvantaged groups or communities. Sharing these counternarratives provides black students with the opportunity to articulate their intellectual knowledge, as well as their history and culture (Morales, 2019). Counternarratives are used as resistant capital, where people exercise history and behavior to actively challenge oppression (Yosso, 2005). The concept of resistant capital is helpful for marginalized groups to restore order and the power that is stripped of them at the hands of their offenders and oppressors (Morales, 2019). Studies also suggest that for African American students, racial pride can help protect against negative outcomes in the face of academic or race-related challenges (Chavous & Leath, 2018).

Campus Racial Climate

Campus racial climate is organized into five distinct dimensions: historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion, organizational/structural, compositional diversity, behavioral, and psychological (Arellano & Vue, 2019). Historically, students of color experience more hostility and higher rates of harassment than white students (Arellano & Vue, 2019). This occurrence can then negatively contribute to the racial climate at their institution (Ceja et al., 2000). White students on the other hand, often overlook this racial reality (Arellano & Vue, 2019). White students at primarily white institutions also overestimate the overall satisfaction of students of color, creating the concept known as “white blindness” (Arellano & Vue, 2019). African American students who attend a higher education institution statistically find the environment to not be supportive or welcoming (Strayhorn, 2010). Additionally, students who experience the campus racial climate as hostile or unwelcoming based on such experiences show decreased motivation and more social and academic withdrawal (Chavous & Leath, 2018).

An institutions campus racial climate is impacted by the various “actors” who perpetuate the normalization of the white institutional narrative (Arellano & Vue, 2019). These same actors

also have the power to disrupt this narrative and redirect its focus to one which embodies inclusion and diversity (Arellano & Vue, 2019).

Student Organizations

Cultural, racial, and ethnic student organizations matter for students of color and campuses as a whole. Their role is essential for retaining students of color, fostering identity development, and supporting a positive campus climate (Chung, 2015). Studies shows students who are retained at an institution learn the skills needed to manage the college-level courses, and therefore are more traditionally successful (Strayhorn, 2010). Additionally, recent literature supports this notion, and describes ethnic student organizations as venues for critical and political consciousness, identity developments, and cultural familiarity and connections (Chung, 2015). Research has shown that cultural clubs or organizations provide safe spaces for minority students and promote academic integration (Balyasnikova & Surtees, 2016). These organizations improve the campus environment for students of color, including non-members of the organizations (Chung, 2015).

Student organizations can have different foci, depending on their mission statement and subsequent programs (Balyasnikova & Surtees, 2016). The mission of these clubs ranges on a continuum from entirely focused on creating a social environment to promoting outreach and support (Balyasnikova & Surtees, 2016). They are broken down into two categories: socially-focused associations and outreach-focused associations (2016). Socially focused organizations, such as student organizations, are more inward-focused, and plan programs that are meant to be bring like-minded people together for fun activities such as bowling and other games. These organizations face their own challenges, as they may be perceived to be supporting ethnic separateness, and ultimately drive the majority population away. Research has shown that some

club members experience an increased sense of victimization, and have conflicts with other student groups (Balyasnikova & Surtees, 2016).

Cultural organizations have benefits that extend beyond graduation. African American men who engage in clubs and organizations are shown to gain practical competencies which are crucial to their success (Strayhorn, 2010). They found that African American students in the United States participated in a study which concluded that students felt less alienated when sheltered from negative stereotypes in their club environment (Balyasnikova & Surtees, 2016). Due to the widespread positivity to both members and non-members, scholars are calling for institutional resources and support for these organizations (Chung, 2015). Cultural student organizations are venues for critical and political consciousness, identity developments, and cultural familiarity and connections (2015).

The need for this intervention stems from many factors, one of which being the lack of representation in higher education. I believe students of color require the resources that afford them a better opportunity. Many African American and Latino men statistically are more likely to come from low-income families, and therefore less likely to be afforded to growth discussed earlier (Strayhorn, 2010). Black men are also unrepresented in the university, making up 5% of the population (2010). I believe this underrepresentation requires student affairs professionals to pinpoint specific ways to help these students and provide them with resources specifically for them.

Related Professional Experience

Throughout my professional experience in student affairs, I have seen the necessity for proper collaboration and diversity. Through New Student Programs and Residence Life & Housing Services I have learned that students come from various backgrounds and often need a

variety of resources. However, there is a commonality amongst their needs, as well as their concerns. Students are concerned with their housing, financial aid, and finding resources such as tutors and clubs. In my efforts to help support these students, I often found that there were multiple opportunities for me to work alongside colleagues from other departments. Some of these opportunities involved programming for students through the Office of Residence Life & Housing Services. Residence Life is tasked with housing and serving new, transfer, and returning students on campus. University faculty and staff members work with resident assistants to provide programs for residential students. However, these same programs are not offered for non-residential and commuter students. There is a need for programming offered and marketed to all students.

In addition to Residence Life, New Student Programs is tasked with orienting and serving new and transfer students. They mainly handle new student orientation; however, they also provide engagement opportunities for their orientation leaders in the form of programs and events. New Student Programs staff members have knowledge of most of the resources on campus, as they partner together yearly for student orientation. The fact that this office interacts with all new students at the university speaks to the need for staff members to embody a university mission of zero tolerance, and to reflect the student body in order to properly serve them. In order to create a positive racial climate, students, faculty, and administration of color need to be included (Ceja & Yosso, 2000). New Student Programs is an office that prides itself on listening to students and providing them with resources. Moving forward, it is my hope that these resources will be more well-rounded and impactful.

Chapter 4

In this chapter I will introduce my intervention to improve campus racial climate and improve the relationship and communication between student organizations at the higher education level. I reiterate theories such as Critical Race Theory, intersectionality, and sense of belonging from Chapter 2, and literature from Chapter 3 highlighting campus racial climate, microaggressions, and the history of minority students and higher education institutions to support this invention.

The Intervention

The *Collaborative Student Organization Coalition*, or CSOC, is a new partnership initiative for student-led organizations. The reimagination of how student organizations are run is one that requires documented partnership amongst various organizations. This intervention will be most successful if every organization has a faculty advisor who is a non-white person of color. The call to action for faculty/staff to become an advisor can be found in Appendix C. The implementation of this initiative requires a cultural shift involving a collaboration of university officials at the highest level, and the acknowledgment that it is time for this change to occur. I believe the continuation of racial injustice and white supremacy in the United States are validating factors which require action and change. Additional resources will require a partnership with faculty, staff, and student services. This partnership is vital to improving campus racial climate.

In order to create a positive racial climate, there need to be four of the following elements: the inclusion of students, faculty, and administrators of color, a curriculum that reflects the historical and contemporary experiences of people of color, programs to support the recruitment, retention and graduation of students of color, and a college/university mission that

reinforces the institutions commitment to pluralism (Ceja & Yosso, 2000). The demographic makeup and social climate of a campus play a substantial role in determining the specific needs of the multiracial population (Wong & Buckner, 2008). Studies have shown that the strength of a program comes from the strength of the staff, student workers, and the structure of the office it is housed in. Solid leadership of the CSOC program would involve a faculty advisor relationship to oversee the production of creative and sustainable programs. I have designed an intervention and an evaluation plan based on feedback from attendees, as well as graduating seniors through the university learning portal.

While the structure of my intervention is comprised of a collaboration program involving cultural or ethnic student organizations, in the structure is also a program model with learning outcomes. These programs speak to important topics such as storytelling, sustainability, anti-racism and more. This intervention will be executed using a Critical Action Research (CAR) approach, due to the face that this method of research is not only involves the community, but lays out a system of implementation that continues. CAR requires a continuation of an implemented method that is analyzed, tweaked, and put into practice again until it reaches optimal results.

Theory to Practice

In Chapter 2, I highlighted varies theories regarding the purpose of higher education, as well as the theories which related most to my thematic concern. In addition to these theories is the vast literature which speaks to the racial history of minority students and their need for inclusion at an institution. The framework and literature are looked at through the lens of Critical Race Theory.

Frameworks

This thematic concern is led by the ideal that the university is a place to provide environments and opportunities that help create a positive learning experience, and positive experiences lead to growth (Dewey, 1938), and lastly, that student involvement is a direct result of the physical and psychological energy the students invest in the college experience (Astin, 1999). In addition to these theories regarding higher education are theories which speak to the development of individuals based on race and ethnicity.

Since this thematic concern addresses African American and minority students, I found it most useful to pinpoint Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), Sense of Belonging (Hagerty, 1995), and Cross' (1991) Theory of Nigrescence to understand student development. Intersectionality has become a key analytic framework through which feminist scholars in various fields talk about structural identities such as race, class, gender and sexuality (Cooper, 2016). I believe the ways in which our racial and ethnic backgrounds have affected and continue to affect our perspective of the world is crucial to understand not only of student development, but of each other.

Sense of belonging is an important mental health concept that has been equated with social integration (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). It is the experience of feeling valued, needed, or accepted (1995). For students of color, this experience is linked to the racial climate at the university and is more important than school context in shaping sense of belonging (Ma, 2010). Lastly, Cross' (1991) Theory of Nigrescence speaks to the steps it takes for African American students to understand and immerse themselves in what their race means to them (Patton et al., 2016). The totality of these theories brings the knowledge that minority students – but specifically African American students – are on a journey of self-discovery, one which is

impacted by their physical composition, as well as how they are perceived and treated by their peers.

Literature

The literature in Chapter 3 addresses campus racial climate and its effects on African American and other minority students. Historically, students of color experience more hostility and higher rates of harassment than white students (Arellano & Vue, 2019). White students on the other hand, often overlook this racial reality, and overestimate the overall satisfaction of students of color (2019). This concept is known as white blindness (Arellano & Vue, 2019). Also featured in Chapter 3 is the history of slavery and white supremacy in U.S. society and schooling. Jim Crow segregation stigmatized African Americans by cutting them off from avenues of opportunity, and in most cases consigned them to inferior social, economic, and political status (Patterson, 2001). The abolishment of Jim Crow laws in 1954 came after the verdict in *Brown v. Board of Education*, in which the Supreme Court voted to eradicate “separate but equal” housing, schools, and other public services (Kulger, 2004). This verdict sparked a revolution in civil rights laws and the political advantage to African Americans in and out of court (Bell, 1980). History behind the experiences of minority populations in the U.S. are the reason for this thematic concern and intervention.

The literature driving this thesis is supported by Critical Race Theory, or CRT. I use a component of CRT, known as storytelling, as a lens to better understand the studies and research around African American students and their development. Critical race theorists believe that law and legal institutions are inherently racist, and that race itself is a socially constructed category used by white people to further their agenda at the expense of people of color (Ceja et al., 2000). The movement behind CRT consists of a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying

and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical Race Theory has also been used to study data from African American university students experiencing racial microaggressions and a negative racial climate (Patton et al., 2016). From critical race theory I have chosen to examine racism and its relationship in the intersection between minority students and higher education institutions.

In higher education, there are direct links to how the treatment of African American and minority students across the nation affects retention (Museus et al., 2008). Campus racial climate is a significant factor that contributes to the low degree completion rates of racial minority students in comparison with their white counterparts (2008). Studies conducted with African American students at predominately white institutions have shown that these students experience microaggressions at the hands of their professors, as well as their classmates and peers. These microaggressions have the potential to harm a student's mental wellbeing, draining their energy and causing racial battle fatigue (Morales, 2020). Realistically, campus racial climate does not begin and end with the students. It also involves the professors and other professionals who help these students on a daily basis.

Intervention Program Proposal

This proposal is a growth-minded intervention. Growth mindsets are based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts, strategies, and help from others (McGabe et al., 2020). One of the first growth mindset studies with undergraduate students examined the relationship between mindset and race-based stereotype threat through the use of a pen-pal program (McCabe et al., 2020). During the study, testimonials from the African American students showed significant boosts in growth mindset ratings, grade point average, and ratings of value and enjoyment compared to white students. These outcomes suggest that growth

mindset interventions hold promise for undergraduate students, but students from demographically disadvantaged categories are more likely to benefit from these increases in growth mindset (2020). A new approach to student engagement also would recognize the value of diverse sets of knowledge and competences which students have already acquired prior to attending a higher education institution (Partington, 2019). It is for these reasons that this intervention intends to provide opportunities for students to expand their knowledge and share their experiences.

I believe that encouraging student organizations to interact with other student body groups could be largely beneficial to not only the student groups, but the entire student body. While certain spaces on campus have been created for the minority student body, opening those spaces on occasion and allowing other students to share in their experiences could be beneficial. By requiring inter-organizational programming, I believe it encourages students to have a greater conversation past the walls of their perceptions. This would be done to improve campus racial climate, and to unite various student ethnic groups.

The CSOC is an intervention which gains its strength from systems already in place at higher education institutions. This intervention proposes a partnership program among cultural and ethnic student organizations on campus. To evaluate campus partners, the organization coalition – comprised of one student affairs professional and one graduate assistant - will first reach out to cultural student organizations and their faculty advisors. This program proposal will operate under the assumption that the selected cultural organizations will already have faculty advisors in place, however, recruitment communication towards faculty members to become advisors can be found in Appendix C.

After the initial contact, the organization coalition will begin the process of creating partnerships between two or more organizations. This partnership will last one full semester. At the end of the semester, the organizations will be re-partnered. The evaluation and assessment component of this critical action intervention will take place before, during, and after the intervention implementation. This evaluation will be sent to every member involved in the organization partnership.

The initial assessment will be to evaluate need for the intervention. This need will be evaluated based on the student's perception of campus: their experience with campus racial climate, racism, microaggressions, as well as intersectionality and sense of belonging. The assessment for this can be found in Appendix F. The assessment taking place during the intervention will be to evaluate each program offered by the student organizations participating in the intervention (can be found in Appendix L), and to evaluate their experience in the partnership and feelings towards campus (can be found in Appendix G) at the beginning of the spring semester. The assessment will be offered at the end of the program, and will evaluate the learning outcome, student knowledge, overall enjoyment of the program, likeliness of recommendation to others, and demographic of the student.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of the CSOC, students will be able to:

- Objectives:
 - Students will plan and execute events with sister (partnered) organizations for the semester.
 - Students will produce data from events to measure success of event (sample of evaluation can be found in Appendix I).

- Learning outcomes:
 - Students will increase their network of social connections due to collaboration with peers.
 - Students will gain knowledge on designated categories selected to improve personal understanding of social issues such as sense of belonging, intersectionality, anti-racism efforts, and equity and inclusion.

These outcomes will be evaluated based on:

- Surveys given to members of cultural organizations and surveys given after joint programming,
 - Comprised of questions regarding campus experience with racism, microaggressions and sense of belonging.
 - Examples of these surveys can be found in Appendices F, G, H, and I.

Required Programming

Each group of two or more partnerships will be required to plan and execute a minimum of two programs each semester.

- If the budget restricts the partnership to two programs:
 - One program will be dedicated to the members only (of both organizations)
 - One program will be open to the entire campus and student body:
 - This program must fulfill the assigned target outcome: sustainability, intersectionality, etc.

Professional Competencies

Core competencies articulated and supported through this intervention, taken from the ACPA website regarding the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization:

- Focus is on reducing the oppression of communities of color at the intersections of their identities, knowing that all oppressions are linked and that the work is ongoing.
- For this intervention we will focus on: tools for personal, professional development.
- Racial justice and the tasks of our jobs do not sit as dichotomous poles. Racial justice is at our core; it underlies the work we each must do every day, in every way we can.

Leadership Models

This intervention and implementation plan is executed through the understanding of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development:

- This model believes that leadership is a process.
- Concerned with fostering positive change.
- Focuses on one of the 7 C's of critical values – Collaboration:
 - It is vital that group members explore differences in individual values, ideas, affiliations, visions and identities.

Chapter 5

In this chapter I will address the process of implementation for the intervention meant to improve campus racial climate. This will include the budget and marketing plan, as well as examples of communication to campus partners and student organizations. Lastly, I will spotlight leadership in higher education and potential limits to my proposed intervention.

Implementation

This intervention requires a reimagined collaborative partnership among undergraduate student-led organizations. This intervention for my thematic concern requires an implementation plan that will last approximately 18 months. The first six months of the plan consists of outreach to student organizations, their advisors, and corresponding offices. This outreach is to determine willing participation of student organizations and their faculty/staff advisors, necessity and urgency of intervention, and material or monetary resources needed. The following plan, its categories, and their corresponding expenses are needed in order to properly execute a successful change to campus racial climate. More information regarding this timeline can be found in Appendix A.

Budget and Funding

The budgeting needs for this intervention requires several large expenses that consume a considerable amount of the funds. The main component of my intervention involves a collaborative partnership amongst groups of two or three student organizations. The organizations will be overseen by faculty and staff advisors, however communication regarding program content and additional resources will come from the program coordinator. Students will collaborate on creating, planning and advertising programs. While the students will be tasked

with brainstorming programs to address anti-racist tactics, students will not be responsible for creating content.

The partnership begins within the first year before the intervention officially begins, to determine willing participation, necessity and urgency of intervention and material or monetary resources needed. The following categories and their corresponding expenses are estimated costs of operation. More information regarding this budget can be found in Appendix B.

Assuming funds come from office of student leadership, I have created an opportunity for organizations to donate a portion of their own programming budget to support more/better programs. An example of this can be found in Appendix J. In the future, we may be able to reach out to alumni and corporations to donate towards this coalition.

Marketing and Recruitment

For marketing and recruitment, I plan to reach out to faculty and staff (see Appendices C and D) to volunteer as organization advisors. There will be a thank-you email sent to students who agree to join the research coalition (see Appendix E). The implementation plan for this intervention can be found in Appendix A.

Theories and Models of Leadership

Some researchers assert that leadership comes from a relational standpoint, while others conceptualize leadership as a trait or behavior (Northouse, 2019). But how do we take the concept of leadership and boil it down to its simplest form? And how do we, as higher education professionals, provide every student with the opportunity to idealize themselves as a leader?

Student-led organizations allow students to gather with a common purpose. At predominantly white institutions, or PWIs, minority students often seek solace in cultural or ethnic organizations. Black students specifically experience racial homophily, which is the act of

seeking and finding other black people. Black students also are less socially integrated at these institutions than white students, and group together to find the social support they need (Gilkes Borr, 2018). This social support can come in the form of friends, or formal groups such as ethnic student organizations (ESOs).

Leadership in Higher Education

The Social Change Model of Leadership is embedded in collaboration and is primarily tasked with promoting positive social change. It focuses on fostering self-knowledge within students, as well as leadership competence (Astin & Astin, 1996). This leadership development looks closely at leadership from three key groups: the individual, the group, and society. For the individual, leaders look at the personal qualities they are attempting to foster in that person. For the group, leaders look at how the personal qualities that have been fostered in the individual can come together on a larger scale to foster positive social change. For the society, leaders look at the activities created by the aforementioned individuals to create said change, and where it is directed. These three pieces feed into and fuel each other. This form of leadership is a process that attempts to integrate already established leadership development concepts.

Leadership Styles to Address Thematic Concern

In order to address my thematic concern, I have suggested the intervention of a new partnership program. One that involves guidelines and encourages collaboration with other cultural organizations. A transformative leader would be ideal for the implementation of this intervention. This person would directly inspire the members of the organization, and work together to create meaningful programs to reach students. That leadership is necessary to create not only change, but to fuel the drive behind the organization. Ideally, this person would be a

staff member and not a student. A transformative leader would use that sense of empowerment to guide the vision for that organization.

A transformative approach may have its challenges as well. The leader may inspire members of the organization off course from the objective, intentionally or otherwise. Because this leadership style uses a hands-on approach, they may deny others the opportunity to actively participate, or take responsibility away from others in order to complete it themselves. However, this has more to do with the personality of the leader than the leadership style itself.

I believe the seven C's of the Social Change Model of Leadership are important due to its belief that leadership is a process (Astin & Astin, 1993). It focuses on fostering positive change. In addition to these factors, having a strong consciousness of self provides the leader with the insight to know who they are and what they stand for. It is the acknowledgement also helps a leader to understand the consciousness of others as well.

Leadership Models

This intervention and implementation plan is executed through the understanding of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development:

- This model believes that leadership is a process.
- Concerned with fostering positive change.
- Focuses on one of the 7 C's of critical values – Collaboration:
 - It is vital that group members explore differences in individual values, ideas, affiliations, visions and identities.

Creative thinking is also vital to being an effective leader. There are times when we benefit from outside perspectives, even on things we think we know best – like ourselves. I believe in providing guidance but also providing the space to fail if necessary. If the people you

are leading do not feel supported, they will not feel loyal to you or your leadership technique. This can cause resentment and frustration. I also believe in ownership, accountability, and grace. People need the opportunity to stake their claim on something – an idea or a project. Doing so empowers them, but only if they feel supported should they trip or lose their way. Providing them with understanding while still holding them accountable reinforces the notion that we are flawed, and no one is perfect.

Regardless of the orientation, leadership styles should be organic to an individual's personality. Contrary to prior beliefs, leadership is not one size fits all. It is important to recognize that as we attempt to make change in the higher education field. Although not a large one, my proposed intervention will be a change, if ever implemented. It comes largely from the notion that we should work smarter, not harder. In this case, working smarter means combining resources. By providing students with the guidelines, tools and guidance to create together, we're increasing their confidence along with our community.

Professional Competencies

Core competencies articulated and supported through this intervention, taken from the ACPA website regarding the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization, are listed below:

- Focus is on reducing the oppression of communities of color at the intersections of their identities, knowing that all oppressions are linked and that the work is ongoing
- For this intervention we will focus on: tools for personal, professional development
- Racial justice and the tasks of our jobs do not sit as dichotomous poles. Racial justice is at our core; it underlies the work we each must do every day, in every way we can.

Assessment and Evaluation of Program

Assessment and evaluation of this intervention is vital to track success and make necessary changes. The assessment of campus racial climate will come in three different forms, at three different times during the first year of the intervention. The first assessment will come before the beginning of the fall semester, before the organizations have been put into pairs and/or trios. It is meant to evaluate sense of belonging and campus racial climate. An email will first be sent to students, to thank them for agreeing to join the CSOC. In this email will be a link to the assessment form. A sample of this email can be found in Appendix E. The assessment form can be found in Appendix F.

The second assessment of the intervention will take place at the beginning of the spring semester of the first year of the intervention. It is meant to evaluate any noticeable changes in sense of belonging and campus racial climate. This form can be found in Appendix G. The final assessment of the intervention will take place at the end of the spring semester (school year). It is meant to evaluate any noticeable changes in sense of belonging and campus racial climate. This form can be found in Appendix H.

Lastly, there will be an evaluation form for students attending these joint programs to fill out. This will be to determine the learning outcomes

Limitations and Looking Ahead

Throughout this thematic concern I chose not to address white students or their development. I also did not create an intervention that included or involved all student organizations. The choice to not include all student organizations will limit the pool or participants, and may make the intervention less impactful. After the first year of the intervention the coalition will need to evaluate the success of the program and determine whether to open it up to all organizations.

Improving campus racial climate is a task which requires time and attention. It is an initiative that I believe will improve student sense of belonging and their higher education experience. Students need support from student affairs professionals to remain persistent on this mission, and do everything possible to make the institution a safer place for them.

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Appendix A

Implementation Plan

The intervention for my thematic concern requires an implementation plan that will last approximately 18 months. The first six months of the plan consists of outreach to student organizations, their advisors, and corresponding offices.

- The initial outreach will be in **January** - via email, with the purpose of setting up a formal, in-person meeting with the advisors for the multicultural/ethnic student organizations on campus
 - Recruitment for potential advisors (if there are none) can be found in Appendix C.
 - This meeting will be to present the organization collaboration program and its benefits.
 - From this meeting advisors will express interest – and present information to organizations; express reservations and decline to move forward.
- Initial meeting between advisors and student org population - to relay information and provide feedback/willingness to participate - to take place by the end of **February** (depending on availability).
 - Advisors and org presidents will reach decision and communicate back to program coordinator and CSOC in order to proceed.
 - Email will be sent to students – thanking them for participating – can be found in Appendix E.
- Follow-up meetings with all participating advisors and their corresponding student org population to take place by end of **March**.

- During these meetings, the following will take place:
 - Students will be provided with a survey seeking feedback on their experience with overall sense of belonging, intersectionality, and overall experience at the university (Found in Appendix F).
- Collaboration partners will be selected in **April**, but will not be announced until the fall semester **August**.
 - Budgeting for the fall semester will begin after the partners have been selected (see detailed plan in Appendix B).
 - Budgeting specs to account for:
 - **Personnel:** Full-time associate director, graduate assistant, hired professional speakers.
 - **Operating Expenses:** Office materials, postage, refreshments for events/speakers, travel, miscellaneous/indirect costs.
 - **Marketing:** Tables, reusable tablecloths, posters, flyers, keychains/pens and other giveaway items.
 - Budget will be divided among collaborating teams of organizations and will be awarded equally.
 - Equal contributions from individual organizations' budget encouraged but not required - language on this can be found in Appendix J.
 - Marketing will begin in August.
 - \$1,000 of “office materials” fund to be allocated to create large signage for events.

- Signage to be posted in all major academic buildings, residence halls, and all other allowed university buildings.
- Fundraising efforts to be completed between the beginning of April and the end of August.
- Communication to the collaborating organizations to advise towards equal contribution of their budget can be found in Appendix J.

Appendix B

Budget Plan

The main component of my intervention involves a collaborative partnership amongst groups of two or three student organizations. The organizations will be overseen by faculty and staff advisors, however communication regarding program content and additional resources will come from the program coordinator. Students will collaborate on creating, planning and advertising programs. The following categories and their corresponding expenses are estimated costs of operation.

Personnel: Full-time associate director, graduate assistant, educational speakers.

Operating Expenses: Office materials, postage, refreshments for events/speakers, travel, miscellaneous/indirect costs .

Marketing: Posters, flyers, keychains/pens and other giveaway items.

EXPENSE ITEM	JUSTIFICATION	COST	TOTAL
Full-time associate director	Supervises graduate assistant, oversees organizations and their operations, oversees program creation and status	1 AD at \$24 per hour at 40 hours per week for 12 months	46,000 + benefits (9,200)
Graduate assistant	Reports on organizations and their operation status, reports to status of program creation,	1 GA at \$12 per hour at 25 hours per week for 1 full school year + tuition reimbursement	20,000

Guest speakers	Provides students with information pertaining to successful life skills, anti-racism tactics, program building, etc.	\$1,500 per speaker, 2 speakers per semester = 4 total speakers	6,000
Travel	Booking travel for guest speakers and office personnel on official business	As needed - \$3,000 allotted per semester for all guest travel and personnel travel	6,000
Refreshments	Used by office and orgs to create full experience and optimize attendance and participation	1 full school year	4,000
Office materials	Used to create office binders, flyers and other materials for programs and events	1 full school year	3,000
Marketing	Giveaways/prizes: university memorabilia, keychains, pens, other prizes/incentives	1 full school year	3,000
Postage	Used to send office materials	1 full school year	1,000
		TOTAL:	98,200

Appendix C

Call to Action (Faculty)

Hello Campus Partners,

I hope this email finds you well. However, after the year we all have had, I am happy that this email finds you at all. Throughout this year of COVID and quarantine, we have all had more than enough time to reflect on the violence and injustice at the hands of police in cities across the nation. In this fight against white supremacy and racial injustices, now is the time more than ever to join together and grow.

The creation of the Collaborative Student Organization Coalition, or CSOC, is a project which aims to form a union amongst all the cultural organizations on campus. We seek to create a partnership program under which students can collaborate on programs promoting social justice and awareness.

To do this, the coalition **needs your help**.

In order to ensure the success of this program, the coalition is asking for faculty and staff members of color to act as advisors to the organizations. As there are 10 different cultural organizations on campus, the coalition is requesting **5 faculty/staff members** to oversee them. The role of an advisor is a one-year commitment. The main role of an advisor is to relay communication from the CSOC to the partnered organizations. This includes monthly CSOC meeting minutes and information regarding deadlines for programming. For more information on advisor responsibilities, please see below.

The CSOC would like to schedule a meeting with all available staff between the week of **(start date-end date)** between the hours of **(start time-end time)**. If you would like to be a part of this leadership opportunity, please respond by **(date)** with two times and dates of availability.

The coalition will reach out with more information and corresponding calendar invite. We look forward to this partnership, and the changes we will make!

Best,

Elissa Wingfield
Program Coordinator

Faculty/Staff Advisor Duties

- Attend monthly CSOC meetings.
- Share meeting minutes with assigned organization.
- Enforce program deadlines.
- Aid organizations in solidifying program details.
- Encourage collaboration through communication and openness.
- Communicate any issues directly to CSOC program coordinator.

Organization Partnership Duties

- Collaborate and communicate with organization partner to plan and execute programs.
- Plan and execute a minimum of two joint programs per semester.
 - One program must be closed to members only.
 - One program must be open to the public.
 - Additional programs encouraged but not required.
- Create and distribute advertising in the form of flyers and social media posts.

Appendix D

Call to Action (Advisors to Partner)

Hello Campus Partners,

I hope this email finds you well. However, after the year we all have had, I am happy that this email finds you at all. Throughout this year of COVID and quarantine, we have all had more than enough time to reflect on the violence and injustice at the hands of police in cities across the nation. In this fight against white supremacy and racial injustices, now is the time more than ever to join together and grow.

The creation of the Collaborative Student Organization Coalition, or CSOC, is a project which aims to form a union amongst all the cultural organizations on campus. We seek to create a partnership program under which students can collaborate. To do this, the coalition need your help.

As the faculty/staff advisor of a student organization, you are already tasked with overseeing and aiding these students. The CSOC wishes to take count of organizations who would be interested in partnering together to increase collaboration, ownership, and awareness on important issues. This program partnership would last one calendar year and would involve a partnership agreement amongst two or three organizations. Please see below for a more detailed list of advisor and organization expectations.

In order to share more information regarding this partnership I would like to schedule a meeting with all faculty/staff advisors between the week of **(start date-end date)** between the hours of **(start time-end time)** to fully explain this initiative. If you would like to be a part of this leadership opportunity, please respond by **(date)** with two times and dates of availability.

The coalition will reach out with more information and corresponding calendar invite.

We look forward to this partnership, and the changes we will make!

Best,

Elissa Wingfield
Program Coordinator

Faculty/Staff Advisor Duties

- Attend monthly CSOC meetings.
- Share meeting minutes with assigned organization.
- Enforce program deadlines.
- Aid organizations in solidifying program details, including:
 - Encourage collaboration through communication and openness.
 - Communicate any issues directly to CSOC program coordinator.

Organization Partnership Duties

- Collaborate and communicate with organization partner to plan and execute programs.
- Plan and execute a minimum of two joint programs per semester:
 - One program must be closed to members only.
 - One program must be open to the public.
 - Additional programs encouraged but not required.
- Create and distribute advertising in the form of flyers and social media posts.

Appendix E

Thank You to Students

Dear Students,

Thank you for participating in our Collaborative Student Organization Coalition! We are excited to be on this journey of partnership and self-discovery with you. Throughout this year we have seen many tragedies, whether through COVID-19 or through the racial injustices that continue to grip our nation.

The Organization Coalition seeks to change the way we think of one another, through collaboration and sharing our experiences. We know that this change will take time, and all we can do is play our part in attempting to make this campus – and the world – a better place.

As discussed in our meeting, we begin this journey by first gaining information about your experience at the University. Please click on this [link](#) to take a brief survey – it is private and will be kept confidential.

The purpose of this survey is to tailor your experience in the CSOC. Please be open, honest, and take this opportunity to heart.

As promised, the organization partnership duties can be **found below**. These duties may change as needed moving forward.

We look forward to learning and growing with you!

Best,

Elissa Wingfield
Program Coordinator

Organization Partnership Duties

- Collaborate and communicate with organization partner to plan and execute programs.
- Plan and execute a minimum of two joint programs per semester:
 - One program must be closed to members only.
 - One program must be open to the public.
 - Additional programs encouraged but not required.
- Create and distribute advertising in the form of flyers and social media posts.

Appendix F

Pre-Assessment Survey

The Collaborative Student Organization Coalition would like to gain more information regarding your experiences at the University. We are looking at the relationship between minority (African American, Hispanic, Asian, etc.) students who are actively involved in their student organization. We hope to gain insight about your experience from this survey to create programs and other opportunities for students to share their triumphs, setbacks, and every experiences in between.

We value your responses, which will remain confidential, and will not disclose any information in your survey responses to any person(s) outside of the established Collaborative Student Organization Coalition, henceforth known as CSOC.

1. What is your current standing with the University?
 - a. First – year
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate student

2. Race/Ethnic Identity:
 - a. African/Black American
 - b. African
 - c. Latino/Latina/Latinx
 - d. Asian
 - e. Asian American
 - f. More than one race/ethnicity - multiracial

3. Gender identity:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Trans
 - d. Non-binary
 - e. Prefer not to say

Please indicate your position on the following statements on a scale of 1-5:

4. I feel like I do not belong at the University due to my race or ethnicity
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly Agree

5. I feel like I do not belong at the University due to my gender identity
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

6. Since beginning my education at the University, I have experienced an uncomfortable/hurtful encounter regarding race/racism
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

7. These encounters have made me consider leaving the University
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

8. I have a support system to talk about these encounters with
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

9. This support system is fellow students and/or faculty. Please check all that apply:
 1. Students
 2. Faculty
 3. Staff
 4. Administration
 5. Family
 6. Other
 7. N/A

10. I would be interested in sharing my experience with others
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly disagree

Please include any comments or information that you would like to share or report regarding your experience thus far at the University.

[empty text box]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! We take your experiences to heart and look forward to creating positive memories with you.

Appendix G

Pulse Check

You are receiving this survey due to your involvement in a student organization on campus! The Collaborative Student Organization Coalition would like to gain more information regarding your experience partnering with another cultural organization on campus. We hope to gain insight about your experience from this survey to evaluate progress of this coalition and the partnerships within.

We value your responses, which will remain confidential, and will not disclose any information in your survey responses to any person(s) outside of the established Collaborative Student Organization Coalition, henceforth known as CSOC.

1. What is your current standing with the University?
 - a. First – year
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate student

2. Race/Ethnic Identity:
 - a. African/Black American
 - b. African
 - c. Latino/Latina/Latinx
 - d. Asian
 - e. Asian American
 - f. More than one race/ethnicity - multiracial

3. Gender identity:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Trans
 - d. Non-binary
 - e. Prefer not to say

Please indicate your position on the following statements on a scale of 1-5:

4. I enjoyed the joint programs offered by my organization and its partner
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

5. As a result of attending a joint program I have felt an increased sense of belonging at the University

1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
6. I would be interested in helping plan a program with a new organization next semester
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
7. I shared an experience with my peers that made me feel seen/heard
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

Please include any comments or information that you would like to share or report regarding your experience thus far in the Collaborative Student Organization Coalition.

[empty text box]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! We take your experiences to heart and look forward to creating positive memories with you

Appendix H

End of Year Assessment

The Collaborative Student Organization Coalition would like to gain more information regarding your experiences participating in the efforts to improve campus racial climate at the University. You are receiving this survey due to your involvement in a student organization on campus. We hope to gain insight about your experience from this survey to evaluate progress of this coalition and the partnerships within.

We value your responses, which will remain confidential, and will not disclose any information in your survey responses to any person(s) outside of the established Collaborative Student Organization Coalition, henceforth known as CSOC.

1. What is your current standing with the University?
 - a. First – year
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate student

2. Race/Ethnic Identity:
 - a. African/Black American
 - b. African
 - c. Latino/Latina/Latinx
 - d. Asian
 - e. Asian American
 - f. More than one race/ethnicity - multiracial

3. Gender identity:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Trans
 - d. Non-binary
 - e. Prefer not to say

Please indicate your position on the following statements on a scale of 1-5:

4. I enjoyed the joint programs offered by my organization and its partner
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

5. As a result of attending a joint program I have felt an increased sense of belonging at the University

1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
6. At one point in my time at the University I felt like I did not belong due to my race/ethnicity
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
7. As a result of joining the Collaborative Student Organization Coalition I have felt a heightened connection to my peers
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
8. I would recommend my organization and the CSOC to friends and incoming new students
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
9. Joining the CSOC has improved my experience at the University
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree

Please include any comments or information that you would like to share or report regarding your experience this year in the Collaborative Student Organization Coalition.

[empty text box]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! We take your experiences to heart and hope that this initiative continues to inspire students to improve themselves and their surrounding community.

Appendix I

Joint Program Assessment

Thank you for attending this program! We'd love to gain some information about your experience to help us offer awesome and informative programming.

1. Program Title:
[empty text box]
2. What is your year?
 - a. First-year
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate student
3. Race/Ethnicity:
 - a. African/Black American
 - b. African
 - c. Latino/Latina/Latinx
 - d. Asian American
 - e. Asian
 - f. Native American
 - g. More than one race/ethnicity - multiracial
 - h. White
4. Is this the first program you've attended by (org. name here)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Please indicate your position on the following statements on a scale of 1-5:

5. I would recommend this program to a friend/peer
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
6. I would like for more programs like this to be offered
 1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

Please answer the following open-ended questions

7. As a result of attending this program I gained more information regarding:

[empty text box]

8. Because of attending this program, I now feel comfortable discussing:

[empty text box]

Thank you again for attending this program!

Appendix J

Matching Funds

Good morning [Organization name here]!

I am writing as a follow-up to our meeting regarding the Collaborative Student Organization Coalition on (insert date here). As a reminder, the CSOC has allocated marketing and advertisement funds for each collaborative partnership for the year. We are hoping that your organization will agree to match the designated (insert dollar amount) towards the programming and advertising efforts for your organization. These events not only help individual student participation and community building, but aid in providing students with experiences to heighten their university connectedness. We hope that your organization will join us on this venture towards a better sense of belonging for our students.

Best,

Elissa Wingfield