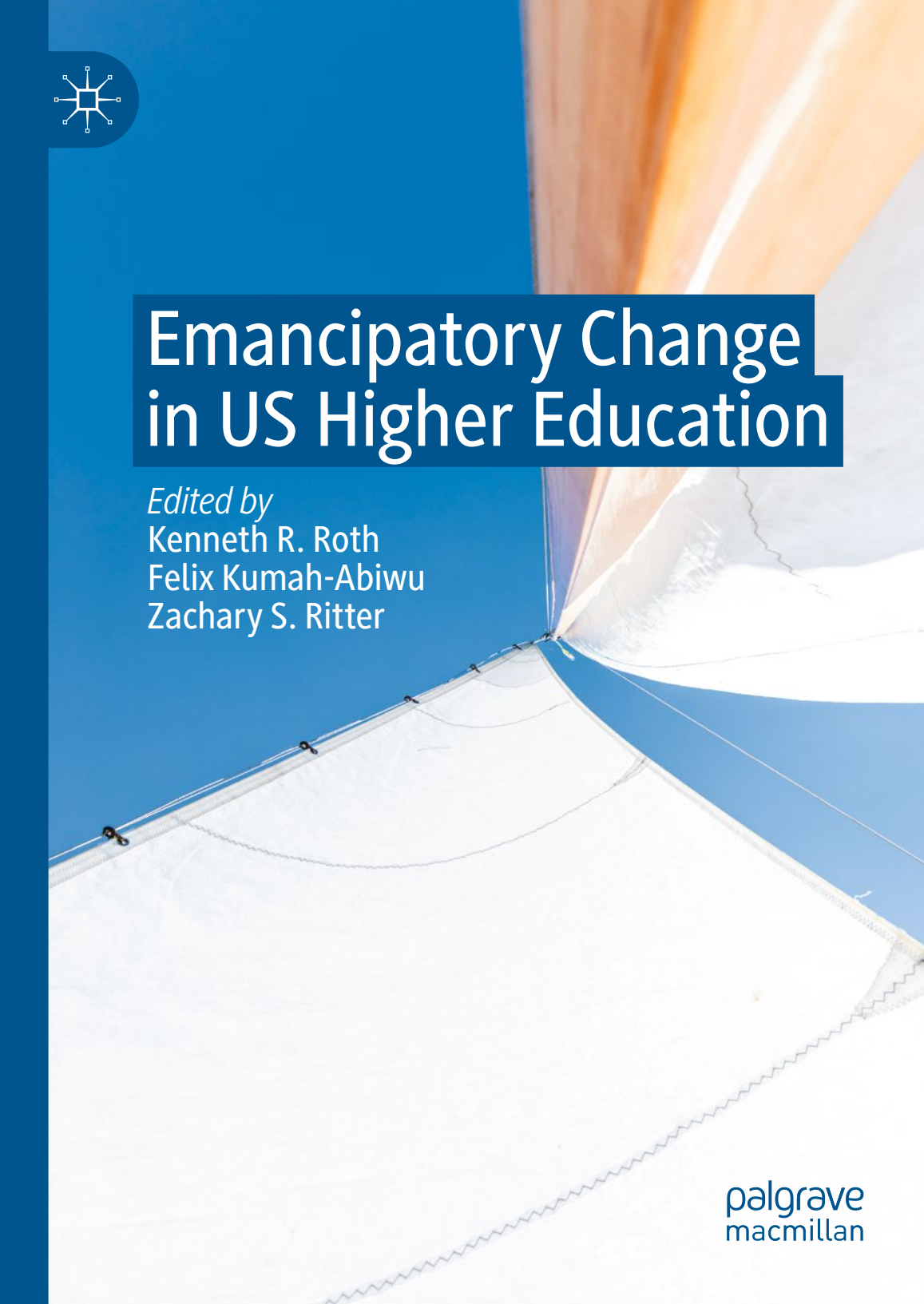

Emancipatory Change in US Higher Education

Edited by
Kenneth R. Roth
Felix Kumah-Abiwu
Zachary S. Ritter

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"This path-breaking book augments higher education's long-held aspirations to better serve underrepresented groups. It proposes new avenues to assist a changing student body to succeed, in classrooms and in life. A "must read" for scholars and administrators."

—Walter R. Allen, Ph.D. *Allan Murray Cartter Professor of Higher Education Distinguished Professor Education, Sociology and African American Studies UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies*

"A lot has been written about higher education in the US in terms of the problems and challenges it faces, and its role and place in the development of American society. Emancipatory Change in US Higher Education is unique in that the editors have assembled an august group of scholars to examine the possibilities of higher education in the US. Essentially, this is not a regurgitation of the old but a brilliant examination and proposition of what can be and what should be."

—Sabella Abidde, Ph.D. *Professor of Political Science at Alabama State University*

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Felix Kumah-Abiwu • Zachary S. Ritter
Editors

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Preface

The prospect of radical change facing higher education, particularly US higher education, has never been greater in our recent era. Emerging from a global pandemic, and ground-level rebellion over ongoing structured racism and inequality across American institutions, the nation's colleges and universities continue to be a proving ground for increased diversity, systems and ways of operation that more equitably distribute social benefits across race, gender, class, identity, and abilities. The editors of this book have collaborated on previous projects as contributors or editors. We have been successful in bringing leading scholars to engage with the challenges and problems facing US higher education on critical issues of whiteness, power structures, and the marginality of urban communities in those previous works. Instead of critiquing current processes as we have done in our other Palgrave titles, we have decided to explore aspirational outcomes through new visions for education delivery, shared governance and power shifts within the academy, a reinvigorated focus on democratic ideals and practices within the curriculum, and a shift from neoliberal market-based operational strategies.

For several decades, American higher education has relied on its sorting function as the route to quality employment and life. But that promise has become increasingly fleeting given the growing number of students, parents, and employers who hold a diminished view of the econometric value of the outcomes from higher education. At the same time, the soaring cost of education has mired many in a crushing debt cycle, reducing them to debt service for decades after graduation. In many ways, higher education has retreated from a mass or universal model, in terms of participation and

potential outcomes, to the elitist and privileged model on which it was built. The lack of access to American's higher education by people from underserved communities, especially Black and Brown communities, is raising further questions about the commonly held view of education as the greatest equalizer for all. We have also been successful in bringing leading scholars from various academic backgrounds with shared interests in US higher education as contributors to this volume. The interdisciplinary nature/perspective of contributors, their central ideas, and arguments undergird this unique volume. The following summary of chapters captures the main ideas authors are working with.

Marcela Cuellar's **Introduction** or Chapter 1 captures the totality of the book, with a focus on the aspirational nature of *what can be*. Reflecting on her own personal education journey, Cuellar argues that the future of higher education must represent efforts to reassert dignity and give back to communities long disempowered in our country. In **Chap. 2**, Richard Van Heertum chronicles the growing danger facing American democracy, which he argues has been under attack along multiple fronts. Drawing on the relationship between democracy and higher education, the chapter offers useful strategies and ideas on how educators can help cultivate a renewed faith in the possibility of positive social change in America's higher education. **Chapter 3** takes on the challenges most women faculty of color have had to face during the COVID-19 pandemic. Marie Lo, Patti Duncan, and Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt discuss the idea of how institutional spaces that often marginalize faculty of color can be reimagined through spaces of healing from the trauma associated with oppressive workplaces.

Chapter 4 by Brad Erickson and Wei Ming Dariotis explores equity/efficacy in teaching effectiveness assessment (TEA). The chapter examines the challenges associated with the practice in universities and concludes by offering a practical guidance in the development of transformative TEA practices for all educational institutions.

Chapter 5 extends the central ideas of the book to cover the debate on access for students and their success in American Higher Education. Rashida Crutchfield, Travis Hedwig, and Henoc Preciado argue for equal access to higher education for marginalized students. They also suggest the need for the design of novel initiatives that address students' basic needs. **Chapter 6** by Edgar Lopez and Adrian Huerta connects well to the previous chapter on how higher education can provide resources for marginalized students to increase their academic persistence. Drawing on

examples from the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on graduate students, the authors offer useful recommendations for universities to support graduate students of color.

In **Chap. 7**, Kenneth Roth and Zachary Ritter examine the dearth of focus on *representation* in media production degree programs. They argue that greater emphasis on critiquing media in advance of production is necessary, to question whether stereotypes and historically simple ways of representing people, places, power, and politics are evident in the production plan. They advocate for a Center for Sight and Sound, where studies focus on race, gender, abilities, politick, religion, and other personal characteristics and how they are represented within the televisual frame. **Chapter 8** looks at the quiet revolution occurring in higher education on the issue of trauma. Christopher Kazanjian and David Rutledge argue the humanistic psychology of the 1960s that helped fashion a person-centered multicultural education has the potential to rebuild higher education in the wake of the pandemic's existential trauma.

Chapter 9 by Abigail Tarango examines the experiences of the Latina *Madre* and her education journey. The chapter provides a vivid description of the challenges often faced by Latinas and their inspiring stories of academic success. The integration of Chicana feminist thought and relevant experiences makes this analysis greatly enriching. **Chapter 10** delves into the debate on why race matters in financial literacy in America's higher education. In the chapter, Daniel Harris examines what he describes as the changes to state and federal student aid that have created unprecedented challenges to college affordability for students of color. The author offers useful recommendations on how these issues can be addressed. In **Chap. 11**, Felix Kumah-Abiwu explores Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and the record-breaking donations from philanthropists and corporations to these institutions after the death of George Floyd in 2020. Providing explanations for the record-breaking donations to HBCUs, Kumah-Abiwu argues that these donations have the potential to create further funding opportunities for HBCUs to better serve their students. Finally, in **Chap. 12,** Siduri Haslerig and Kirsten Hextrum discuss their experiences, addressing inequity in college sport and a colloquium they developed and presented on the same topic. The chapter traces their steps through the process and their approach and strategies to look at ways that the colloquium can become a model to create humanizing, collective, and enriching academic research, programming, and presentation spaces.

Across the nation and many fields of endeavor, new ideas and models are emerging for social interaction, political exchange, and ways of survival outside those of a less-competitive era. This volume seeks to anticipate some of the possibilities of a renewed purpose in higher education to more adequately meet the demands it faces from an increasingly diverse, discerning, and demanding clientele.

Tucson, AZ — Kenneth Roth
Kent, OH — Felix Kumah-Abiwu
Los Angeles, CA — Zachary Ritter

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Rashida M. Crutchfield is an associate professor in the School of Social Work at California State University Long Beach (CSULB) and the Director of the Center for Equitable Higher Education. She is an advocate committed to amplifying the voices of marginalized communities through research and service. Prior to her work at CSULB, she served on the staff of Covenant House California, a shelter for 18-to-24-year-olds experiencing homelessness. This experience blossomed a passion for support of this population. Rashida led the phase one of the California State University Office of the Chancellor study on food and housing security and was co-principal investigator for phases two and three of the same study. Rashida has authored or co-authored many publications, including a book entitled *Addressing Homelessness and Housing Insecurity in Higher Education: Strategies for Educational Leaders.*

Marcela G. Cuellar is an associate professor in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis. Her research examines higher education access and equity with a focus on Latinx/a/o students' experiences and outcomes at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and emerging HSIs, campus racial climate, and community college baccalaureates. Her scholarship has been published in *Community College Review*, *Journal of Higher Education*, and *Review of Higher Education*. Originally from Oxnard, California, she is the proud daughter of Mexican immigrants.

Wei Ming Dariotis is co-chair of the Teaching Effectiveness Assessment (TEA) Task Force, Professor of Asian American Studies, affiliate faculty of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program, and Faculty Director of

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Patti Duncan is an associate professor of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Oregon State University, where she specializes in women of color feminisms and transnational feminisms. She is the author of *Tell This Silence: Asian American Women Writers and the Politics of Speech*; co-editor of *Mothering in East Asian Communities: Politics and Practices*; and co-editor of *Women's Lives Around the World: A Global Encyclopedia*. Her work has appeared in *Women's Studies Quarterly*; *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*; *Qualitative Inquiry*; *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, & Social Justice*; *The Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement*, and many book collections. Since 2016, she has served as editor-in-chief of *Feminist Formations*.

Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt is the Edith Green Distinguished Professor in the English Department at Linfield University in Oregon and also co-coordinates the Gender Studies program. She is a teacher-scholar and a cultural critic and is the author of *The Postcolonial Citizen: The Intellectual Migrant* and is the lead editor of *Civility, Free Speech and Academic Freedom in Higher Education: Faculty on the Margins*. Her scholarship and creative writing are widely published and circulated in various literary and scholarly journals. Dutt-Ballerstadt also serves as the editor for Inside Higher Ed's column "Conditionally Accepted," a column for marginalized faculty in higher education and the co-editor for a new and forthcoming column in Truthout called "The Corporate University." She is also the founder of Academic Trauma in Higher Education.

Brad Erickson PhD (UC Berkeley, Socio-Cultural Anthropology 2008), is a researcher, educator and activist investigating the intersections of policy, public reasoning, cultural practice, and history to perpetuate or resist inequality. He is full-time Lecturer Faculty in Liberal Studies at San Francisco State University where he is Vice Chair of the Academic Senate, Vice

President of the California Faculty Association Local 1983, and active in Oakland politics where he researches the racial aesthetics of gentrification and resistance. Representative publications include "Utopian Virtues: Muslim Neighbors, Ritual Sociality, and the Politics of *Convivència*." *American Ethnologist* 38(1): 113–130 (2011); "Blue on Black Violence and Original Crime." *Anthropoliteia: Critical Perspectives on Police, Security, Crime, Law and Punishment. 21 Aug.* (2014); and "Abolish the Lecturer: A Manifesto for Faculty Equity." In *Whiteness, Power, and Resisting Change in US Higher Education*, eds. K. R. Roth & Z. S. Ritter. London: Palgrave Studies in Race, Inequality and Social Justice in Education. 215–228 (2021).

Daniel Harris, PhD, is the inaugural Bayard Rustin Post-doc Fellow at Whittier College. In his role, Daniel is responsible for equity-based research, programming, and faculty development at the College. His formal research examines the role that race and racism inform the academic options, experiences, and outcomes of Black students to and through higher education. Before joining Whittier College, Daniel taught at the K-12 and higher education levels and worked as a data analyst in the nonprofit educational sector. He also served as a fellow for the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans under the Obama administration. Daniel crafted policy recommendations during his fellowship that advanced the Initiative's agenda to promote educational advancement among Black communities. Daniel also held two terms as Education Pioneers Fellow with the Leadership for Educational Equity (LEE) and the Broad Center in New York, New York, and Los Angeles, California. Daniel completed his undergraduate studies at Georgetown University and formal graduate studies at Columbia University, Teachers College, and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Siduri Haslerig is an associate professor, Linda Clarke Anderson Presidential Professor, and associate dean for Research & Graduate Studies in the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education. Her scholarship nests the study of intercollegiate athletics within higher education, emphasizing analysis of race and equity through innovative qualitative methods. In addition to conducting the first study of graduate student athletes' experiences, she is writing a book about racialized and political coverage embedded in college sport broadcasts.

Travis Hedwig is an applied cultural/medical anthropologist and Assistant Professor of Health Sciences at the University of Alaska Anchorage. His primary research interests involve impairment/disability and health

inequality in the areas of housing and homelessness, mental and behavioral health, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), and community-based supported living. Travis has worked extensively on questions related to cultural adoption and kinship caregiving, child welfare, adolescent health, suicide prevention, community-engaged approaches to alcohol and substance misuse risk prevention, and health advocacy. He is passionate about teaching and learning and enjoys the challenge of translating research into practice in collaboration with communities.

Kirsten Hextrum, assistant professor and Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professor, is a nationally recognized expert on college athletic admission and the author of *Special Admission: How College Sports Recruitment Favors White Suburban Athletes* (2021). Her work has appeared in top journals (e.g., *Harvard Educational Review* and *Teachers College Record*) and media outlets (e.g., The Atlantic and NPR). She is a frequent host of equity workshops and the faculty advisor for OU's white athlete ally program and other athlete-equity groups.

Adrian H. Huerta, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Education in the Pullias Center for Higher Education, Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. His research focuses on boys and men of color, college access and equity, and gang-associated youth and young adults. His scholarship appears in *Boyhood Studies*, *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, *Teachers College Record*, *The Urban Review*, *Urban Education*, and other practitioner and scholarly journals. He is a past recipient of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Minority Dissertation Fellowship and is Racial Equity Fellow with Health Affairs.

Christopher J. Kazanjian, PhD, is Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at El Paso Community College. Kazanjian is the author of *Empowering Children: A Multicultural Humanistic Approach* and *Creating Meaning in Young Adulthood: The Self-Actualizing Power of Relationships.* Since 2015, he has served as the program director for the after-school program Kidz n' Coaches, El Paso, which pairs volunteer college students coaches with emerging children in prosocial group activities to support culturally relative self-actualization processes.

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Marie Lo is Professor and Chair of English at Portland State University. Her work explores the settler imperial genealogies of contemporary US culture, from the intersections of nineteenth century US Indian removal policies and anti-Asian exclusion laws to the intersections of empire, race, and craft. Recent publications can be found in *The Global South*, *ASAP/Journal*, and *Critical Ethnic Studies*.

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Henoc Preciado joined the California State University (CSU) Office of the Chancellor in October 2019 and serves as the Systemwide Manager of Basic Needs Initiatives having worked with marginalized and underserved student populations over the past eight years at CSU Fullerton and CSU Los Angeles. Prior to his role, Henoc served as the Director of the Dreamers Resource Center at Cal State, Los Angeles. In his role, Henoc works closely with the 23 campuses in the CSU as programs and services are created and delivered to support students who experience food and housing insecurity and homelessness. He provides regular oversight of state-funded grants, totaling more than $21M, including one-time funds to expand basic needs programs and ongoing funds to pilot the implemen-

tation of college-focused rapid rehousing programs. Henoc is a proud product of the California State University, holding his Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Cal State Fullerton and his Master of Science degree in Higher Postsecondary Education from Syracuse University.

Zachary S. Ritter is Interim Associate Dean of Students at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), where he focuses on conduct issues from a restorative justice lens. He also teaches civic engagement and social justice history at UCLA. Prior to CSUDH, he was Associate Dean of the Office of Institutional Diversity at Harvey Mudd College and Associate Director of the Office of Campus Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Redlands. Ritter recently co-edited *Marginality in the Urban Center: The Costs and Challenges of Continued Whiteness in the Americas and Beyond*, for Palgrave Macmillan.

Kenneth R. Roth is a Research Associate with the Choices Program at UCLA, where he examines access and equity issues associated with college-going among underrepresented groups. Previously, he taught research methods and organizational communication at USC's Rossier School of Education, in addition to 13 years of teaching in the Art, Digital Media and Communication Departments at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Roth began his professional career as a print journalist, writing and editing for daily newspapers and magazines in five Western states. He co-edited *Marginality in the Urban Center: The Costs and Challenges of Continued Whiteness in the Americas and Beyond*, with Zachary Ritter and Peary Brug, and *Whiteness, Power and Resisting Change in US Higher Education: A Peculiar Institution*, also with Zachary Ritter.

David Rutledge, PhD, is Associate Professor of Educational Design and Learning Technology at New Mexico State University. Rutledge is interested in the role technology plays in teacher professional development. His areas of research focus on technology integration for inclusionary teaching practices, language learning, and equitable educational approaches. Rutledge has multiple publications related to equitable teaching practices for members of marginalized populations.

B. Abigail Tarango has demonstrated capacity and expertise in the field of education by working in early childhood, secondary and postsecondary instruction and administration for the last 20 years. Her experiences in academics (curriculum design, instructional methods, and assessment) have provided a solid foundation in student-centered practices, and Tarango's

work in school district operations (long-range facilities planning, transportation, bond referendums—over 855M to date, and other areas) has allowed for a deep understanding of public school systems. Most recently, Abigail served in a Pk-12 administrative role and as an Executive Cabinet-level Director at a large urban school district in the Southwest Borderlands; her diverse background has expanded from educator and practitioner to tactician and strategist. Additionally, serving in the last three legislative sessions, government affairs, and policy on public education has proven invaluable to understanding the effect of local, state, and federal policy work in education. As of 2021, Tarango left education to pursue a career in the nonprofit world, as the Executive Director of the University Medical Center Foundation of El Paso, El Paso Children's Hospital Foundation, and Presidenta de la Fundacion de Mexico UMC.

Richard Van Heertum is an LAS Faculty member/Academic Advisor at the New York Film Academy, Los Angeles. He has also taught at UCLA, CUNY, the Art Institute and Drexel. Richard has a PhD from UCLA in Cultural Studies and education and an MA in Economics from SDSU. He has published four books: *The Fate of Democracy in a Cynical Age: Education, Media & the Evolving Public Sphere* (2009), *Educating the Global Citizen: Globalization, Educational Reform, and the Politics of Equity and Inclusion* (2011), *Hollywood Exploited: Corporate Movies, Public Pedagogy and Cultural Crisis* (2010, Palgrave) and *The Selling of Bohemia* (2015). He has presented at over 20 conferences, published 30 academic essays and chapters and hundreds of articles in the popular press on movies, music, politics and sports.

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Transforming Higher Education—Reflections on the Past and Possibilities for the Future

Marcela G. Cuellar

Higher education often is touted as a great social equalizer through its potential to provide social mobility for anyone regardless of racial or economic background. My own trajectory into and through higher education is an example of the possibilities it holds, especially for minoritized students. I attended a private selective university six hours away from home for my undergraduate education. As a first-generation, low-income Latina, the environment at Stanford was so foreign to my home and community in Oxnard, California. In this space, I observed and directly experienced the disparities in educational resources and preparation among students from different zip codes and family backgrounds. I encountered culture shock in this predominantly white institution and navigated my way toward graduation through much trial and error. At the same time, this was a transformative experience through the knowledge and friends that I gained. My awareness of educational inequities subsequently inspired me

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to pursue a career supporting other college aspirants to achieve their goals, which eventually led me to graduate school to research and produce solutions to these issues. Now, as a tenured faculty member, I teach students about these issues, learn from their current experiences, and generate knowledge on how we can reduce education inequities in higher education.

While much has changed in the world in the 25 years since I first stepped onto my first college campus, this trajectory into and through higher education still reflects the story of many of our students—many of the students with whom I engage with in the classroom and in my research. The importance of a college degree for upward mobility has only intensified. Even in the midst of growing costs for a postsecondary education, a college degree remains a primary pathway toward career and economic advancement. Social mobility has become the primary goal for many students. Students from the lowest income backgrounds, many of whom are students of color, know a ticket to a better life is contingent on earning a postsecondary degree, especially from the most elite institutions. Paul Tough (2019) captures the psychological and emotional toll this takes on students when they anxiously wait for admission decisions after years of intense preparation, planning, and dreaming of going to college. Tough (2019) draws from Dr. Raj Chetty's research illustrating how these patterns are consistent and increasingly stronger though the enrollment patterns of students from the lowest income brackets and remain low at approximately 3–4% annually. In other words, students who would benefit most from these institutions have the least access. On the other hand, low-income students, many of whom are students of color, are more likely to enroll at less selective public institutions, including the two-year sector, where graduation rates are generally lower and institutions receive the fewest resources. This structure reinforces inequity in its design.

The role of higher education in supporting the nation's economy cannot be overstated. However, this provides only a partial view into the multiple roles higher education occupies in society. The United States' aspirations for a more democratic and just society are intertwined with goals of higher education. However, the reality of achieving these democratic ideals falls short. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the fissures and inequities in our higher education system, as well as the possibility of immediate changes responding to a global health and economic crisis. These challenges remain moving forward. To address these challenges, González (2011) reminds us we must reflect on the history of higher education that has led us to this point. Despite changes throughout the past 400 years since its

inception in this United States, essential elements of higher education endure.

Purposes of Higher Education in Steady Tension

Throughout history, higher education has held multiple purposes. On the one hand, higher education is strongly aligned with building and supporting strong economies. On the other, higher education aims to produce knowledge that may not yield immediate economic returns but offers tremendous social value. Specifically, higher education has been central in the development of educated citizens who engage in democratic processes and advance communities. Though the tensions between utilitarian and liberal education coexist, the emphasis toward one or another is shaped by different social, economic, and political contexts.

History teaches us higher education has been central in the establishment of powerful nations. Great nations build and invest in strong education systems (González, 2011). This is also true in US higher education. In 1636, the Pilgrims established the first college, Harvard, only 16 years after their arrival here to colonize as the United States. Harvard was modeled after Cambridge and Oxford with a strong emphasis on teaching. Each colony similarly erected its own institutions of learning (Geiger, 2016). The primary purpose of these institutions was to educate white men who were land owners to become the future leaders and clergy in these colonies. Our institutions of higher education in the United States are thus Eurocentric and patriarchal in design.

As the United States developed as a nation, higher education remained a key feature in establishing its growth and emergence as a global power. The federal government invested in the creation of new institutions to expand access and meet its economic goals. In 1862, passage of the Morrill Act fundamentally transformed higher education for a broader populace and solidified its role in advancing the economic needs of the country. This act provided "federal land" to states to support the establishment of new public institutions in more practical areas of study. The curriculum at these institutions would emphasize agriculture and mechanical arts to support and build the local economies in newer territories. States could use this land to build a college if one did not exist or sell these lands to invest in existing institutions. Land-grant institutions are thus often romanticized as providing greater access to higher education and serving the public good. Later, the development of a robust system of community colleges

emerged from earlier conversations in the 1947 Truman Commission report to provide an education to support the economy and an educated citizenry for our democracy (Gilbert & Heller, 2013). But who has access to higher education and how has the public good been defined?

Leigh Patel (2021) reminds us the structure of higher education has been serving the public good but at the expense of many marginalized people, including the exploitation of slave labor and stolen indigenous lands. Settler colonialism undergirds higher education creating a system that creates and protects wealth for a select few. The dominant cultures within most institutions of higher education remain Eurocentric and promote norms and values that preserve the status quo (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012). Deficit thinking pervades these systems as students who fail to assimilate or succeed are held responsible without any blame falling on institutions. While most institutions are shifting their cultures to be more diversity-oriented, many of these efforts frequently remain peripheral and/or confined to certain spaces, such as ethnic studies or ethnic student organizations (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012). Diversity may be espoused as a value to enhance learning across the institution without addressing racial inequities at a structural level. As a result, many students of color, at the undergraduate and graduate levels, continue to encounter culture shock and feel like they are "guests in someone else's home"—a feeling that extends to faculty and staff from minoritized backgrounds (Turner, 1994; Yosso, 2006).

The contemporary shift toward social mobility as the primary goal of higher education complicates matters further. As a result, social mobility views higher education as a commodity that serves to increase individual opportunities and meets individual needs over those of a collective. This orientation diminishes the value and emphasis on goals that are more oriented toward serving the public good (Labaree, 1997). While this has become the tagline for the importance of a college education, students express more emancipatory visions. In the classroom, undergraduates often remind their aspirations and hopes for a college education are deeper than a monetization of learning, which compelled me to probe their thoughts on higher education more systematically in a recent study. Students, my colleagues and I interviewed, shared how social mobility was emphasized consistently at home, in school, and in society throughout their life as the goal for pursuing a college education (Cuellar et al., 2022). This was true for first-generation students, those whose parents did not have a college degree, and those with college-educated parents. Many

students, however, were motivated by other goals that were oriented more toward becoming engaged citizens, and effecting change in society broadly. Most first-generation students also connected their college goals to uplifting their families and communities. Some described how their views had changed during college to include more than social mobility, contrary to dominant narratives. These students thus give me hope for the future.

Progress, Constraints, and Potential for Transformation

Despite the limitations in its design, some transformation has occurred throughout the history of higher education. Powerfully connecting the struggles of oppressed individuals and study, Leigh Patel (2021) recounts how minoritized students and social movements are at the heart of these changes. Access to a college education during the 1960s helped the development of many Black and Chicanx/a/o students groups. Student movements in this time pushed for more inclusive practices. These collective efforts produced lasting changes in higher education with the inclusion of ethnic studies, ethnic cultural centers, and ethnic student organizations (Chang et al., 2005).

Progress in postsecondary access and equity, unfortunately, is not always linear. For example, the steady postsecondary access Black students gained throughout the 1800s through the establishment of various colleges that opened their doors to these marginalized students (Harper et al., 2009). With the passage of the Morrill Act of 1890, the federal government established public land-grant universities to educate African American students, thereby legalizing segregation in public postsecondary institutions across 17 states (Harper et al., 2009). While the creation of these public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) expanded access, inequities remained. These HBCUs generally offered a lower quality education than predominantly white land-grant institutions established under the 1862 Morrill Act. Desegregation and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ushered still greater education opportunities for African American students. However, these gains were short lived. Harper et al. (2009) outline the various ways inequitable funding for and desegregation of HBCUs along with removal of affirmative action policies diminished opportunities for African American students. These patterns

reinforce at a larger scale the natural inclination within campuses to be selectively inclusive as opposed to truly transformational (Patel, 2021).

Yet, some educational leaders illustrate that institutional change and transformation to better serve historically underserved students is possible. In *The Empowered University*, President Freeman A. Hrawbowski III and colleagues (2019) discuss how the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, enacted a shift from mostly a top-down leadership approach to a more inclusive process that deeply engage faculty, staff, and students. This cultural model encourages individuals to be leaders in their respective areas of influence by challenging and working with the university's administration to take action on critical issues or propose and implement new programs and initiatives that more intentionally support students. While cultural change is hard, it is possible. The empowered university recognizes its strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities, as well as embraces and incentivizes innovation and risk taking. Institutional members share a narrative of where the institution has been, where they are, and where they are going. This work, however, is grounded in being unapologetically aspirational. Institutional leaders must aim to be what America wants to be and recognize the critical role of higher education in achieving this vision. While this vision may seem unattainable, President Hrawbowski draws on the powerful words of Nelson Mandela to remind us, "it always seems impossible until it is done."

Minority-serving institutions (MSIs) also serve as models of what is possible in our stratified system of higher education. While the histories and missions of MSIs differ, these institutions serve many minoritized student populations historically excluded from higher education (Gasman et al., 2015). For more than 150 years, HBCUs have fostered validating environments where faculties are committed to student success in culturally affirming approaches. For the past half century, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) have provided a similarly affirming education for Native Americans rooted in tribal traditions and indigenous knowledge. Newer types of MSIs, such as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Asian American Pacific Islander Institutions (AANAPISIs), respectively, provide postsecondary access to a significant proportion of Latinx/a/o and Asian American and Pacific Islander students. These institutions are defined by enrollment criteria established by the federal government, which makes them eligible for competitive grant funding. The mission of most HSIs and AANAPISIs does not explicitly center these students, but rather reflects growing enrollment among these student populations.

Yet, several HSIs and AANAPISIs adopt institutional changes that are culturally responsive to the educational needs of their student populations. Sheer comparisons in graduation rates between HSIs and non-HSIs show gaps, with HSIs graduating fewer students. Dr. Gina A. Garcia (2019) argues these negative portrayals of HSIs reflect our racially stratified postsecondary system. The best predictors of graduation rates are incoming students' backgrounds and institutional resources, indicators of white normative standards, which automatically privileges institutions that are more selective and enroll larger proportions of white students. Research, in fact, shows gaps in graduation rates between HSIs and non-HSIs disappear when accounting for student- and institutional-level inputs (Flores & Park, 2015; Rodríguez & Galdeano, 2015). Thus, these institutions are historically oppressed like the students they educate.

As our system of higher education disrupts historical legacies of exclusion, Garcia (2018) argues HSIs serve as models for inclusion by decolonizing traditional modes of operation steeped in whiteness. Through counterstories in *Becoming Hispanic-Serving Institutions*, Garcia (2019) illustrates how some HSIs may integrate pedagogical and organizational practices that honor the cultural values of Latinx/a/o students but struggle in increasing graduation rates. Others reframe what success means among this student population altogether while others may succeed in graduating Latinx/a/o students similar to their white peers but through Latinx/a/o neutral approaches. These narratives represent the challenges HSIs and institutions, more generally, face in adopting more inclusive practices for racially minoritized students. Garcia ultimately charges educators at HSIs to decolonize our (and their) minds to reimagine how HSIs can and should operate in a racially stratified postsecondary system. This charge applies to all institutions of higher education.

Reimagining Higher Education for the Next Generation

In this moment of racial reckoning and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, enduring elements of higher education are open for questioning. Persistent inequities in college access and degree attainment merit scrutiny. We have agency to question, reimagine, and enact different approaches that meet societal demands to more closely reflect the emancipatory system generations before have aspired to achieve. In this sense, the goals and

structure of higher education must unapologetically realign with the ideals of the United States as a democratic nation. We are now at a critical juncture where we need to create institutions that serve as models for the next generation of students. These institutions must be restructured in a manner that confronts their past and reimagines their future to serve increasingly multicultural student bodies.

Since 2015, I have taught an undergraduate course at UC Davis covering contemporary issues facing higher education. Common topics include the tensions between public and private goals, access for the historically undeserved (including students of color, undocumented students, low-income students, student parents, etc.), campus racial climate, and the challenges the new economy of college-going that Sara Goldrick-Rab (2016) describes poses for students, families, and society. I value teaching this course because discussions with students ground me. Each term, I conclude this course by reminding students they have a unique and important vantage point on these higher education issues. Most of them navigate these challenges directly. I remind them students have often been at the center of major transformations in higher education, which has usually aligned with pushing our institutions to be more responsive to society's problems (Rhoads, 2016).

As I complete this introductory chapter, I just finished teaching this course for the seventh time. When I started the semester in January, UC Davis was transitioning back excitedly yet cautiously to large-scale in-person instruction since the shutdown due to the global pandemic in March 2020. That also was the last time I taught this course. Unfortunately, almost two years later, like so many campuses across California and the nation, we immediately shifted to virtual instruction given the surge of the omicron variant. While my university planned to shift to in-person teaching at the end of January, I requested and was granted permission to teach the course remotely for the remainder of the term given students' and my own concerns over our health and safety, as well as a need to minimize the continued uncertainty in all aspects of life in these challenging moments.

In our final week of the course, I also gathered students' thoughts on the future of higher education. Given their unique views in this time I asked them to describe where they would like to see higher education in five or ten years. Their answers were illuminating. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many addressed college affordability and the need for decreasing college costs and student debt. Others noted recognizing students' mental health needs and providing more resources to support students in general,

especially those who are returning students, student parents, transfer students, and commuter students. Another set of students wanted to see greater access to a college education and leveraging technology for this purpose. Others described the need to value the holistic goals of education, including the value of humanities and liberal arts, preparing students for more than career readiness, and helping students find purpose. These answers demand a shift away from neoliberal forces engulfing the American university, to creating institutions that humanize students. This is what higher education must do.

Education thought leaders have long theorized and advocated for the adoption of humanizing approaches to teaching and learning in higher education. bell hooks (1994) asserted our school system is a system of oppression and we must teach liberation. Our education practices in higher education too often remove *the emotional self* from the learning process, creating a split between our mind and our body. Rendón (2009) similarly calls for the transformation of teaching in higher education to be more holistic and encourages faculty to educate students who are socially conscious. Lea, a fourth-year undergraduate in my class this past quarter, echoes these demands for changes in the classroom. In her response to what she hoped to see in higher education over the next five to ten years, she responded, "instructors to care deeply about their students and understand the power of the role they have. Even if they are lecturing to an audience of 600 a day, every word they speak has the power to transform and/or tear down the lives of the next generation." This is an emancipatory vision for teaching in higher education.

Most of our institutions are structured to educate a population that vastly differs from the majority of students we serve today. Institutions we revere in the higher education imaginary were built on problematic premises. If higher education is a mirror of society, the reflection shows us it is sorely falling short on delivering the promises it promotes. At the same time, this image perhaps suggests the system is working fine if the goal is to maintain a social hierarchy. Yet, a desire for a higher education for many students extends beyond making more money or simply gaining status for their own personal gain. For many, higher education represents collective efforts to reassert dignity and give back to their communities that so often remain disempowered in society. History shows us how higher education has been influenced by society and how it contributes to the betterment of society through the students it educates and the knowledge it produces.

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CHAPTER 2

The American University and the Struggle for Democracy

Richard Van Heertum

Introduction

Democracy is in great peril across the globe, a small cabal of global elites, right-wing organizations and populist authoritarians chipping away at foundational principles at the heart of popular sovereignty. The signs are everywhere. In Hungary, India and the Philippines, the public has been largely complicit in accepting democratic backsliding, while in countries like Venezuela and Turkey, people have experienced the full realization of the process (Taub, 2021). In China and Russia, power is consolidating in ways that undermine any notion of freedom, while threatening democratic neighbors in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Ukraine (Satariano & Mozur, 2021). In Egypt, Tunisia and Myanmar, popular rule is dying before our eyes as Africa suffers through its worst democratic backsliding in 40 years, with military coups in Chad, Guinea, Mali, Sudan and Burkina Faso. And across the globe, multinational corporations and a small coterie of global

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elites continue to hold outsized sway over decision-making at all layers of governance.

In fact, recent studies have shown global democracy has been on a steady decline since 2006 (Diamond, 2021; Repucci, 2020) and popular support for democracy has fallen substantially (Wike et al., 2019; Wike & Fetterolf, 2018). This is particularly true of the United States of America (US), with *The Economist* downgrading it from a full to a "flawed" democracy in 2017 and even further to 25th on the list in 2021, based on deficits in five criteria including electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation and political culture. The report's authors argue, "The US's overall performance is held back by a number of weaknesses, including extremely low levels of trust in institutions and political parties; deep dysfunction in the functioning of government; increasing threats to freedom of expression; and a degree of societal polarization that make consensus on any issue almost impossible to achieve."

Yet the problem today is more dire as an increasing cacophony of voices warns us America appears to be on the road to the potential collapse of our nearly 250-year experiment in popular rule (Gellman, 2021). The neo-populist, anti-democratic movements at the heart of the shift are centered on a virulent nationalism that sees difference as a threat to identity and economic livelihood—misplacing blame for the growing inequality and general decline in quality of life on immigrants, feminists, and minorities (Payne, 2017). These ultra-nationalist, xenophobic movements have been growing in stature in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, England, Hungary and, really, most of Europe to varying degrees for some time now (Rooduijn, 2015; Schaart, 2019). But the more recent movement in the United States, which arguably has its roots in the wake of 9/11 (Ackerman, 2021), has left it arguably the most vulnerable democracy in the Western world today.

At its core, the post-truth, authoritarian-tilting America of today is the full realization of a conservative project decades in the making (Perlstein, 2020). It is not a unique path, though, following well-tested strategies employed by authoritarian regimes throughout modern history. The process generally starts with attacking the media and experts as members of an elite class that looks down on the public and seeks to undermine popular will, alongside some essentialized feature of that country generally tied to national identity that must be rescued from an "invader." This redefining of the elites as the intellectual and professional classes allows an "outsider"

to come in to save the country from this invasion and purportedly corrupted institutions that have infected political, social and economic life. They simultaneously sow doubts about the electoral process, as part of a broader inculcation of cynicism regarding politicians and the entire political class except for them, as the sole savior, while delegitimating the mainstream media and other channels of empirical investigation, allowing them to spread partisan right-wing propaganda directly to their constituents through carefully cultivated conservative media outlets and, more recently, social media networks. Speaking to their followers, an increasingly insular tribe full of grievance and resentment, without the inconvenient interruption of facts or truth, allows them to mobilize the mob in service to their cause: with threats, intimidation and violence as essential features of the new collective consciousness (Taub, 2021).

In fact, as pointed out by Gessen (2016), Snyder (2017, 2018) and Chenoweth (2021) among others, the roots of the decline of democracy often lay more in the tacit acceptance of a disengaged or disillusioned public than a forceful takeover. Snyder reminds us of democracies since Ancient Greece have almost invariably fallen prey to tyranny eventually, often with the tacit support of a subset of the population. This process often can be surprisingly rapid. What happened after Trump won in 2016? The liberal establishment immediately demanded we accept the new President and give him a chance. His erratic behavior undermining the norms of democracy was then essentially normalized by the mainstream media rather quickly. Even those who had rejected him on the right soon began to accept his leadership and the troubling move toward authoritarian tendencies as more time passed, until the moment when enemies became committed friends and almost assisted him in "killing" American democracy. Since then, rather than turning their back on a man who lost the House, Senate and Presidency, while ceding states like Arizona and Georgia that had been firmly Republican for many years, the party has further cemented its commitment to Trumpism (if not always Trump himself) and its virulent counter majoritarianism (Parker et al., 2022).

In this chapter, I explore the relationship between the increasing threats to democracy and the university. I argue higher education has unwittingly become a key battleground in attempts to save democracy from forces seeking to strike it down, as one of the last bastions of progressive thought not fully encumbered by corporate and conservative takeover, though both have made great inroads in attempts to disempower higher education's potential, as they have already done with varying degrees of success

in K-12 education, the media, the Internet, the courts and political discourse itself. The battle over our collective future will be fought in the world of epistemology and the university can be a powerful voice on the side of science, truth and the struggle toward the common good.

Democracy in America

A series of essays in late 2021 warned our democracy could be on the precipice of collapse, either through neglect or through violent revolt. The *Washington Post*, for example, published "18 Steps to a Democratic Breakdown," which suggested:

> Democracy is most likely to break down through a series of incremental actions that cumulatively undermine the electoral process, resulting in a presidential election that produces an outcome clearly at odds with the voters' will. It is this comparatively quiet but steady subversion, rather than a violent coup or insurrection against a sitting president, that Americans today have to fear most. (Brooks & De Bruin, 2021)

The endangered state of American politics was also the dominant theme of eight articles published by the National Academy of Sciences, looking at hyper-partisanship and the inability or unwillingness of opposing sides to even listen to one another, much less move toward compromise—the essence of democracy from its onset. Zack Beauchamp, a senior correspondent at Vox, raised similar concerns, focusing on the source of the problem: "We are experiencing failures on both the elite and mass public level … Republican elites have chosen to normalize the violence committed by their extreme right flank on Jan. 6" (2021).

The Atlantic was also tolling the bells of warning in December with "Trump's Next Coup Has Already Begun" (2021), arguing "January 6 was practice. Donald Trump's GOP is much better positioned to subvert the next election." In the same issue, Packer, in "Are We Doomed?" (2021), envisions an even darker future of deep divisions, factional violence and a government supported by less than half the country imposing near martial rule. Canadian political scientist Thomas Homer-Dixon agreed, predicting, "By 2025, American democracy could collapse, causing extreme domestic political instability, including widespread civil violence. By 2030, if not sooner, the country could be governed by a rightwing dictatorship" (Luscombe, 2022). While three generals worried

the military itself might get involved in future coup attempt, reminding us the 124 retired generals and admirals openly supported Trump's false claims in 2020 (Kelly et al., 2021).

The general sentiment is perhaps best summed up by a piece in the *New York Times* asking whether we had passed the point of no return, arguing "Democracy—meaning equal representation of all citizens and, crucially, majority rule—has, in fact, become the enemy of the contemporary Republican Party" (Edsall, 2021). What is increasingly clear is one of the two major parties in the country is intent on establishing permanent minority rule in service of corporate America and the power elites, uninterested in enacting policies popular with the public or even most of their supporters (Cox, 2022). This long-term trend goes back to at least the conservative revolution of the Reagan 1980s (Perlstein, 2020), but which began to accelerate in the 1990s with the birth of Fox News, the Contract with America, and the ascendancy of Rush Limbaugh, Newt Gingrich and Glenn Beck. The Bush Administration, though often at odds with the far right on economic policy, tried to lay claim to almost limitless presidential power while serving the few and establishing the strategy of lying with reckless abandon. In 2010, it picked up further steam when Republicans took over the Senate on the back of a Koch-sponsored Tea Party revolt (Leonard, 2019) and decided obstruction was their raison d'etre until 2016, when they helped elect the most corrupt President in history. His defeat four years later and the "big lie" that quickly followed has left us in our current crisis, with Republican operatives across the country working to undermine free and fair elections, subvert the will of the people, spread false information in service to their agenda and set the stage for a successful coup d'état in 2024.

The threat to democracy today is thus as great, or greater, than at any time since the Civil War. Not only have large swaths of the public lost faith in our representatives and political institutions (Public Trust in Government: 1958–2021, 2021), not only has polarization reached heretofore unrealized heights (Macy et al., 2021), not only are Facebook and other social media sites seemingly intent on abetting the withering of democracy while fomenting violence, insurrection and suppression of free speech (Halpern, 2017; Silverman et al., 2021), but a growing plurality are willing to use violence to "save" the country from perceived threats constructed by the power elite (Balz et al., 2022). In a speech in early 2022, Trump went as far as openly calling for his followers to use violence

to save him from impending critical charges in several states. But how did we get here?

A number of interrelated strategies have been employed to this end. The first, which many seem unwilling to acknowledge though it has existed for some time, is to delegitimatize the electoral process itself. The approach has been deployed since the 2000 election as a false narrative about fraud used to suppress the vote, by pushing voter ID laws, poll taxes and other once outlawed methods generally targeted at minority voters (Bateman, 2016). Even as the narrative has been debunked again and again (Feldman, 2020), it continues to animate a frontal assault on our democracy. On March 26, 2020, during a morning appearance on Fox News, Trump summed up the Republican position quite well, talking about the original coronavirus relief bill, "The things they had in there were crazy. They had levels of voting that, if you ever agreed to it, you'd never have a Republican elected in the country again." That bill had $400 million for voter protection, down from the $2 billion experts said was needed. As we now know, it was enough, together with local and state funding, to ensure the most secure election in history, which endless recounts, court cases and even right-wing audits have shown, was without widespread fraud. And yet, Trump and his acolytes somehow convinced 58 percent of Republicans he won (at one point the percentage was closer to 75 percent) and 62 percent believed massive fraud was involved (Parker et al., 2022).

That lie, which has become popularly known as the "big lie," has led to the introduction of at least 440 bills in 49 states in 2021 alone, intent on suppressing the vote of minorities and the poor. Legislators in 19 states have passed 34 of these bills, directly restricting voter access by limiting early voting and mail in voting, imposing stricter voter ID laws, increasing the chance of faulty voter purging or explicitly creating laws that allow the state legislature to override the voters and select alternative electors (*Voting Laws Roundup: December 2021*, 2021). This is coupled with a second strategy, radical gerrymandering, which has allowed the GOP to be over-represented across state and federal offices for much of the past 20 years (Daley, 2019). As an example, in 2016, the Democrats won more votes in the House, Senate and for President, but lost all three. Rather than adjust this imbalance, recent decisions by the Supreme Court have essentially codified racially biased gerrymandering, by claiming state power supersedes their own in this case, even as they consistently go against federalism's central premises when it serves their ideological leanings (Cobb,

2019). A third, and potentially more troubling tactic, since voter suppression and gerrymandering have long been central, is Trump's operatives taking over local and state election offices, allowing them to undertake the step that many Republicans across the country were unwilling to in undermining the fair results of an election (Gardner et al., 2021). On top of this, 163 Republicans who have openly embraced Trump's lies are running for statewide positions that would give them authority over the administration of future elections, including 69 for governor, 55 for the Senate, 13 for state attorney general and 18 for secretary of state (Parker et al., 2022).

The failed coup of 2020 also has fortified a fourth strategy, using the courts to undermine not only the will of the people but local, state and federal legislatures and executives. It is not just the shadow docket of a Supreme Court, using a relatively secretive and unaccountable process for decision-making with huge implications (Donegan, 2021), or the fact Republicans have had an unfounded and outsized influence on judicial appointments up to the Supreme Court while Democrats have held the executive office for 17 of the past 29 years, but the way the courts seem to be increasingly intent on overturning legislative decisions and thus making laws themselves. This was never the intent of the constitution and goes against the traditional ideas of constitutionalists. Among the worst of these decisions are two that stand out for dramatically circumventing democratic norms. The first is the 2010 Citizens United decision that, together with the explosion of the lobbying industry in the 1980s, has corrupted the political process with money at levels that overwhelm the voice of the people (Hasen, 2019). To wit, in the last election cycle, an astounding 54 percent of the outside money came from only ten Super PACS (Lessig, 2021). The second is a series of recent decisions effectively neutering one of the signature acts of American politics over the past 60 years: the 1965 Voting Rights Act (Charles & Fuentes-Rohwer, 2021).

Many localities and states have attempted a fifth strategy, which is to outlaw protest itself, in line with effectively convincing tens of millions of Americans that protest and looting are synonymous when civil rights are the topic (Halliday & Hanna, 2021). The exoneration of Kyle Rittenhouse and his subsequent elevation to conservative darling are an open invitation to increased violence at protests, further shuttering an avenue for dissent. In a truly chilling new survey, one in three Americans believe violence against the government is sometimes acceptable (Pengelly, 2022). And, all of this is occurring as a democratic bill, For the People, languishes because of two heavily corporate-sponsored Democratic Senators and a campaign

by right-wing operatives to subvert legislation with popular support across party lines (Kaufman, 2021; Mayer, 2021).

These are but the most direct ways in which democracy is being threatened today. Popular rule has been under attack through conservative rhetoric and degradation of the channels of knowledge production for several decades now. The long-term strategy of maligning the mainstream media as having a liberal bias has borne huge dividends, with many Americans turning away from it toward more conservative, implicitly biased sources like Fox News, Newsmax, OAN and Breitbart, the unchecked information provided by social media, or simply choosing to ignore the news completely (Roberts, 2017). Local news outlets have been stripped bare to the detriment of community building, with the nationalizing of the agenda in recent years very effectively harnessing clear lines of ideological distinction (Sullivan, 2021). They have attacked K-12 schooling through neoliberal and, more recently, neopopulist reform efforts, instrumentalizing knowledge, largely eliminating civics education, undermining multicultural efforts to increase tolerance and embrace of difference, and exacerbating the achievement gap and overall inequality of the system. They have bred a deep cynicism through their political rhetoric going all the way back to Nixon and then Reagan. And they have infected popular culture with conservative messaging that maligns progressive goals, drums the beat of nationalism and justified violence, reaffirms the centrality of capitalist and consumer culture ideals, and breeds a lack of faith in the ability of government, the courts or the community to enact positive social change.

Democracy is thus threatened from all sides. Violent attacks by far-right groups stand beside death by a thousand cuts of local, state and national movements to suppress the vote, a mainstream media seemingly intent on undermining popular rule in service to corporate or right-wing interests, a K-12 system under constant attack for promoting critical thought and dialogue, a court system increasingly hostile to the public at large, social media and tech empires antithetical to the rules of traditional media, truth or anything but their bottom line and a public sphere so infected with hate speech and consumer culture interests there seems little room for reasoned debate. The result has been the retribalizing of America into two camps that seem less and less willing to even talk to one another. This hyper-partisanship has fomented a rampant cynicism and political insularity which now dominates American politics. The clearest signs of the success of the various strategies laid out above are the absurdist reactions to Covid-19 and the vaccine that can protect you, with near certainty, from

death (Scheper-Hughes, 1995), convincing millions to believe clearly skewed right-wing media and social media posts over the lead scientists and experts in the country. This has become a common trait of the new tribalism: whether convincing 75 percent of Republicans an election was stolen with no evidence (Montanaro, 2021), global warming is a scam perpetuated by dark, though never named sources, and liberals around the world are part of a "deep state" that traffics and even "eats children," and a party that has shown no interest in the concerns of its constituents is still better than one offering policies with popular support across the ideological spectrum.

Democracy and Higher Education

The victories in attacking, delegitimizing and replacing the other institutions of knowledge production and dissemination—including the media, the Internet, K-12 schools and political rhetoric itself—have been coupled with a growing assault on one of the last bastions of independent thought, the university. Yet I think it is important to start the discussion of higher education and democracy by arguing there is no explicit relationship between the two. Higher education has existed in democratic, autocratic and totalitarian states alike. It has persisted in military juntas, in Maoist China and Stalinist Russia and even in fascist states and is often complicit in reproducing the prevailing power dynamics and ideologies of a given society. On the other hand, postsecondary education has often been at the forefront of movements for democratic social change. Obvious examples like the Arab Spring, May 68 in France and the 1960s countercultural movement stand beside inspiration and support for second-, third- and fourth-wave feminism, the various LGBTQA+ movements and global social movements like the world social forum.

The very first university in Europe, in Bologna, established the idea of academic freedom, and it has been a central theme in higher education ever since, seeking to insulate research and teaching from surrounding cultural, political and economic forces and influence. Yet that goal has varied dramatically among the three broad paths higher education has pursued since its formation. The first, informed by Christian values and then separated into religious and secular varieties, with the liberal arts tradition as its most obvious incarnation, saw a well-rounded education as key to cultivating individual development and freedom, while serving the larger society. The second, resulting from the scientific revolution, is the

research university established in the sixteenth century in Cambridge and Berlin, with the common aim of pursuit and dissemination of objective knowledge useful to policymakers across the social, economic and political worlds. The third, the technical college, established in Scotland during the industrial revolution, was focused on work-based skill formation and further credentialing graduates (Kromydas, 2017). As Kromydas argues, the three archetypes have, in recent years, created two major ideas of the university—one based on instrumentalized versions of higher education as serving predominantly economic interests and the other on the more intrinsic value to the individual and society associated with values central to social justice, freedom and democracy.

Looking specifically at the United States, the original private colleges tended to support the interest of the power elite both in whom they trained and how, but from the onset of the republic, there was a notion the university was essential to the proper functioning of democracy. George Washington was so committed to this idea he left a sizable portion of his wealth to the forming of a university to teach young people the "principles of politics and good governance." While the earliest universities in America were generally training grounds for the elite, the public university system was tied to democracy from its very inception in the early nineteenth century. Private colleges seemed incapable or uninterested in serving the broader needs of American society so institutions like the University of Virginia, and new state universities in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, offered an alternative vision, where the potent role of higher education in shaping the American experiment was intimately linked with revolutionary ideas on human abilities and the requirements for creating a functioning, participatory democracy. By the mid-1800, state governments, with federal government prompting, launched a dramatic number of new public universities distinct in their governance, in their commitment to broad access, in the scope of their academic programs and in their commitment to public service (Douglass, 2018).

The President of John Hopkins University laid out the four major roles the modern university can play in democracy in a 2020 speech, including (1) training and educating of citizens, (2) fostering a pluralistic society founded on interaction and debate across various lines of diversity, (3) providing opportunities for social mobility, and (4) discovery, interpretation and dissemination of "facts." I will consider each in turn. The first, civics education, should arguably begin early in primary school and continue throughout the formal schooling period of American children, even

before they move onto college. Among other reasons, this is because only 60 percent of white youth and 50 percent of black youth even start post-secondary schooling. But more than that, civics education sets the foundation for the fundamental idea we must balance our individual wants and interests against those of the community, state, nation and globe (as Dewey argued in *Democracy and Education* [1916]). But to address the ongoing lack of civics education in American schools, it is imperative colleges and universities across the country take on this role to ensure their students are well-versed in their civic responsibility, the proper functioning of democracy, the various roles they can play (beyond voting) and to fight a trenchant cynicism among the young that is a serious challenge to the future of our democracy (Van Heertum, 2009, 2021).

A relative consensus developed in the 1960s and 1970s around the second point, arguing teaching tolerance was a worthy goal and should be pursued across the entire educational system. The conservative attacks on that idea have been around since the 1950s, if not earlier, but they were refortified in the 1980s and the ongoing battle over affirmative action and, more recently, critical race theory are at the heart of the contemporary conservative movement (Gambino, 2022). The ability of higher education to engage in these debates in meaningful ways opens the door to increased dialogue and understanding across all lines of demarcation, real and virtual, and is essential to fighting the pervasive tribalism and political insularity currently ruling American life. Yet this should also include a renewed commitment among progressives to truly open debate, meaning accepting those with different, or even vile, perspectives have the right to have their thoughts heard and debated on college campuses. Freedom of speech is not about protecting speech we like, as an old professor friend of mine used to argue, but about protecting speech we may well despise. Universities across the country, particularly the elite ones, must open their doors to a wider diversity of opinions, to demonstrate to students that dialogue and engaging with ideas that contradict one's own is the essential first step in thinking.

In a world that has become increasingly unequal, the third goal of social mobility is key to confronting a fundamental fear associated with the passing down of wealth and power from one generation to the next. The argument, as again enumerated by Dewey, is the keeping of wealthy in power over time leads to the degradation of ideas and a lack of sufficient diversity of solutions to address changing social conditions and problems. One could go further to argue it foments a myopia to the lived conditions of

those outside elite circles and a neglect of those who suffer the most in contemporary society. In America today, three people have the combined wealth of the bottom 50 percent of Americans and the squeeze on the middle class, working class and poor to support the super wealthy continues to accelerate (Horowitz et al., 2020). As many, including Teddy Roosevelt, argued, the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few and democracy are innately incompatible, and dramatic and growing inequality along with the problem of pluralism and global warming are the three key issues facing the globe today.

Turning to the fourth point, Kleinman and Vallas (2001) argued while university scientific research has always been tied to commercial and government needs and interest (most clearly during the Cold War years), more recent changes have amplified the relationship to commerce, challenging the role science can play in democratization and contributing to the common good. The problem has only deepened in the intervening years with universities themselves sometimes playing an active role in the post-truth world (Van Heertum, 2021). It is not the overarching political system so much as the political, economic and cultural realities of a given epoch that have heavily influenced higher education. Whether it was Jewish intellectuals kicked out of universities across Europe in the period surrounding World War II, the firing of left-leaning professors in the McCarthy era or the shuttering of universities in periods of tyranny, powerful forces often seek to undermine the independent nature of higher education research and teaching.

Yet it is important to note three related points: (1) the university has often been involved directly or indirectly in movements for social change throughout its history; (2) the university has consistently been a contested space where the contours of knowledge and meaning are debated and fought over and (3) higher education continues to be one of the key sites where social reproduction of the power dynamics of society are combatted, as both a site of opportunity for marginalized and oppressed groups and one where powerful groups solidify and reproduce their status and ideologies. Taking these three arguments together, one could argue the university has become the latest and most vociferously contested space for one of the key battles of democracy, which is over access. Access not only to educational opportunity but to information, to relevant knowledge and to power. And ultimately, it might well become the final battleground in access to democratic participation and democracy itself.

What Can Be Done?

Today, higher education is far too often abrogating its responsibility to serve democracy and the common good, contributing to the threats outlined above largely through its inaction and separation from the larger public sphere. This is arguably the result of the long march of neoliberal reforms that have increasingly instrumentalized education to predominantly serve economic interests; the corporatization of institutions undermining independence and academic freedom; more recent neopopulist reforms attacking the intrinsic values of higher education and a general move toward a consumer-centric model that devalues rigor and the broader goals of higher education to open the mind and cultivate diverse identities, opinions and ideologies (Baker, 2021; Van Heertum, 2022). In considering a path forward for higher education to reengage in the fight for the future of democracy, I think the work of Chenoweth (2021), who has become one of the most important voices in chronicling and contributing to movements against authoritarianism, can be informative. She has highlighted a host of successful and unsuccessful efforts, finding four strategies that have proven most effective: (1) mobilization of mass popular participation, (2) defection of people in authority (including elites, security forces and even opposition party members), (3) moving beyond mass demonstrations to include noncooperation (e.g., strikes and boycotts), and (4) staying disciplined, even in the face of increased repression.

While this list might, at first blush, appear to be more attuned to activists and NGOs, I believe there is a large role for those in postsecondary education to play as well. Universities and colleges have often been the breeding ground and intellectual foundation for mass movements for change. The revolving door between Corporate America and Washington D.C. also extends to universities and might be the most likely space to recruit defectors. Noncooperation has long been a strategy in higher education, and in concert with popular education efforts, postsecondary institutions can serve as a powerful resource to the community and student in planning and implementing these efforts. And, even as attacks on academic freedom and tenure proliferate, research and teaching are still powerful resources for keeping movements alive over time. Here I include seven pragmatic strategies academics can use in the service of working to revitalize democracy:

1. Undertaking research in service not just of social justice but democracy as well and disseminating that research outward through channels of the public sphere, focusing particularly on engaging in social media sites that can reach broader audiences most susceptible to fake news. This research must be translated to terms that are easily understandable to both the public and a mainstream media that often confuses correlation and causality and misreports findings to the detriment of reasoned debate. To fortify these efforts, faculty senates and progressive voices in higher education should continue to push for a shift in tenure and advancement decision-making to include engagement with the public sphere, moving away from the strong focus on academic publications alone.
2. Working to educate and empower students to become civically engaged themselves. I don't believe this entails teaching them about their own oppression or working to get them to think like we do, but instead creating the space to allow them to find their own place in the world and their own positions of interest. It includes getting them to understand the reality that change is the only constant in the universe through examples that are relevant to their own lives, reminding them of Heraclitus' point: we never enter the same river twice. Postsecondary institutions should be sights of pluralistic dialogue and interaction, rather than dogmatic sites where group think dominates open debate and thought police indoctrinate students into closing themselves off to any ideas outside the current collective consciousness of progressivism.
3. Teaching not just tolerance, but empathy and embrace of difference, most effectively by allowing students to see through other's eyes and not judging them, even when disagreeing with their perspective. This does not mean to forgive or excuse bad acts, but to start with the question of why, rather than with judgment, and to open spaces for alternative (including conservative) voices to be heard and openly debated, rather than feeding the rampant culture of indignation. Marshall McLuhan once argued "the opposite of violence is dialogue" and I think this should be the guiding principle to opening new channels for interaction and communication.
4. Modeling democracy by being authoritative rather than authoritarian in the classroom and inviting democratic participation whenever possible. I have increasingly done this in my own classrooms, giving students the opportunity to have real input in content and assign-

ments, which has led to deeper engagement overall. And this includes, when viable, working to make your assignments and content relevant to the current political, social and economic realities and to your student's lives. While I love *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and Freire's other work, I think the most practical advice he provides in this regard is in his last book, *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1998). It is a guide to being a good teacher and public intellectual working to fight the cynicism at the heart of contemporary social life.

5. Safely engaging in political action ourselves. As Freire highlighted so often, we must be leaders not through our words alone, but our actions. Sure, political engagement comes with risks, but democracy often dies with the complicity of those unwilling to stand up and fight for its survival. That engagement can take a variety of forms including project-based learning to engage students with local social issues in ways that can inspire broader engagement or simply make them aware of efforts in campus politics. It also can include providing expertise, assistance and even students to local and national efforts to fortify democracy.
6. It has long been true that numbers are what sway policymakers to act and while the current state of the Republican party makes this less likely than in the past, it is important to try to work on both sides of the aisle to provide sound research that can help inform decision-making. As just one example, research could have staved off the poor decision decades ago to move from scholarship-based funding to student loans, which has saddled an entire generation with unreasonable debt while pushing many to forgo college completely.
7. Maybe most important in the current environment of received knowledge and fake news, academics must find creative new methods to get information and arguments to the public in ways challenging deeply held beliefs. This means engaging with the ways people communicate, learn and interact today and finding messages that can resonate across trenchantly drawn lines. It also entails working with politicians when possible to help with rhetoric, messaging and campaign strategies, as well as research-based policy reform suggestions.

Freire believed teachers should be public intellectuals, working to empower students and provide them with the critical thinking skills,

creativity and knowledge necessary to fight for a better future. Having taught in US colleges and universities for 14 years, what I find the most striking is a persistent cynicism among college students believing politicians are corrupt as a rule, the government is the problem rather than potential solution to social ills and things are unlikely to change for the better. I think this is a key area where professors can have an outsized impact, by inspiring students to hope and believe in the possibility of change and their ability to contribute to that change.

Broader reforms in higher education that could help educators play a more active role in the public arena may be a move toward a model incorporating service as a component of advancement providing the opportunity to engage community and more public research rather than relying solely on publishing that rarely crosses over into public view. Professors must also work collectively to reassert their power over institutional decision-making, including working to veto hiring decisions that further ensconce corporatization into governance. At the more basic level, they must work to redress both the attacks on tenure and the ways administration has weakened faculty senates. They also must work to reaffirm their academic freedom, particularly in the wake of a number of high-profile firings or tenure decisions that appear to have political undertones. More generally, professors should work to combat the attacks on the humanities and arts and attempts to commodify higher education as the training ground once charged to the corporate world itself.

Conclusion

The attacks on democracy have left the United States in a perilous state, with the future of the country residing in a battle between those who support popular rule and a diverse coalition who advocates for authoritarianism and violence. The commodification and instrumentalization of knowledge has played an important role in creating a political milieu antithetical to reasoned debate and thick democracy. Leaders across education and the public sphere must thus confront the political insularity, hyperpartisanship, and the direct and indirect attacks on our democracy, finding ways to alter the nature of debate and political discourse in the public sphere while helping students gain the critical thinking skills and inspiration necessary to challenge contemporary threats and challenges.

Yet how do we move forward in an environment increasingly hostile to science, reason and intellectuals themselves? As dictates of a prescribed

and proscribed curriculum increasingly infiltrate higher education, how is one to navigate the wrought space of administrative oversight, particularly if unprotected by tenure or academic freedom? I believe this starts with progressive teaching in the classroom, working to combat cynicism and tribal epistemological positions, but must be coupled with efforts to move research beyond what is cloistered from the public sphere and to translate it in ways so it can resonate with politicians and the public at large.

The central point is colleges and universities create specialized knowledge essential to the democratic project, and have access to multiple channels to disseminate knowledge and providence over the most radical space of possibility left in society—a college classroom with the door closed (hooks, 1994). We must reaffirm the importance of science and the scientific method to our students, the media and the larger American public, challenging the miasmic cloud of skepticism that now fogs our world. We also must reassert the importance of legitimation and justification for truth claims and the power of hope and imagination in creating a better world. Otherwise, the death of democracy is nigh.

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CHAPTER 3

Space, Place, and Power in the Neoliberal Academy: Reflections on Asian American Women and Leadership in *The Chair*

Marie Lo, Patti Duncan, and Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt

Introduction

Sitting across from the administrators of the fictional "lower-tier Ivy" Pembroke University facing faculty conduct charges, English professor Bill Dobson (Jay Duplass) offers no rebuttal. Instead, he tells them, "To be an English teacher you have to fall in love with stories, with literature. And what you're doing when you do that is … is you're always trying to see things from someone else's view. You're trying to occupy a different

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space" ("The Chair" 2021). Such a speech in the final episode of the first season of Netflix's *The Chair* seems to encapsulate the six-episodes' multiple threads: the limits of academic freedom; cancel culture; the relevance of the humanities to speak to the pressing issues of racial, environmental, and social justice; and the role and function of the university in these conversations given it remains an institution of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy.

The belief that to "occupy a different space" is crucial to the function of English, and more broadly, the humanities, sits in tension with the episode's opening scene which features a class discussion of Audre Lorde's essay, "The Master's Tools Will Not Dismantle the Master's House." It is during this scene a student explains it is not enough to "just insert people of color" ("The Chair" 2021), and we couldn't agree more. In this chapter, we explore the university as emblematic of the Master's House as distilled in the different registers of space, place, and power implied in the series title, *The Chair*.

Reviewers have highlighted the series' characterization of academic dysfunction and its on-point portrayal of the challenges women faculty and faculty of color endure, all the while celebrating Sandra Oh's performance as the titular role of English Department Chair, Ji-Yoon Kim. Our analysis examines the symbolic registers and critical purchase of the chair, and what it means for women of color, in this particular case, Asian American women, to take on leadership roles, ostensibly to have a seat (or chair) at the table of the Master's House. Lorde's essay is addressed to white middle-class feminists, noting it is the housework, child rearing, emotional labor, and other care work done by working-class women and women of color that makes possible the intellectual work of white feminists. At this juncture, when we are the women of color who are not only working and mothering, but also occupying relative positions of privilege in academia with tenure, how do we participate in the academy and simultaneously work to dismantle the Master's House? What are the costs of working within the institution, and how do we reimagine alternative ways of challenging the white heteropatriarchal spaces we occupy?

Having a seat at the table is often characterized as the means by which marginalized groups can achieve visibility, representation, and eventually institutional power. The critical purchase of this metaphor is persistently tested in *The Chair* as it explores the institutional imperatives of knowing one's proper place. Indeed, one could argue this is the central set of conflicts in *The Chair*—where having a seat at the table is juxtaposed against

knowing one's place, and the ability to occupy new and different spaces becomes the site of contest and power struggles. The first episode's opening sequence sets up this recurring dynamic as we see Ji-Yoon pausing to reflect on her new role as chair of an English Department. As she walks up the steps to her campus, the soundtrack crescendos, seemingly to propel her forward across the colonial campus architecture through the hallowed halls of her department until she comes upon her office and sees her name on an office door. Vivaldi's "Gloria" peaks just as she sinks into her office chair and surveys the wood paneled space that signals her ascension. This triumphant moment is quickly undercut by her falling off the chair, a none-too-subtle foreshadowing of her eventual toppling ("Brilliant Mistake" 2021). Later, at the first faculty meeting she sits in the "wrong" chair and is corrected by senior colleague and antagonist, Elliot Rentz (Bob Balaban), who tells her where the chair usually sits—at the head of the table. As a corollary to Ji-Yoon's promotion and new office, the senior white female faculty member Joan Hambling (Holland Taylor) discovers her office has been moved to the basement of the gym, a harbinger of her increasing obsolescence and an index of her relative lack of power among senior faculty, all of whom are white and male. When she goes to the Title IX office to complain about her mistreatment, Joan is surprised to find Sarah (Havana Rose Liu), a young Asian American woman at the front office who is the Title IX advocate, and she condescendingly recommends Sarah to dress appropriately so others will not make the same mistake she did when entering the office ("Brilliant Mistake" 2021). Despite her outrage at being displaced, Joan mis-places Sarah, suggesting that, Sarah's gendered and racialized body does not align or fit the spaces her role requires.

As these examples demonstrate, much of the satirical force of *The Chair* draws from the disconnect between what is perceived as the proper and appropriate place for women, particularly women of color, and what happens when those expectations are disrupted. This chapter explores how knowing "one's place," "having a seat at the table," or even being out of place is to be embodied in a racialized, gendered, ageist, ableist, and classist space. And as we watched *The Chair* with varying degrees of anticipation, excitement, and dread during the COVID-19 pandemic, we also are aware of how this moment offers a recalibration of the traditional spatial structures of power embedded and embodied in the language of the place and metonymically represented by "the chair." The shift to remote meetings and remote instruction, while disembodying and at times isolating,

also offers the potential for thinking about a new mode of "re-placing," one not tied to physical spaces of trauma, but instead offering the possibility of self-preservation and self-restoration through solidarities forged by a network of belonging.

Invisibility/Visibility and the Labor of Asian American Women's Leadership

A lot has been written about the increasingly demanding, seemingly impossible service loads carried by women of color in the neoliberal academy.[1] In the corporatized academy, institutional structures reinforce gendered, racialized, and economic power dynamics and inequities.[2] The push by university administrators to uphold diversity, equity, and inclusion is everywhere, and yet the lack of professional and structural support and representation for Black, Indigenous, and other People of color (BIPOC) women faculty in predominantly white institutions (PWIs) is dismal. Numbers of faculty of color on such campuses are disproportionately low, compared to the growing number of students of color on college and university campuses. And of the few professors of color and women who are hired, many are exiting higher education, where they experience lack of support and resources to be successful in their positions. Women of color faculty, staff, and students are frequently expected to perform various forms of service and care work at the same time this labor is deemed less valuable and less productive and is often invisible to those in positions of administrative authority. Working within hegemonic settler colonial institutional spaces that are patriarchal, racist, ableist, homophobic and transphobic, and frequently inhospitable to those of us from minoritized backgrounds, we, like Ji-Yoon, navigate this work in complex ways.

We situate the specific ways in which Asian American women are positioned and excluded in the academy in the context of the racialized responses to and reviews of *The Chair*. Within a week after its release, it became clear that responses from BIPOC faculty were squarely focused on

[1] Many authors address the additional service performed by women of color faculty in the collection, *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2012), edited by Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. See also *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (2012) by Sara Ahmed; and *Power, Race, and Gender in Academe: Strangers in the Tower?* (2000), edited by Shirley Geok-Lin Lim and María Herrera-Sobek.

[2] See Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. (2012); Maldonado and Guenther (2019).

structural and institutional racism in higher education (Torres, 2021), while many white faculty chose to focus on ageism, calling the show a portrayal of "ageist defamation" (Wittenberg-Cox, 2021). Contingent and adjunct faculty, called the "new majority" within the landscape of higher education (and many of them disproportionately faculty of color), questioned their complete omission from the show. Anecdotally, many women of color faculty we know have not yet been able to watch *The Chair*, admitting they felt triggered by its representation of racism and microaggressions, which mirrors their own experiences in the academy. These divergent responses indicate the specific challenges women of color faculty face. According to Nancy Yuen (2021), in 2018, women of color comprised less than 7% of the professoriate. Additionally, scholars have commented on the erasure of Asian and Asian American faculty within statistics about the dismal numbers of women of color faculty members in the U.S. "Asian women are 3.8% of non-tenure-track faculty, and 2.6% of tenure-track or tenured faculty. It is also unclear whether these statistics account for Asian or Asian American women, or both" (McKee & Delgado, 2020, p. 4).

We recognize our work as Asian American women faculty is deeply embodied, shaped by how we are seen and treated on our campuses, how we come to represent "diversity" within our institutions, and how we feel, on a physical, somatic level—moving through spaces that are often hostile to women of color. Notions of visibility and invisibility have deep implications for women of color in the U.S. In the current political moment, anti-Asian violence has sharply escalated since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and hate incidents targeting Asian Americans, particularly Asian American women, have surged by nearly 150%.[3] As Asian American women, we know all too well what it's like to be rendered invisible in contexts of higher education while at the same time frequently being made hypervisible to those in power, to affirm the diversity of institutions.

Sara Ahmed uses the term "diversity workers" to describe those of us working to transform institutions, as well as those of us who do not fit the norms of those institutions (2017). Frequently, as she points out, we embody "diversity work" through our own minoritized subject positions

[3] See a recent report published by Stop AAPI Hate and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF), *The Rising Tide of Violence and Discrimination Against Asian American and Pacific Islander Women and Girls*, May 20, 2021. https://stopaapihate.org/aapi-women-and-girls-report/.

within institutions. The experiences many of us have as diversity workers within the academy are hard to talk about: isolation, fear, racialized harassment, exclusion, affective labor, a lack of mentoring, invisible service, unbearable workloads are some of the effects of racism and sexism and ableism and other forms of oppression that many of us encounter on a daily basis within the academy. And so much of this work, Ahmed argues, goes unrecognized. Doing this work can be fraught for everyone, but we suggest this is especially the case for women of color. For Asian American women, particularly those of us at predominantly white institutions, doing so may also mean addressing an archive of grievances and institutional failures and betrayals. It involves acknowledging and naming what some activists and scholars call the thousand tiny papercuts—or microaggressions—that structure our experiences in the academy. We continue to feel ambivalent about the ways institutions of higher education, as Shirley Hune explains, function as instruments of both social change and social control. As an agent of social control, the academy can "help preserve the status quo by perpetuating existing hierarchies and reproducing gender, race, class, and other inequities" (Hune, 2006, p. 15). These processes continue to structure our particular form of exclusion within the academy.

When it comes to Black, Indigenous, and women of color in leadership positions, our very presence can threaten white heteropatriarchal structures. Women of color in leadership may signal a shift in curriculum, hiring practices, conversations about politics that obstruct inclusivity, and advocacy for underrepresented students. There is often an anxiety a shift in leadership will challenge the status quo and begin the process of shifting sites and configurations of epistemic power. Leadership roles, Linda Trinh Vô writes, "can be treacherous for women of color since their authority is often challenged more than that of white males or females" (2012, p. 107). Further, Asian American women "still have to work against the prevalent stereotypes of them as submissive and subservient, which can undermine their authority and prevent them from being considered for leadership positions" (2012, p. 107).

Though *The Chair* offers an opportunity to reimagine institutional transformation by creating a seat at the table for a minoritized woman in an elite academy, the challenges Ji-Yoon faces demonstrate the entrenchment of the white heteropatriarchal structure of the Master's House. At one point, Ji-Yoon says to Yaz, "I don't feel like I inherited an English department. I feel like someone handed me a ticking time bomb because they wanted to make sure a woman was holding it when it exploded"

("Don't Kill Bill" 2021). Yuen (2021) connects Ji-Yoon's experience to the "glass cliff," a concept theorized by Michelle K. Ryan and Alexander Haslam (2005), where women and people of color are propped into leadership positions in times of crisis, when the stakes and risks of failure are high (2021). This concept is familiar to us, as we have frequently observed women of color in the academy being appointed to leadership roles as evidence of the university's commitment to diversity. Then, like Ji-Yoon, they are expected to work miracles cleaning up messes they did not create, with inadequate resources and support. Set up to fail, their struggles or perceived failures in effect justify the retrenchment of white supremacy, as the eventual vote of no-confidence in Ji-Yoon demonstrates.

The Chair's depiction of Ji-Yoon's leadership indexes the oscillation of invisibility and visibility of the "diversity work" Asian American women perform in the academy. When Ji-Yoon's Dean, Paul Larson (David Morse), asks her to retire three senior faculty, he tells her, "If anyone can bring Pembroke into the 21st century, it is you" ("The Faculty Party" 2021). The implication of a "diverse" future is premised on the contrasted shot of her three white senior colleagues walking across campus who seem discombobulated by an errant frisbee thrown at them. But how she signals "diversity" depends on the contexts and institutional narratives her diversity is meant to serve. When Ji-Yoon attends her first faculty meeting as chair, she is congratulated for being the "first woman" chair. In this context, her status as the first faculty of color chair seems to be considered either irrelevant or secondary to her gender. This erasure of her identity as an Asian American faculty member in these invocations of her new leadership role is instructive for thinking about the place Asian American women are often asked to occupy: a nonthreatening racialized presence that fulfills "diversity" agendas, for whom their racial identity is only tangential or secondary to their status as women.

While her racial identity seems only worthy of comment in that it seems incongruous to her field of expertise—Emily Dickinson—her interactions with Yaz Mackay, the junior Black faculty member, is premised on her recognition they are both faculty of color. Though Ji-Yoon sees herself as a mentor and ally to Yaz, her navigation of a system that inherently preserves white supremacy and fragile male egos leads her to ultimately undermine Yaz's class and authority. In trying to convince Yaz to co-teach with Elliot, she tells her: "We have a real opening here. You're going up for tenure, I'm chairing this department. The dean has my back so let's just get your case through and then let's fucking shake this place up" ("Brilliant Mistake"

2021). The sad truth, of course, is the dean does not have her back. Rather, he props her up and relies on her status as a minoritized proxy for whiteness in order to preserve the Master's House, and positioning (or rather "inserting" to use the student's comment) Asian American women at the figurative head of the table to index diverse leadership and inclusion without disrupting or "fucking shak(ing)" the spaces they occupy.

Commenting on Ji-Yoon's inability or unwillingness to push back against the administration, Yaz says to her, "You act like you owe them something" ("The Last Bus in Town" 2021). Ji-Yoon's own precarity is revealed when in the final episode ("The Chair" 2021), she refuses to serve as the administration's toady and she is voted out of her office by her colleagues. Owing, playing nice: these are the terms of civility that have a gendered quality, that when combined with the model minority discourse, code Asian American women as not threatening the Master's House. This perhaps explains why when Ji-Yoon is elected Chair, she is not identified as the first faculty of color chair but the first woman chair. That is, she is not perceived as racialized because to be racialized as nonwhite in the academy is presumed synonymous with being disruptive to the Master's House.

While women faculty of color in leadership positions potentially threaten the centers of white supremacy by both identifying and speaking up against the million-dollar investments called "diversity initiatives," what is clear in *The Chair* is that Ji-Yoon's "diversity" as the first woman chair is to be performative, masking the structures of white supremacy from public view. Diversity initiatives, in many cases, tend to mask and protect systems of power and decision making. Some of these decisions often harm and disenfranchise Black and Brown bodies. Such "harms" become cause for routine institutional betrayals experienced by BIPOC-WOC in the academy. Putting women of color in leadership positions without providing them the institutional support structures they need to thrive is a national story.

Refusing and Re-placing Spaces of Trauma

The Chair mimics the various realities of trauma for racialized women of color in the academy. Sometimes trauma is in physical spaces, like the buildings where we work, or in encountering colleagues and administrators who may have harmed us through their complicity with institutional forms of oppression and violence. Ahmed describes the brick walls we come up against when we try to change institutions to make them more

welcoming to those of us who have often been excluded from and marginalized within them (2017). These brick walls, or "institutional walls," are, in Ahmed's words, "hardenings of histories into barriers in the present: barriers that we experience as physical; barriers that are physical" (135–136). The wall she describes is "a physical contact; a visceral encounter" (136). And, she writes, "If the two senses of diversity work meet in our bodies, they also meet here: at the wall" (136). The brick wall may be a metaphor, but we feel its impact within academic institutions where the "hardenings of history" linger, and often we feel its impact in our own bodies. We find ourselves surrounded by "white fragility" (DiAngelo, 2018), and experiences of microaggressions are an inescapable everyday reality. Such a reality manifests into invisible bodily harm and injury, fear, fatigue, and anxiety or "cultural taxation" (Padilla, 1994) created by our obligations and expectations to demonstrate good citizenship by serving the diversity missions of our institutions. Such visceral experiences form the anatomy of what is called "racial trauma" in the academy.[4]

Our bodies have witnessed these layered traumas in various rooms or hallways inside concrete and contained buildings, some with windows and others without. This is why our bodies are instantly stressed when entering particular work spaces. Trauma, as Ocean Vuong writes, "affects not only the brain, but the body too, its musculature, joints, and posture" (Vuong, 2019, p. 19). Bessel Van Der Kolk in his book *The Body Keeps Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma* explains triggers as, "the trauma that started 'out there' is now played out on the battlefield of their own bodies, usually without a conscious connection between what happened back then and what is going on right now" (2014, p. 68).

While a series such as *The Chair* exposes the everyday experiences of microaggressions for BIPOC academics and particularly women working in highly masculinized, and heteropatriarchal spaces of the Master's House, watching *The Chair* during the pandemic also revealed the limits of inclusion as well as the possibility for re-placing and spaces of protection from such abuses and injuries. In a previous essay, we discussed how the shift to remote learning during the pandemic enabled many of us to engage a

[4] Resmaa Menakem discusses the somatic effects of racialized trauma in *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathways to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* (2017). Others have discussed the effects of such trauma specifically in education, for example, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's edited collection, *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education* (2018).

politics of refusal, particularly to refuse some of the norms of the academy, including its gatekeeping policies and its racialized logic of success and merit and values that render much of the work we do invisible, or deems it meaningless (Duncan et al., 2021). We also explored how the Zoom space reconfigured the spaces of power such that we no longer had to work on campus and experience viscerally the histories and spaces of trauma. Through a shift away from physical spaces of trauma, we hoped to move toward healing, not only for ourselves but also for our students and our larger communities.

According to Sandy Grande, the struggle for inclusion and recognition within academic institutions furthers and maintains the power of the state, sustaining settler colonialism (2018). We also read such emphasis on inclusion and recognition primarily in terms of upholding the apparatus of the Master's House. Rather than inclusion as the mode of transformation, Grande draws on Audra Simpson's "politics of refusal." A refusal to play by the rules and live by the terms set forth by an institution that has largely failed to create inclusive and equitable spaces can take many forms. In January 2022, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published a piece titled, "The Great Faculty Disengagement: Faculty members aren't leaving in droves, but they are increasingly pulling away." The article states how diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts have often "failed to meaningfully improve the lived experiences and career opportunities of scholars of color." Despite the possibilities of career stagnation, what does "pulling away" mean for BIPOC faculty? For many BIPOC faculty this "pulling away" is a deliberate disengagement from their institution and colleagues who have caused them harm, to carving out other spaces of engagement. While disengaging from their universities, they are engaging more[5] outside their universities as research experts, public intellectuals, editors, and collaborators in other kinds of labor that energize them and keep them connected to their academic passions and commitments to social justice. Some have also left altogether to pursue interests in various nonprofits agencies, think tanks, a community-based, justice-related services for a broader public outside the university. In doing so, scholars of color are more consciously limiting the injuries and institutional betrayals they have been subject to, and are moving toward acts of self-preservation and self-restoration.

[5] See, for example, "The Great Faculty Disengagement: Faculty Members Aren't Leaving in Droves, But They Are Increasingly Pulling Away," by Kevin R. McClure and Alisa Hicklin Fryar (January 19, 2022): https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-great-faculty-disengagement.

This disengagement, as an example of collective refusal, has a long history—comprises women of color and others from marginalized backgrounds refusing to work within a system that replicates forms of oppression and asks us to adhere to a logic of success and merit and value that renders much of the work we do invisible or meaningless. A refusal to participate is to refuse a narrative that renders our work impossible or illegible. Following arguments posed by critical scholars like Roderick Ferguson (2012) and Sara Ahmed (2012, 2017), we ask how those of us who remain in the academy can stay in such a contested space but refuse to be complicit or destroyed by it.

Solidarities Through Networks of Belonging

As we reflect on our own experiences within the university, informed by the years each of us has spent in leadership positions within our institutions, we consider the importance of building networks of feminist mentoring as one critical site of resistance. For women of color and others marginalized within the academy, mentoring can function as a strategy of resistance to multiple forms of oppression many of us experience, where institutional structures often reinforce gendered, racialized power dynamics and inequities. Through the creation of networks of belonging, feminist mentoring practices can reinforce connection and community, and it can also disrupt the spatial binaries of inside/outside by facilitating agile movement between the two. Also, feminist, anti-racist mentoring practices represent an important formation for women of color and other scholars in establishing and expanding interdisciplinary social justice-centered fields of study. In this way, feminist mentoring can be part of building movements for change, as we grow our networks and attempt to live out the processes we explore in our scholarship and teaching.

To theorize feminist mentoring as a strategy of resistance, we consider what makes a mentoring practice explicitly feminist. Building on the work of women of color feminist scholars, feminist mentoring is necessarily

intersectional in both theory and practice.[6] It integrates an ethic of care and empathy, is attentive to systems of power and privilege, is a high-stake and high-risk process, and is centered in the love invoked by women of color scholars such as bell hooks (2018) and Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2012)—which can include a love for self or those we mentor or are mentored by, as well as love for the work we do and the feminist places and spaces we work to build. This work can be imagined as part of the process of building feminist dwellings, in Ahmed's words, to deconstruct and reconstruct, to build something new and just.

Moving forward, we propose rethinking mentoring in terms of networks of mutual support and affirmation that recognize the specific gendered, racialized practices of exclusion within the academy. We reimagine what it means to "network," a term that has historically been loaded with privilege and insider-access to consider the decentralized space of the networked Zoom space, where opportunities for mentorship across different institutions and outside of them may offer respite from the embodied spaces of trauma that we have previously discussed.

At the same time, as Asian American women in the academy, we are mindful of the particular ways in which white supremacy and heteropatriarchy potentially co-opt feminist anti-racist mentoring by specifically positing Asian American women faculty leaders as "diverse" proxies for whiteness. Essentially a manifestation of the model minority discourse in which Asian American success in middle-management becomes the means by which the potential challenges to white supremacy by other people of color are contained, it is important to note the ways in which Ji-Yoon's promotion to chair does little to address the precarity that women and women of color face on campus. Karen Tongson writes,

[6] To consider feminist mentoring that is intersectional and informed by women of color feminisms, we build on the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, including *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings* (2014); bell hooks, especially *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994) and *All About Love: New Visions* (1999); Patricia Hill Collins, especially her books *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (1990) and *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (2019); Gloria Anzaldúa, including *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987); Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, for example, their edited collection *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education* (2018); and Lynn Fujiwara and Shireen Roshanravan, including their collection *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics* (2018), among others.

> Ji-Yoon's focus at the start of the series is, as it should be, on shepherding rising star Yaz McKay (Nana Mensah), who also happens to be the only junior scholar and the only Black woman in the department, to tenure. But her time as chair is consumed by massaging the wounded egos of older white faculty members who have the lowest enrollments in the department even as they reap the highest salaries. Furthermore, she must contend with constant pressure from the upper administration to boost enrollments or downsize. (2021)

In 2018, Black faculty members made up only 5% of all tenured professors in the U.S. In recent years, the lack of institutional support for Black scholars has been illustrated through several highly publicized cases, including that of Nikole Hannah-Jones, a Pulitzer Prizewinning journalist and scholar, whose offer of tenure at the University of North Carolina was rescinded and then re-offered. As Asian American women invested in feminist mentoring as care (for ourselves and each other), we share a responsibility to challenge multiple systems of oppression and power and to be in solidarity with others marginalized within the academy, especially BIPOC faculty, queer and trans colleagues, and contingent faculty.

Whereas *The Chair* illuminates how deeply entrenched white supremacy and patriarchy are a part of the academic institution, we also want to suggest that the experiences we have in higher education cannot be separated or isolated from the overall culture and climate of our specific programs and departments. So, for example, experiences of racialized harassment by colleagues and supervisors and students go hand in hand with racist exclusionary practices in the required curriculum of course offerings, and in what is valued or devalued in program policies. As we write, there are currently 131 active Educational Gag Order bills aimed at eliminating the teaching of Critical Race Theory and Ethnic Studies across the country.[7] We note it is invariably faculty of color, whose labor, research, and expertise in these particular fields are the primary targets of these bills. As Patricia Hill Collins and others have pointed out, race and gender "are embedded in multiple locations of education: epistemology, knowledge, theory, language, spatial arrangements, research methodologies, standpoint, and other aspects" to the disadvantage of women of color (Hune, 2006, p. 18). Hence, changing the practices and policies also requires changing the gendered, racialized contexts of our scholarship and work conditions, which is

[7] See https://www.aaup.org/active-educational-gag-order-legislation.

part of the larger challenge in front of us all. But we do this work within the larger institutional framework of the academy, in which we must resist institutional norms that often erase, delegitimize, and invalidate our experiences and realities. We need to remember that when having a seat at the table is equivalent to knowing one's place, we need to refuse the terms and conditions by which we are invited to the table.

Conclusion: What Can Be?

Representations of life in the academy are uncommon, and those that do exist frequently fail to capture the nuances of racial and gender politics (Tongson, 2021). *The Chair* clearly reveals both the costs of invisibility and hypervisibility for Asian American women and other BIPOC faculty members, along with how they are frequently used, misused, overworked, and at the end simply discarded by academic institutions. Through its depiction of Ji-Yoon, *The Chair* demonstrates the psychological toll of isolation, invisible labor, and constant microaggressions many of us encounter in the academy. As Tongson writes, "Instead of fetishizing the literary classroom as a luminous font of inspiration, the series shows us how Ji-Yoon's strenuous efforts are constantly crushed by structural racism and sexism. We're given the sense she won't be able to heal the institution or bring her department into the new millennium, no matter how many conciliatory Harold Bloom quotes she drops in department meetings" (2021). As we reflect on the embodied experiences and gendered, racialized labor of women of color in the academy, we also consider the futures of Asian American and women of color feminisms within the current political climate.

Now, as universities push for a return to in-person teaching and learning, and rush to "return to normal," there also is a commensurate push to speed up, increase enrollments, and require more from faculty and graduate instructors. We are often expected to participate in institutional policies and practices that result in increased exploitation and injury, particularly to the most marginalized and vulnerable groups within the academy. Drawing on the work of Wendy Brown, Marta Maldonado, and Katja Guenther, we've learned: "Through the neoliberalization of higher education, colleges and universities have moved away from an emphasis on the public good and toward marketization, profitability, and an individual consumer model" (2019, p. ix). The pressure we have encountered to cause harm for the good of the institution (i.e. for greater institutional

profit) is a painful reminder of the exclusionary practices that have long structured the academy.

In *Pedagogies of Crossing*, in a chapter titled "Whose New World Order? Teaching for Justice," M. Jacqui Alexander asks what we need to know and do: what "liberatory praxis" is required within the "new world order" we find ourselves living in? "Place and space are important sites in the process of knowledge production," and, citing Toni Morrison, she considers what is at stake in drawing a new, different kind of map, "of a critical geography … without the mandate for conquest" (2005, p. 91). These cartographies, then, become methods for making education explicitly political (2005, p. 91). Pedagogy, intertwined with theory, is a frame for this work, which becomes the work of social justice. Our work together, including our different roles within the academy and our collaboration, represents our collective engagement and commitment to develop strategies that can resist pressures for increased institutionalization.

If we take the contortions Ji-Yoon goes through to try and support Yaz's tenure process, we suggest we re-map and re-place the terms by which the process of promotion and tenure requires the replication of itself—a mode of scholarship and scholarly performativity premised on becoming a Master. The need to play nice with Eliot and the Dean as the condition for getting Yaz's dossier through demonstrates the ways in which what counts as "knowledge production" in the academy is persistently determined by the white heteropatriarchal academy. After explicitly naming the exploitative practices of the university, which she says would be nothing but "a pile of bricks" without the ideas and labor of BIPOC faculty and students, Yaz announces she is leaving Pembroke. When Ji-Yoon says to Yaz: "You're going to be the first tenured Black woman in the department," Yaz responds: "That's why I'm leaving" ("The Last Bus in Town" 2021). By leaving the place in which she has experienced daily racialized, gendered microaggressions and moving to claim a space where she will no longer be "the only one," Yaz refuses the isolation of the academy so familiar for many women of color. Ji-Yoon, on the other hand, remains at Pembroke, having been voted out of the Chair position. In the final scenes we see her back in the classroom teaching Emily Dickinson, asking students to comment on "Hope is the Thing with Feathers" ("The Chair" 2021). Whether the series means to offer a hopeful ending for Ji-Yoon or to suggest things are okay now that she is back "in her place," we are not sure. However, as we reflect on strategies for survival in the academy as Asian American women and women of color, refusal and

re-placing sites of knowledge production through alternative forms of feminist mentoring and networks of belonging offer us important ways to reimagine our intellectual labor.

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CHAPTER 4

Equity and Efficacy in Teaching Effectiveness Assessment (TEA)

Brad Erickson and Wei Ming Dariotis

Introduction

Why Change TEA? Why Now?

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators across the world have radically changed both how and what they teach. Shifting to emergency remote teaching modalities required more than grafting in-person teaching techniques into online environments; teachers had to completely

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redesign activities to support student achievement of learning outcomes within new modalities and evolving high-stress contexts. At the same time, the inequities laid bare during the pandemic called for a shift to redress the *educational debt* owed to students subject to generations of cumulative educational disinvestment and oppression (Ladson-Billings, 2005); related calls to *decolonize* and redress racism within academic disciplines also have affected how and what instructors teach (Harrison, 1991). We also recognize that there has been a transformation of the ways we teach through changes to teaching and learning objectives; new knowledge about and developmental support for pedagogy; the integration of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) principles in instruction and evaluation; and the radical shift in teaching conditions since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Pokhre & Chhetri, 2021; Holme, 2020; Safir & Dugan, 2021; Thomas, 2020). Many universities made serious investments in faculty development and pedagogical innovation for both online and anti-racist pedagogies. And yet our assessment practices remain unchanged.[1]

Even before the pandemic, a groundswell of discontent prompted a change in teaching effectiveness assessment (TEA) practices. Though largely triggered by equity concerns about bias[2] in student evaluations and the workload of faculty peer review of teaching, a fundamental issue is teaching effectiveness assessment is not effective in achieving either of its primary goals: (1) supporting the development of more effective teachers and thus increasing student success; and (2) evaluating teaching effectiveness as part of the employment assessment process. If we do not assess the

[1] A study of nearly 1100 SET questions across a variety of US institutions of higher learning found "after 30 years, course evaluation questions still adhere to Marsh's original model of nine categories. Second, we found a vast majority of the questions focus on instructors' performance, using a predictable pattern of truth statements (i.e., 'The instructor graded me fairly …') that may cause students to hyper-focus on their teacher rather than to evaluate their own learning …; language emphasizing instructor performance makes teachers responsible for every aspect of a student's success, a tacit assumption that conflicts with contemporary pedagogy" (Ray et al., 2018, n.p.).

[2] The extensive literature on this bias need not be reiterated here; however, it is worth mentioning this bias was part of the original design of SETs, first created in 1923, by psychologist Max Freyd: "Early on […] SETs not only highlighted teacher personality and appearance but also were constructed to measure teachers' subjective traits, not student learning. … Students were thus put into a position where they were evaluating factors that neither they nor the instructor had sole control over and they could do little to affect" (Ray et al., 2018, n.p.).

achievement of primary goals, we will either not achieve them, or we will fail to support those who seek to achieve them. For example, at SF State, the mission is social justice through education,[3] but none of our teaching effectiveness assessment practices assess the achievement of that goal.

The Changing Context of Higher Education

We write from the assumption universities should support faculty in the ongoing development of their pedagogy in order to improve student outcomes. This assumes the possibility of change in the ways we teach and the cultivation of spaces in which faculty feel safe to become learners themselves and have the freedom and support to continually adapt to new information, changing conditions, and student voices. We believe setting this goal for teaching effectiveness assessment is the most high impact practice in which any group of educators could engage, and the one most likely to support student success.

While the evaluation of teaching effectiveness is the focus of this chapter, we note that structural conditions in higher education constrict the possibilities of liberatory change. The neoliberal turn in higher education features disinvestment, the erosion of autonomy, and the reduction of the lives of students, faculty, and staff to data (Martell, 2021). This data is not, as many assume, *pure*, as in free from bias. The questions that frame data collection, the intentions of those who collect and use it, and the systems by which it is collected and interpreted may replicate and conceal bias (Benjamin, 2019). Those who rely on such data must be prepared to mitigate these biases; however, in campus climates in which dynamics such as stereotype threat (Collins, 2020; Steele & Aronson, 1995) or carceral antiblackness (Shange, 2019) are unacknowledged or superficially understood, we should expect bias to permeate the learning, teaching, and assessment environment.

Disinvestment in higher education followed the increasing percentage of students who are people of color and working class, the same students who demanded curricula that center their history[4] and instructors who

[3] "With the unwavering commitment to social justice that is central to the work of the University, SF State prepares its students to become productive, ethical, active citizens with a global perspective" (https://sfsu.edu/mission/mission.html).

[4] For example, the 1966 Ten Point Program of the Black Panther Party demanded "education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self" (Newton, 2009, p. 4).

shared their experience.[5] The increasing share of faculty who are people of color, working class, and women would seem ideally positioned to address the needs of those students *except* this increase has corresponded to the casualization of faculty labor and a decrease of public higher education support by the state. Thus, women and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) faculty are disproportionately relegated to the inferior second-tier both of public higher education and within the systems into which they are allowed (Griffin, 2020; US Department of Education, 2020). The period of these demographic and structural changes in higher education corresponded to the emergence of mandatory student evaluations of teaching (SET),[6] which can be traced to the student protest movements of the 1960s (Gelber, 2020, p. 47) and may be seen as an administrative attempt to appease student demands for accountability without genuinely functioning to achieve the real goals of student protest: self-determination and sovereignty, education toward liberation, and hiring more diverse faculty (Epstein & Stringer, 2020).

Predominately white and male tenure-line faculty[7] teach fewer courses, receive more compensation for non-teaching activities, and enjoy greater support for professional development (Kezar, 2017; Thirolf & Woods, 2018). Tenure-line faculty are structurally better able to stay active in their disciplines, have a voice in shared governance including curricular design, and continue to learn to be better educators. Contingent faculty teach more courses and do not typically receive compensation to stay active in their fields or continue learning. In these ways, the liberatory potential of the demographic change in higher education has been stymied by the rise

[5] In 1968 the Black Student Union and the Third World Liberation Front at San Francisco State demanded fifty dedicated faculty for a School of Ethnic Studies and Black Studies Department with autonomy over hiring, retention, and curriculum (Epstein & Stringer, 2020).

[6] "Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) were independently developed in the 1920s by the educational psychologist Herman H. Remmers at Purdue University (e.g., Remmers & Brandenburg, 1927)and the learning psychologist Edwin R. Guthrie (e.g., Guthrie, 1953) at the University of Washington. Remmers and Guthrie wanted to provide university teachers with information about how their teaching was perceived by students and thus help them to make improvements, where necessary. They intended to limit access to these course evaluations to course teachers. Even though Guthrie warned in 1953 that 'it would be a serious misuse of this information to accept it as ultimate measure of merit' (p. 221), SETs soon became valued sources of information for university administrators, who used them as a basis for decisions about merit increases and promotion" (Stroebe, 2020).

[7] Faculty at the full professor rank are 80% white and 67% male. And 59% of all tenure-line faculty are men (US Department of Education, 2020).

of the two-tier faculty labor system (cf. Berry & Worthen, 2021, p. 84). Because of the failure to compensate contingent faculty for service labor, on many campuses, peer observations of contingent faculty are exclusively conducted by tenure-line faculty, such that educators under vastly different labor conditions evaluate one another without considering those differences in the evaluation process.

While academic freedom is beset by an increasing number of cases in which faculty are harassed, targeted, disciplined, or dismissed (Missé, 2021), the academic freedom of tenure-line faculty is ostensibly protected through the job security offered by tenure, affording them the freedom to teach, conduct research, and publish in one's discipline without fear of retaliation or intimidation (AAUP, 1970). This principle is effectively nonexistent for contingent faculty because academic freedom is predicated on tenure (Berry & Worthen, 2021, pp. 99, 105). The literature shows educators who innovate in the classroom may receive negative student evaluations, especially in response to pedagogies that emphasize student agency.[8] Further, faculty know this and thus are influenced by the chilling effect of SETs within the neoliberal university in which students are recast as *consumers* and instructors as *service providers*:

> We cannot compel educational consumers to attend classes; we cannot make them uncomfortable with their privilege or the state of the environment. We are not supposed to challenge their abilities or to insist on the integrity of academic disciplines. We are creating a space where it is difficult, if not impossible, to be the teachers we want to be. For students, consumerism in higher education creates a type of pseudo-agency where market power stands in as a proxy for real critical consciousness and community-building. (Hoben et al., 2020, p. 167)

[8] "Trends that emphasize student agency and decentering instructor's authority raise questions about the validity of SETs, particularly those based on generic forms such as the SEEQ or IDEA that do not account for classrooms modeled on distributed agency. … students may not immediately appreciate de-centered models of teaching in which an instructor acts more as a facilitator or workshop leader. First-year college students in particular may react negatively to instructors who do not fit with their perceptions of college professors as 'sages on a stage.' Likewise, open-ended writing prompts may appear to many students to lack organization or clarity. Such reactions reflect common beliefs that students may have about instructor agency-that an effective instructor is authoritative, controlling, and/or objectively unimpassioned about their subject" (Ray et al., 2018, n.p.).

Due to this model of students as consumers, existing SET structures actually discourage innovation and therefore undermine the possibilities of using TEA to support faculty growth. Because student evaluations are often the only data determining whether to rehire contingent faculty, the structural vulnerability of contingent faculty presents a formidable obstacle to pursuing pedagogical innovation (Erickson, 2021).

Managers have met the problem of decades of public disinvestment in higher education by raising tuition and increasing reliance on lower-paid, disposable contingent instructors, who are now the majority of faculty and who teach the largest proportion of courses and students (Berry & Worthen, 2021). In this context, it does not make sense to create policy using tenure-line faculty as the normative model of the educator. In fact, we must assume conditions of contingency as the baseline and lecturer faculty as the exemplary figures of teaching in higher education, particularly due to the fact the majority of contingent faculty have teaching as their sole assignment; teaching is normatively the only measure by which lecturer faculty are retained or rehired (Berry & Worthen, 2021, pp. 120–4; Erickson, 2021).

We might imagine a future Museum of Neoliberalism in which student evaluations of teaching are displayed as exemplary artifacts, like thumbscrews in a museum of torture. The docent might explain this instrument was once used to reduce the exploration, creativity, and dialogic exchange of a learning community to an abstract numerical ranking and managers far removed from the classroom created elaborate comparative spreadsheets, which they subjected to arcane, infinitesimal comparisons, like the reading of tea leaves, to craft justifications for denials of promotion, pay raises, and retention. The docent might also point out these abstract rankings had arguably concealed and amplified social biases based on race, gender, age, accent, or national origin.

What the future docent and we ourselves might miss is what this simultaneously crude and sophisticated technology didn't do. What these rankings and the majority of student comments haven't done is provide instructors with constructive feedback about how to improve their teaching.

Actionable Data, Bias, and Statistical Meaninglessness

We argue for the radical transformation of the use of student feedback in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness based on three arguments

supported by data. First, student evaluations of teaching (SETs) contain little actionable information to improve teaching outcomes[9] and student achievement of learning outcomes; second, current policies provide little guidance on how to appropriately interpret and apply SET quantitative ratings and comments for employment purposes (particularly from an anti-bias perspective); and third, "When results are summarized and only mean or median ratings are included in a dossier, negative scores and comments are inadvertently awarded extra weight in a review" (Linse, 2017, p. 103), thus amplifying the harm of biases (whether implicit or explicit). Even if these limitations are addressed, SETs can be harmful to faculty because of the widespread lack of confidence in SETs and especially because concerns about their application in employment decisions undermine their use for teaching improvement.[10]

While some scholars of faculty evaluation propose methods for extracting useable insight from SETs while minimizing bias (Kreitzer & Sweet-Cushman, 2021; Linse, 2017), we note the application of these methods may require considerable additional labor, reducing the likelihood institutions will implement them. Further, despite prior claims of a high correlation between positive student evaluations and student learning, recent studies found low or even zero correlation, meaning students do not learn better from instructors who receive positive scores (Uttl et al., 2017). Wherever one falls on the debate about harm caused by SETs to women and BIPOC (Lazos, 2012) faculty, what is true across the board is they are rarely used in a way that supports the improvement of teaching and student learning. While Linse argues (2017) that studies on the negative impact of student evaluations are either flawed or taken out of context by higher education publications in a form of sensationalist journalism, she also argues:

> Student ratings are "broad brush" instruments used to gather information from a group of students, not all of whom will agree. They are not precision

[9] One instructor reported, "For several years I consistently was dinged on the question 'instructor is open to a variety of points of view.' I was really confused by this as I feel that I'm very open to hearing what students have to say. It wasn't until I had a peer observe my class that they commented that I sometimes cut students off, or would react to their 'erroneous' declarations with humorous disdain. It took someone [observing] my sometimes naturally interruptive style [for me] to make headway on this and I'm very proud of the fact that I have. But is that something I should not be hired over? And without explanation, what was I to do with that information?" (Anonymous, personal communication; November 3, 2021).

[10] "Inappropriate use of student ratings breeds mistrust, fosters inequities and inconsistencies, and ultimately demoralizes the faculty" (Linse, 2017, p. 103).

> tools that produce a measurement that can then be compared to a known standard. Unfortunately, some faculty evaluators over-interpret small differences as indicative of a problem, a decrease in quality, or an indication one faculty member is materially better than another. (2017, p. 100)

We would like to emphasize this point because of the impact, in practice, of focusing on small differences in the results—which cannot be correlated to a measurable improvement of student learning. Over-interpretation of small variations in ratings can lead to big employment decisions. For example, at San Francisco State University (SFSU), the student rating system ranges from 1 to 5, with 1 being the best. However, many departmental retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) criteria indicate to faculty and their supervisors any instructor receiving above 2.0 has "failed." The majority of SFSU departmental RTP criteria documents include language similar to this: "Generally[,] scores of below 1.5 on the evaluation questions indicate excellent teaching; Scores between 1.5 and 2.0 are good; Scores of 2.0 or higher suggest a need for improvement." In contrast, none of this is transparent to the students who are giving the ratings. For them, a five-point scale is more familiar as the A–F, in which a C is a passing grade. This would be equivalent to a "3" on the 1–5 rating for faculty, which is far above the static "2" most departments cite as the cut off for acceptable performance.

Further, at SFSU, many RTP policies require comparison to the departmental, programmatic, or college *mean*, creating an absurd system in which many faculty are guaranteed to "fail" purely because of a policy that falsely equates an arbitrary data point to effective teaching. According to Linse, "Unit means are not an appropriate cutoff or standard of comparison because there will always be some faculty members who are, by definition, 'below the mean.' This is particularly problematic in units with many excellent teachers" (2017, p. 102). Few RTP criteria at SFSU acknowledge a high degree of excellence within the department complicates a reliance on means; and even for these, a reliance on the mean may be substituted with the inflexible score of "2."

While some RTP policies suggest the number that is best for the candidate should be used when there is a discrepancy between the college, departmental, or program mean and the fixed ratings number, most are muddled. There also is an extreme variance between departments. For example, one states, "Excellence in teaching will be gauged in reference to the College-wide average and should be better than the College-wide

average for the semester under review. Quantitative scores over 2.25 indicate serious concerns," while another states, "SETE averages of 1.6 and better are deemed appropriate for tenure consideration." However, there is no set rating number that would make sense, because the mean changes every semester. Likewise, reliance on the mean would also be inadvisable, because a requirement all faculty ratings be better than the mean relegates a significant proportion to categorical, undeserved failure.

Additionally, Linse argues poor ratings are often due to so many variables it is important to "not over-interpret … relatively small differences in average ratings" (2017, p. 100). Linse presents myriad factors that impact ratings, and suggests potential remedies, all of which center on giving faculty resources, support, and time to improve. While these may be provided in the case of tenured/tenure-track faculty, lecturer faculty may be more vulnerable to the over-interpretations of ratings because there is less investment in their teaching development. Linse's analysis shows that student ratings distributions are typically negatively skewed, giving more weight to students with biased outlier views:

> In skewed distributions, means are sensitive to (influenced by) outlier ratings; in student ratings, these outliers are almost always low scores … Student ratings instruments … are best at capturing the modal perceptions of respondents, but they are not the best instruments for capturing rare views, i.e., the views of students represented by the tail of the distribution. While students with outlier views are not unimportant, they should not be given more weight than the views of most students. *This is particularly crucial when evaluating the ratings of non-majority* [sic] *faculty because we often see students with biased views represented in the tails of the distribution.* (pp. 101–102; *emphasis added*)

An argument administrators might make is bias impacts only a small number of faculty (and thus is not a concern), ignores the likelihood these outliers might be faculty who least resemble the traditional model of a professor, and those most impacted by imposter syndrome, stereotype threat, micro- and macro-aggressions, and who already swim against an underlying tide of bias and exclusion (Hune, 2020, p. 9; Muhs et al., 2012).

We strongly recommend no quantitative ratings of any kind be used in any part of the TEA process. However, if a system of teaching effectiveness assessment *must* use student ratings, they should be developed in consultation with statisticians and applied for specific purposes of supporting

faculty development and, if applied to employment decisions, with protective buffers built into both policy and practice. Administrators and department chairs in the position of assessing the rehiring of lecturer faculty, for example, must be trained[11] to understand how to interpret student ratings. If resources cannot be dedicated to developing instructor and administrator skills in interpreting student ratings, ratings *must not* be used in employment decisions.

Even more concerning than the lack of clarity or misinterpretation of ratings is the fact there is no apparent correlation between student ratings and student learning (Lawrence, 2018; Uttl, et al, 2017; Flaherty, 2016). In other words, there is no evidence these demonstrably harmful quantitative ratings offer any valid assessment of teaching effectiveness. In a 2017 "Meta-analysis of faculty's teaching effectiveness," Uttl, White, and Gonzalez argue, "The best evidence—the meta-analyses of SET/learning correlations when prior learning/ability are taken into account—indicates the SET/learning correlation is zero." They conclude "simple scatterplots as well as more sophisticated meta-analyses methods indicate students do not learn more from professors who receive higher SET ratings." Given one of the primary arguments for conducting student evaluations of teaching is they encourage student success via teacher effectiveness, this meta-analysis strongly suggests student evaluations fail to meet this purpose. As critics of the metrics-obsessed era of primary and secondary education remind us, "what is measurable is not the same as what is valuable" (Safir & Dugan, 2021, p. 12).

[11] The training suggested by "A Guide for Making Valid Interpretations of Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) Results" is extensive and labor and resource intensive:

> Relevant stakeholders should receive training on both basic survey research principles and psychometric concepts such as validity and reliability. Survey research training should focus on key concepts, such as sample size, MOE, and confidence levels, and how each of these factors interacts in the context of SETs. Training on basic psychometric properties such as validity and reliability should focus on the notion that validity not only addresses the accuracy of a set of scores but also the appropriate interpretation and use of scores. (Royal, 2017)

The modern educational data system itself has been implicated as a harmful form of *scientific colonialism*,[12] particularly in imposing standard models of comparison and evaluation criteria that give inadequate weight to the cultural perspectives and lived experience of the people subjected to assessment (Hall, 1992; McDougal III, 2014; Safir & Dugan, 2021). Even if these forms of measuring could be decoupled from their colonial effects, UC Berkeley Professor of Statistics Philip Stark and Richard Freishtat, Vice President of Curriculum at UC Berkeley Executive Education, expose the rating system of student evaluations of teaching as a house of cards predicated on multiple errors of basic statistical science. They conclude, "The common practice of relying on averages of student teaching evaluation scores as the primary measure of teaching effectiveness for promotion and tenure decisions should be abandoned for substantive and statistical reasons" (2014). They debunk the apparent objectivity of ratings and their use in employment decisions:

> Personnel reviews routinely compare instructors' average scores to departmental averages. Such comparisons make no sense, as a matter of statistics. They presume the difference between 3 and 4 means the same thing as the difference between 6 and 7. They presume the difference between 3 and 4 means the same thing to different students. They presume 5 means the same thing to different students and to students in different courses. They presume a 3 "balances" a 7 to make two 5s. For teaching evaluations, there is no reason any of those things should be true [6]. SET scores are ordinal categorical variables: The ratings fall in categories that have a natural order, from worst (1) to best (7). But the numbers are labels, not values. We could replace the numbers with descriptions and no information would be lost: The ratings might as well be "not at all effective," … "extremely effective." It does not make sense to average labels. Relying on averages equates two ratings of 5 with ratings of 3 and 7, since both sets average to 5. (Stark & Freishtat, 2014, p. 2)

[12] Smith describes this phenomenon: "In Western epistemology, understanding is viewed as being akin to measuring. As the ways we try to understand the world are reduced to issues of measuring, the focus of understanding becomes more concerned with procedural problems" (as cited in Safir & Dugan, 2021, p. 14).

In light of the statistical meaninglessness of such ratings, their lack of correlation to student learning, and their inherent biases, we argue there is no way to recuperate quantitative ratings for any legitimate purpose.

A Modest Proposal: TEA for Transformation Versus TEA for Status Quo

Having argued the case against SETs as currently designed and used, and having outlined the challenges facing the assessment of teaching effectiveness, we propose the following set of practices to support improved teaching and learning outcomes.[13]

First, *identify* all members of the campus community with a stake in the outcome and *define* the scope of their interest. Faculty can legitimately expect assessment processes to be anti-biased, be transparent, and provide actionable feedback accompanied by institutional support for implementation. Administrators, department chairs, and members of RTP committees have a valid need for assessment data on which to make employment recommendations and decisions with confidence. Staff members dedicated to the educational mission may have a stake related to their work with faculty and with students. And students expect to have their feedback contribute to faculty and curricular development, to be informed about how their

[13] The alternative we propose is inspired in part by the suggestions in Stark & Freishtat's (2014) analysis: "In 2013, the University of California, Berkeley, Department of Statistics adopted as standard practice a more holistic assessment of teaching. Every candidate is asked to produce a teaching portfolio for personnel reviews, consisting of a teaching statement, syllabi, notes, websites, assignments, exams, videos, statements on mentoring, or any other materials the candidate feels are relevant. The chair and promotion committee read and comment on the portfolio in the review. At least before every 'milestone' review (mid-career, tenure, full, step VI), a faculty member attends at least one of the candidate's lectures and comments on it in writing. These observations complement the portfolio and student comments. Distributions of SET scores are reported, along with response rates. Averages of scores are not reported. Classroom observation took the reviewer about four hours, including the observation time itself. The process included conversations between the candidate and the observer, the opportunity for the candidate to respond to the written comments, and a provision for a 'no-fault do-over' at the candidate's sole discretion. The candidates and the reviewer reported that the process was valuable and interesting. Based on this experience, the Dean of the Division now recommends peer observation prior to milestone reviews. Observing more than one class session and more than one course would be better. Adding informal classroom observation and discussion between reviews would be better. Periodic surveys of former students, advisees, and teaching assistants would bring another, complementary source of information about teaching" (p. 4).

perspectives will be used, to have access to clearly defined mechanisms through which to seek redress for harms experienced in the classroom, and also to celebrate instructors who positively impact their learning and success.

Second, *engage* all stakeholders to determine the objectives to be assessed; then, *align* assessment questions and practices, including how the assessments will be used, toward the desired goals. Assessment questions should be achievable and assessable, and faculty development to achieve these objectives must be supported equitably for all instructors by the institution. Questions related to instructor effectiveness also must focus only on those things over which an instructor has control.[14] Assessment practices must be developed through systems of shared governance and must be transparent to all stakeholders, participants, and users. If there is a campus-wide commitment to principles such as equity, social justice, or anti-racism, these objectives must be explicitly integrated in teaching and learning objectives in every program.

Third, *decenter*[15] summative, end of semester, instruments such as SETs and *redesign* evaluation as an ongoing, growth-oriented process throughout the professional career of individual instructors and within the context of supportive teaching communities. Rather than one high-stakes instrument riddled with defects, the evaluation of teaching should include formative student feedback such as midterm evaluations, focus groups, open class discussion, and formative self and peer evaluations, such as through the self-peer observation tool (SPOT) process described below.

Fourth, *eliminate* any quantitative rating system, such as Likert scales, from self, peer, and student perspective gathering instruments. Include longitudinal evidence, such as surveys of students a year after they have

[14] "Our analysis reveals that instructors are often placed as grammatical subjects in questions despite their lack of agency over some areas such as participation and student devaluation of alternative teaching practices. Such question formation skews students toward evaluating instructor factors that are, at best, uninformed, and, at worst, biased. We recommend that SET questions align with student learning and/or engagement rather than teacher performance, rewriting questions to put students in subject positions and cue them on best practices as a better reflection of rhetorical theorizations of classroom agency" (Ray et al., 2018, n.p.).

[15] "While students are in a good position to evaluate some aspects of teaching, there is compelling evidence that student evaluations are only tenuously connected to overall teaching effectiveness. They offer only a single perspective on a very complex and multifaceted teaching and learning process that no single source of evidence can reasonably evaluate" (Stark & Freishtat, 2014).

completed a course, or student success in graduate school or career placement.[16] And, include analysis of other institutional factors that impact student experiences and student success in a particular course, such as how a program chooses to schedule the course, what aligned tutorial services are available, course enrollment caps, instructional aids or Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), the course learning modality, the support available for appropriate faculty professional development, and other factors.[17]

Fifth, completely separate extraordinary employment decisions, such as failure to retain or promote faculty, from any mechanism designed to support instructor teaching effectiveness development. Any employment decision processes also must be supported by faculty and administrator development courses to learn best practices for gathering and applying any form of teaching effectiveness assessment for the purposes of making employment decisions.

Sixth, *transform* campus climate by creating systems to prevent and respond to bias. *Build* from justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles instead of adding them on to an ostensibly neutral model. *Center* the voices of the most disenfranchised students and faculty at all stages of the process (cf. Safir & Dugan, 2021, p. 52). This effort should feature proactive education about systems of bias and oppression including white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism with attention to specific forms such as white privilege, anti-Black and anti-Asian violence, settler colonialism/gentrification, and the intersections between race, class, gender, sexuality, and other attributes.

Self and Peer Observation

We offer the following draft models for formative self, peer, and student observation and reflection. We also provide a model for soliciting stakeholder observations to support extraordinary employment decisions.

[16] As Boyle and Schmierbach propose, "Midterm evaluations, focus groups, open discussion with the class, and even experimenting with different approaches at random within *or between courses* can all provide valuable data" (2021, *emphasis added*).

[17] In a collaborative autoethnographic analysis of how course evaluation questionnaires at Canadian universities "shape and restrict our teaching identities as well as the identities of our students," the authors note that "only the teachers are assessed even though classrooms are a microcosm of the institutional forces, personalities, and cultures that intersect within these spaces. Within this model, it is easy for student satisfaction to take precedence over pedagogic goals" (Hoben et al., 2020, p. 161).

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is not codified within most institutional practices of TEA, but has the potential to be the most truly transformative. Bali and Caines argue for "dialogue and reflection with others" in order to achieve "transformative learning, learning that will create deep and lasting change in our practice because it is based on reflection on how our beliefs and values influence our practice, and the connections we make with others in the process" (2018, p. 20). Self-reflection is a meta-cognitive process that allows us to consider what we do well and what we think we do not do well, and thus to consider our relationship to new skills, such as learning new approaches to pedagogy (Haukås, 2018, p. 12). Self-reflection also allows for instructors as stakeholders to have a meaningful voice in their own development through TEA.

The sample self-peer observation tool (SPOT) described below can be used for self-reflection, perhaps with additional questions about changes the instructor would like to make, based on evidences such as student perspectives surveys, students responses to specific pedagogical strategies, or successful student achievement of learning outcomes through specific assignments or assessment activities. We have combined self-reflection with peer observation to enhance alignment between these practices and also to support the development of teaching and learning communities.

Peer Observation

Many peer observation tools and practices are built on the same inherently biased framework as SETs; thus, despite a relative lack of research on peer observations, it is possible to infer from studies on bias in hiring, tenure, and other practices in which faculty evaluate one another, peer observations may be particularly harmful to BIPOC, women, and other marginalized faculty (Starck, et al, 2020). In a study on implicit and explicit bias among K-12 teachers, researchers found that "[f]aculty can also act from implicit bias in their evaluations of each other" (Gleason & Sanger, 2017, p. 14; *emphasis in original*). Thus, peer observation tools, policies, and practices must be designed, practiced, and analyzed from an explicit anti-bias stance.

To illustrate this impact, we provide the following example from a dissertation on men of color in the California community college system, written by a Black man in a tenure-track position in such an institution at

the time of the incident he describes. This example shows how the ascendance of white faculty over BIPOC faculty in rank can contribute to an accumulation of harmful bias. Eventually, the incident so disturbed the author that he separated from the institution prior to the tenure and promotion process. Would he have been harmed by this biased peer observation in terms of being denied tenure or promotion? Possibly. Was he harmed by it in other ways? Definitely. Dr. Collins' persistence within academia despite the negative impact of this peer observation by his then-department chair is a mark of his resilience, rather than of the negligible impact of biased peer observation.

Collins frames his narrative with an analysis of stereotype threat in educational contexts. Within this framework, he initially questions his own academic persistence in the face of racism, eventually becoming a careful practitioner of student-centered pedagogy: "Relying on Hammond's (2013) Culturally Responsive Pedagogy to ensure critical thinking and writing while integrating the cultural knowledge and background of my students, I carved a space in my classroom that celebrated authenticity, dialogue, and vulnerability (Ponjuán & Hernández, 2016)." However, the narrative below shows his liberation pedagogy conflicted with existing stereotype threats, and the institutional practices of peer observation in teaching effectiveness assessment externalized this conflict.

> When I was hired, I was told I was hired because I was a "successful Black man" and I was expected to work with the Black student population, however, my methods for promoting Black authenticity, identity, and resourcefulness were criticized by both the dean and the department chair, both who happened [*sic*] to be white females. One area of critique was my style of classroom management. During one of my classroom [peer] evaluations, a Black male student walked in late. I simply said, "Hello Jay, thanks for being here," and continued lecturing. The department chair was upset and in my first tenure review meeting revisited the incident and told me the better way to handle the student would be to shame him in front of the entire class. She admonished me for welcoming him into the classroom without calling him out in front of the class for being late. The department chair contended that embarrassing him in front of his peers would make him come to class on time in the future. Her suggestion of how I should have handled the tardy student reminded me of my own student experience in community college. The memory of when I was locked out of the classroom for being late resurfaced. The memory of the time I was yelled at in front of the entire classroom because my research paper did not meet the teacher's expectations

hauntingly returned. The vicious institutional (micro)aggression was, and still is a problem in community college.

Some suggestions for reducing bias in peer observations include developing an awareness of such bias including bias related to instructor identity, student biases, sub-field biases, confirmation bias, and teaching approach bias (Troisi, 2021) within the pool of faculty and administrators who conduct and review such observations, as well as carefully designing peer observation tools to refocus on observations of equity and excellence in student-teacher interactions, to relate to pedagogical standards and innovations in the field, and to require specific evidence to support observations.

We strongly recommend peer observations be conducted with pre-observation meetings and post-observation meetings, as well as reviews of additional materials, including course syllabi, online course management systems, assignments, student learning assessment rubrics, and student work. In order to mitigate power differences and biases, and to better support faculty development, we also recommend self-reflections and peer observations be conducted in tandem, preferably with both parties conducting both a self-reflection and a peer observation, when possible. Peer observers may also want to reflect on how acting as observers/mentors impacts their own professional development as teachers. Doing this work should be both recognized and compensated as an important part of the labor of developing and maintaining equity and excellence in teaching and learning.

In fall 2021, San Francisco State University piloted a new self-peer observation tool developed by the Center for Equity and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CEETL) with stakeholder input facilitated by the Academic Senate Teaching Effectiveness Assessment Task Force. The SPOT identifies five teaching areas that have been shown to support student success, especially for BIPOC and first-generation students, as verified by an extensive literature review conducted within SFSU's CEETL and sponsored by the California State University Quality Learning and Teaching Initiative. For each of these five teaching areas, the SPOT provides direct links to resources within the CEETL Online Teaching Lab (OTL) and the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Institute,

among other offerings.[18] Faculty who used the SPOT as an optional formative assessment component in their Spring 2021 Faculty Teaching Squares (which is not part of their formal teaching evaluation process) generally reported positive experiences; reports from the Fall SPOT Pilot are forthcoming. The SPOT functions as two sides (self and peer) of a triangle of self, peer, and student perspectives in the teaching effectiveness assessment process. The purpose is to support teaching effectiveness development within an anti-oppressive framework. This framework seeks to support—rather than manage—faculty labor.

For each of the five areas addressed in the SPOT, we provide below a rationale ("Why"), suggested supports, and suggested assessment practices. Policies for the implementation of instructor self-reflection and peer observation should also include rationales, inventories of existing and needed institutional supports, and holistic assessment practices (including mandatory mentoring, e.g., pre- and post-observation meetings). These policies must also provide guidelines for how such self-reflections are to be used; we recommend divorcing them entirely from employment decisions. Faculty may wish to quote from their self-reflections or peer observations in their teaching narratives, but must not be required to do so.

Course Organization

- Why: Courses should be organized in ways to support students in building self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to succeed.
- Support: For example, course organization can be supported by providing a syllabus template or online tool, online course management templates, and development to use these as part of faculty onboarding, and as an ongoing process of deepening faculty abilities to respond to student and environmental contexts and development in the field of instructional design.
- Development Assessment: Peer review and student experiences of course organization elements and learning environments should pro-

[18] These include Online Teaching Lab (https://ceetl.sfsu.edu/online-teaching-lab); Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion PIE Institute (https://ceetl.sfsu.edu/jedi-pie-institute-course); Asian and AAPI Solidarity Statement and Teaching Resources (https://ceetl.sfsu.edu/asian-and-aapi-solidarity-statement-and-teaching-resources); and Anti-Racist Pedagogies (https://ceetl.sfsu.edu/anti-racist-pedagogies). Additional resources addressing other specific pedagogical approaches are under development in collaboration with campus partners.

vide constructive feedback during formative assessment.[19] Assessment of course design should include samples from extant course design elements, peer reviews, student experiences, and instructor self-reflections. Formative questions might include "how did the instructor communicate where to start, course outcomes, and other important course information, such as course materials, frequency of instructor communication, community agreements, and grading policies?" and "how did the syllabus provide an overview of the semester schedule and was the course divided into manageable pieces?"

Context and Purpose

- Why: Articulating personal and collective purposes helps imbue student learning outcomes with meaning, motivating them to succeed.
- Support: Faculty should be supported to understand and communicate their personal, social, community, and local contexts and positionalities as well as to support students to develop and communicate their own contexts and positionalities. These might include land acknowledgments, pronoun declarations, preferred forms of address, and other markers of identity and vulnerability in order to build a learning community based in trust and mutual respect.
- Development Assessment: Analyze sections of peer observations, self-reflections, student experience surveys, and instructor and student context and positionality statements in formative assessment processes. Formative assessment questions might include: "how did the instructor acknowledge social conditions shaping student experience[20] without singling out individuals?" and "how did this course foster a culture of knowledge development that is co-constructed

[19] Instructors should compare their course organization at different stages and reflect on changes they have made and how these changes were indicated by peer and student comments and by professional development experiences. They may also benefit from surveying students on alternate course organization structures.

[20] Student academic success is often radically shaped by their material conditions and their emotional and physical wellbeing outside of the classroom environment. As Erickson documents in a study of Oakland's lowest performing middle schools, realities outside of educational institutions can have catastrophic impact on student success, especially for working-class BIPOC students and members of their families subject to multiple forms of trauma—racial profiling, food insecurity, violence, housing insecurity, incarceration, deportation—that may interrupt or permanently derail educational goals (2014).

through students' lived experiences and particular contexts, and toward their personal goals?"

Student and Community Engagement

- Why: Students who feel excluded, marginalized, or invisible have difficulty developing a sense of efficacy and benefit not only from feeling included but by gaining practice in successfully acting on the world as individuals and as members of a learning community.
- Support: Provide multiple and ongoing development opportunities for active, engaged pedagogy based on a shared learning community, and access to resources that support community service learning.
- Development Assessment: Analyze sections of peer observations, self-reflections, student experience surveys, and student learning artifacts in formative assessment processes. Formative assessment questions might include, "how did course activities include opportunities to make a difference in the world such as project-based learning, building a resource for the campus (or other) community, and sharing information with peers?" and "how did the instructor engage students through active and group learning?"

Teacher Presence

- Why: The development of an inclusive teaching presence that communicates expectations of equity and excellence begins with faculty expertise in the identities and social realities of BIPOC, LGBTIQA++, differently abled, neurodiverse, and other students whose identities have not been normativized in academic student learning assessment.
- Support: Provide faculty development courses and consultations that support faculty to: (1) identify and assess personal goals for intersectional anti-racist pedagogy; (2) examine and demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary institutional and individual racism and white supremacy in education practice; (3) assess current assignments, assessments, and teaching practices through a critical race and

intersectional perspective; and (4) design strategies for inclusive and equitable engagement.[21]

- Development Assessment: Peer observations, self-reflections, student experience surveys, and teaching philosophy or pedagogy statements should be discussed formatively. Formative questions for self, peer, and student might include "how did the instructor position themself within hierarchies of oppression such as gender, race, and class?" and "how did course materials center the knowledge and accomplishments of members of diverse communities?"

Student Learning Assessment

- Why: Ensure assessment strategies are aligned with student learning outcomes and reduce barriers to student achievement. Anti-biased assessment strategies should include how to create an ecology of trust to cultivate a trust-based learning community.
- Support: Provide faculty development courses and consultations that support faculty to: (1) align learning activities with stated outcomes; (2) use student-friendly language to communicate expected outcomes, grading policy, and transparent grading practices; (3) provide regular feedback to students across a variety of modalities; (4) provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning; (5) provide opportunities for reflection and metacognition one or more times throughout the course; (6) actively incorporate strategies that promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion pertaining to assessment and feedback on student learning.
- Development Assessment: Analyze formative surveys of student learning; track student achievement by associating student learning assessment activities with particular outcomes; review students' summative reflection on their achievement of learning outcomes. Questions might include "how did assessment activities (essays, quizzes, tests, etc.) provide opportunities for students with diverse learning styles to succeed?"

[21] These supports are those of SFSU's Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Pedagogies for Inclusive Excellence (PIE) Institute, https://ceetl.sfsu.edu/jedi-pie-institute-course.

Student Perspectives

Student perspectives have a legitimate, useful place in teaching effectiveness assessment—especially for formative feedback that can improve a course immediately.

Sample Student Perspective Survey

The following questions are built around the same five categories as the SPOT, with the addition of a section on learning modality[22] and context, and a global reflection on all the other areas.

Course Design

- How did the syllabus and course materials provide the information you and your classmates needed to be successful in this course? Please mention specific elements of the syllabus, online course management system, and other course materials.
- How did course activities and assignments help you see connections between what you learned and your future goals?

Inclusion and Belonging

- What about this course helped you experience a sense of community and connection with your classmates?
- How did your instructor help you and your classmates feel welcomed into and valuable to the class?
- Does everyone in the class know how to pronounce your name?
- How did the instructor acknowledge social realities (such as white supremacy or patriarchy) shaping your life experience without making you feel singled out as an individual?

[22] As the title of one article argues, there is a significant "Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning." This article suggests that "[c]olleges and universities working to maintain instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic should understand those differences when evaluating this emergency remote teaching."

Teacher Presence

- How did your instructor motivate you and your classmates to work hard and to believe you could succeed?
- In what ways did your instructor make adjustments to instruction based on your and your classmates' learning needs and feedback?

Engagement

- How did the course materials and assignments help you achieve the learning outcomes?
- How did the instructor engage and motivate you and your classmates to learn during discussions and learning activities?
- What did you and your classmates do to support your learning in this course?
- Did any aspect of this course help you feel you could make a difference to something you care about?

Assessment

- How did the feedback you received from your instructors and classmates help you improve your performance in this course?
- How did the processes used to determine grades support your learning in this course? In what ways were these processes clear and equitable and how can they be improved to be more so?

Modality and Context

- What were the learning modalities of this course? (online, in-person, HyFlex, etc.)
- How did the learning modalities of your other courses impact your learning experiences in this course?
- What was the context of this course for you personally (e.g., did you experience a major life change?), locally (e.g., environmental or social factors), nationally, or internationally (e.g., significant social factors) and how did any of these contexts impact your learning experiences in this course?

Global

- What factors most impacted your successful completion of this course? (Select all that apply)

  – Course Design
  – Inclusion and Belonging
  – Teacher Presence
  – Engagement
  – Assessment
  – Modality
  – Other

- Please comment on those factors you selected in terms of their impact on your learning in this course.

Do student perspectives also have a place in employment decision processes? Perhaps so, but we would argue this is for extraordinary cases and should be solicited outside of student perspectives used to inform faculty development. These two conflicting purposes should not be mixed; doing so erodes faith the solicited information will be used supportively and thus can impact the candor of respondents, as well as how instructors perceive, receive, and use the information provided. It is for these reasons we recommend an extraordinary commendations and concerns process, outlined below.

Extraordinary Commendations and Concerns

The biggest challenge we have faced in reimagining TEA processes is how to reconcile the creation of a zone of faculty autonomy that supports growth with the use of TEA data in employment decisions, which forecloses that autonomy. We have concluded TEA for faculty development must be completely separated from TEA for employment purposes. TEA, for reasons presented above, must not be used at all in decisions to retain, promote, or separate. We assume the majority of faculty are performing within an acceptable range and can improve their teaching if they are positively drawn to development opportunities. The current model puts all faculty on the chopping block (with lecturer faculty closest to the blade). We propose taking all faculty off the chopping block except in cases of extraordinary cause.

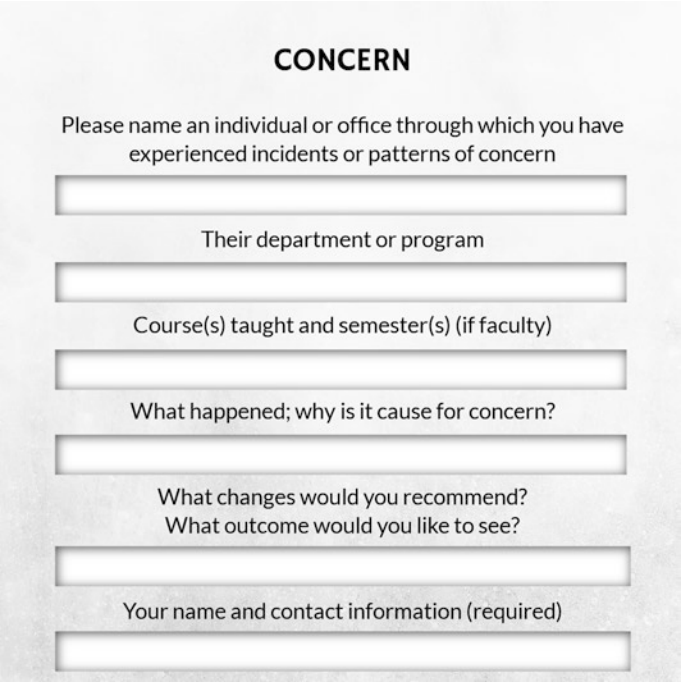

Fig. 4.1

The instrument we propose is a Commendations and Concerns Comment Box, separate from other TEA processes. This extraordinary process could reside on department websites, online course management system homepages, graduation/separation surveys, as links from formative or summative instruments, or within bias-incident reporting structures. Submitting a commendation would trigger a process leading to recognition and awards, while submitting a concern would initiate fact-finding to determine if intervention is necessary and to recommend a process of redress where warranted.

The commendations box (Fig. 4.1) encourages an environment of celebration: in the best cases of transformative teaching that supports student success, this method would support and reward excellence, while encouraging achievement through a reward nomination system to recognize and incentivize teaching excellence. Whether or not commenders should be anonymous will probably engender some debate; in our opinion,

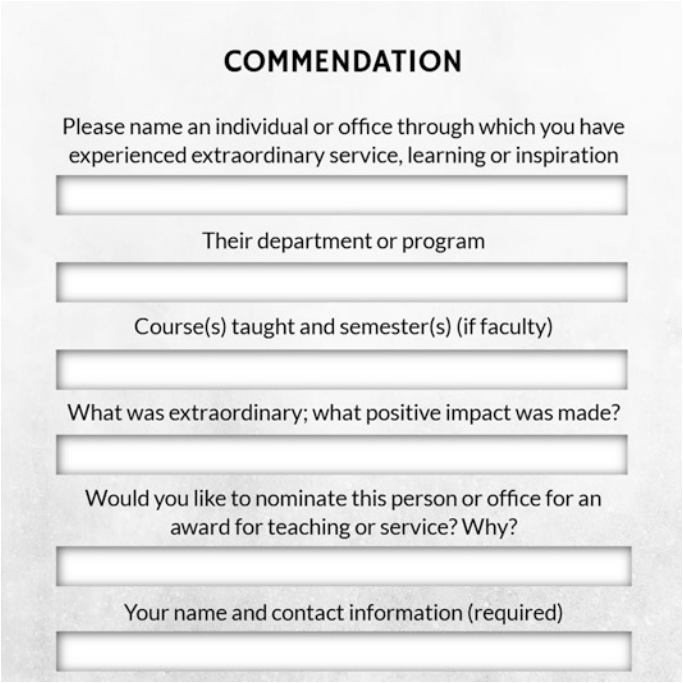

Fig. 4.2

commenders should be encouraged to go on record and participate in celebrating those being commended

The concern box (Fig. 4.2) provides accountability: how can ineffective faculty or those who commit harm be supported to learn to create an effective, inclusive learning environment, or, if they refuse to shift, be held accountable and ultimately removed? Whether or not complaints should be anonymous will probably engender serious debate; in our opinion, the complainant should be encouraged to go on record and be available for further engagement toward resolution. Such complaints should be directed to the HR Title IX office, with a Faculty Rights panel of the faculty union notified as watchdog, perhaps including student voices in the process as well. Title IX staff can clarify the facts of the incident to determine next steps. Consider the following typical incidents and the differing responses they might prompt, either a determination that no harm was done or a recommendation for mediation and support:

1. A faculty member teaches critical racial analysis; a student feels uncomfortable and reports the instructor.
2. An instructor uses the word "negro" in historical context; a student hears it as the n-word and complains.
3. A faculty member presents Palestinian perspectives on the Israeli occupation and a student denounces the instructor as an anti-Semite.
4. Other students misgender a trans student and the instructor doesn't intervene.
5. An instructor asks a third-generation Asian American student to describe their own immigrant experience.
6. All the course materials are written by men; women students complain they have been erased from the discipline.

In these examples we see the potential for de-escalation, reconciliation, growth, and development rather than immediate escalation to formal grievance with potential employment consequences. Universities could benefit from developing the capacity for practices of *restorative justice*, a facilitated process in which those who have done harm can take responsibility for their actions and grow from the experience and those who have been harmed can experience being heard, receive redress, and heal (cf. Karp & Schachter, 2018). There are multiple potential benefits: a sense that justice was done and agency for the person harmed; the opportunity to develop strong equity practices; an opportunity for redemption for persons who commit harm; and, for administrators, a reduction in the number of formal grievances filed at their university. Although this process may not always be appropriate or possible—both parties must be willing participants—creating the capacity to practice restorative justice can contribute to the real structural transformation of the institution so equity is not relegated to superficial declarations, siloed programs, or token spokespeople (cf. Dugan, 2021).

Hard Choices and Obstacles

We have shown prevalent TEA practices work at cross purposes to positive outcomes for students, faculty, and administrators alike. We have presented proposals for the reorientation of TEA practices to support pedagogy development that each campus community might pursue in its own way.

Despite widespread frustration with SETs and eagerness for change among faculty, we foresee numerous traps preventing campuses from

putting down swords of TEA torment and picking up plowshares of TEA transformation. We predict the following half-measures likely to occur but unlikely to produce improved outcomes for any campus stakeholders:

1. Campuses will rename SETs, *Student Opinions of Teaching* or *Student Voice Surveys*, while continuing to misuse student data in the same unproductive ways.
2. Campuses will update SETs with new questions, which might produce better data but which will still be misused as employment management tools, undermining their value as faculty development resources.
3. Campuses will improve their summative instruments such as SETs and peer observations but fail to develop formative processes and support essential to faculty growth.
4. Campuses will bow to white fragility and reduce commitments to equity to toothless diversity discourse[23] that contains rather than liberates students and faculty of marginalized identities.
5. Administrators will insist on Likert scales, arbitrary numeric means, and comparative norms despite lack of legitimacy and potential for harm, thus maintaining faculty and student distrust of TEA processes.
6. Campuses will design transformational TEA processes around tenure-line faculty, marginalizing the majority contingent faculty and thus excluding the majority of students from the benefits.
7. Campuses will focus on isolated incidents of bias instead of attending to systemic bias-producing processes.

Campuses that surpass these obstacles will create conditions to produce tangible benefits for all stakeholders:

- Students can become active agents in their learning processes, witness responsive faculty, and feel empowered to hold faculty accountable in instances of harm and to publicly recognize exceptional educators.

[23] Ahmed documents the ways *diversity* serves as a managerial discourse and marketing term that conceals systemic inequalities within universities and thus serves as a containment strategy that makes challenges to racism appear impertinent (2012, pp. 52–3).

- Faculty can experience security in which to innovate and be open to continual learning toward excellence and equity in teaching.
- Administrators may see fewer complaints escalate into formal grievances, fewer disengaged students drop out, and more students graduating in less time.

In the end, we are left with an existential question about the purpose of higher education today. Do we exist to equitably serve and co-liberate the human potential of an already heterogeneous learning community? Or is our purpose to reduce learning processes to quantifiable data to serve labor management? It will not and cannot be both.

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CHAPTER 5

What Students, Whose Success? Reimagining the Transformation of Higher Education Through Critically Engaged Student Success Initiatives

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Introduction

Today's college students face unique challenges to educational success and degree completion, including meeting their daily basic need of access to food and housing. At a time when colleges and universities are continually

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faced with competing urgent needs such as financial difficulties, declining student enrollment, decreased state funding, and now COVID-19, it can be challenging to build institutional support for new initiatives.

As vocational employment opportunities in fields that provide a living wage without a college degree decrease, it is clear a higher education degree continues to be crucial for long-term economic stability (Ma et al., 2016). However, alongside this opportunity is the colloquial but pervasive narrative of the "starving student" that is held and perpetuated by many. This largely engenders a vision of an 18-year-old student, supported by their parents, who might be mismanaging their money, and as a result, eat a lot of staple food to make ends meet. It suggests that struggle with economic stability is inherent in the college student experience. Contrary to this common notion, this traditional student is less and less represented in our campus communities and is quickly being outnumbered by students who are funding their own education, are returning to school from the workplace at older ages, are parents, and are marginalized in a variety of ways (Seftor & Turner, 2002; Spitzer, 2000). Empirical evidence suggests too often students do not have enough financial means to accommodate the cost of college and living expenses for a range of reasons, least common of these are personal budget mismanagement. Not having enough money contributes to heavy tolls on their well-being and ability to earn a higher education degree, and contributes to students' being considered *basic-needs insecure* (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018, 2019; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2019).

Researchers and practitioners in higher education often defined basic needs as the conditions necessary for students to survive and thrive (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2019; Trawver & Hedwig, 2019). This most often references safe, affordable, fixed, and habitable housing; the ability to acquire, prepare, and store nutritious food; and the financial well-being to ensure those needs are met. This definition has changed as research has progressed and in response to the disparities and challenges exacerbated and amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted elemental needs. Beyond food, housing, and financial security, basic needs for

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students can also be inclusive of *essential needs* for student well-being such as access to reliable broadband internet, spaces conducive to student learning and studying, support for mental and physical health, access to personal hygiene supplies and products, transportation, and childcare to attend educational opportunities and employment responsibilities (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018).

More specifically, research on basic needs has relied on a definition for homelessness given in the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act, which defined homelessness for youth as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017; Hallett et al., 2019). This definition appears to best represent the experience of homelessness for college students, some of whom live in shelters, places not meant for human habitation like their cars, but are more likely to "couch surf" moving from place to place without a consistent place to live (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017; Hallett et al., 2019).

Community colleges have high prevalence of homelessness and housing insecurity than their four-year counterparts, ranging from 30% to 50% of students experiencing housing instability and 13% to 14% experiencing homelessness (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2016). A national study found 12% of community college students and 9% of university students experience homelessness (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). In a study of the California State University (CSU) system, a four-year institution that is the largest comprehensive post-secondary higher education institution in the country, 10.9% of students experienced homelessness in a 12-month period (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). Similarly, recent survey data from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) indicate 8.3% of student respondents experienced homelessness at some point in their college career, 30% reporting experiences with housing insecurity, and over 44% reporting experiences with food insecurity (Trawver & Hedwig, 2019).

The United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (USDAERS) defines food insecurity as those who are low or very low food secure (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017). *Low food security* indicates reduced quality of diet and *very low food security* indicates disrupted eating patterns, reduced food intake, both due to limited financial means. Studies have also shown high rates of students in colleges and universities experiencing food insecurity. Researchers have found between 21% and 52% of students experienced food insecurity including reduced intake of food, nutritional deficits, and worry or anxiety about having access to enough

food (Chaparro et al., 2009; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Freudenberg et al., 2011; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015; Martinez et al., 2016). Similar to rates of homelessness, community college students have higher rates of food insecurity than their four-year counterparts (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015, 2018; Martinez et al., 2016).

Although policies and practices have been developed to address equity for and retention of low-income students in higher education, there are limited supports specifically for students who are unable to meet their basic needs. Research suggests students who experience homelessness and food insecurity struggle to meet a variety of competing needs, including management of personal and financial responsibilities and navigating college environments (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2019; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Gupton, 2017). The innumerable problems associated with basic need insecurity undoubtedly inhibit academic success. Students experiencing housing and food insecurities have higher levels of stress (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Eisenberg et al., 2014). Students are often in the precarious position of having to sacrifice their well-being in the pursuit of their education (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Cady, 2016; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018, 2019; Freudenberg et al., 2013).

Further, state and federal programs intended to support low-income individuals and families outside of higher education, like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), often fail to help struggling students because of restrictive eligibility requirements specifically for those in higher education (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2019). Many college students would qualify for public welfare support systems, but they become categorically ineligible for those services by virtue of the very fact they are college students. The gap between public service supports and the college environment leaves students struggling to earn a degree in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Although some campuses have developed official, institutionally supported efforts to research campus food- and housing-insecurity and student homelessness (Crutchfield, 2016) and others have developed coordinated resources and services to serve students (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015), many institutions have not. The advent of campus food pantries and emergency grant support to students who experience basic need insecurity has proven helpful for students in addressing short-term crises. However, rethinking these approaches to name the embedded inequalities in higher education and the policies and community institutions are situated in is necessary. Basic need insecurity is a manifestation of these

economic and social disparities, and institutions of higher education must avoid the recreation of charity systems that replicate inequities embedded in historical approaches to addressing poverty. Further, incorporating a paradigm and action-oriented position to address education in and out of the classroom with the intention to address racial and economic parity is required if student success is truly the mission of higher education.

Positionality of the Authors

The California State University (CSU): The authors come from two systems of higher education that address basic needs in a variety of ways. The California State University (CSU) has 23 campuses, more than 481,000 students, and is the largest, most ethnically and economically diverse public comprehensive higher education system in the US and offers undergraduate and graduate instruction leading to bachelor's and higher degrees. Twenty-one of CSU campuses are Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and 14 campuses are Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions. Spanning 800 miles across California, CSU campuses serve urban, suburban, and rural communities, and one-third of undergraduates are the first in their families to attend college.

In February 2015, Timothy P. White, then-Chancellor of the CSU, first commissioned Dr. Rashida Crutchfield, later adding Dr. Jennifer Maguire, to conduct the CSU Study of Student Basic Needs (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018) to explore the prevalence, scope, and health impacts for CSU students who experienced food and housing insecurity and to learn more about coping and supports students used. We found 41.6% experienced food insecurity. Almost 22% of those reported very low food security, meaning they were not getting enough food, linked with hunger, experiencing weakness, difficulty concentrating, and sickness and missing school. African American and first-generation students (68%) were far over-represented as basic needs insecure when compared with the CSU student average.

We found 10.9% of CSU students reported homelessness. Again, African American and first-generation students were disproportionately represented as almost 18% reported low or very low food security. We found the more food insecure or homeless a student, the lower their reported GPA and higher their level of academic concerns like anxiety about academics, work, trouble concentrating, and time management. Students who face these challenges had more symptoms of poor mental

and physical health and were more likely to miss days of school or work than their secure peers. Students describe a variety of ways in which housing insecurity or homelessness influences their educational outcomes. Unhoused students also experience the challenges of working multiple jobs to make ends meet, taking courses, and finding time and money to eat. Often, students report the ongoing need to find ever transitioning places to sleep as having an additional job. One student said, "It affects my studying if I don't know where I'm going to go, where am I studying or am I concentrating on studying because I'm not worried about where I'm going to go."

The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)

Located on Dena'ina Athabascan homelands in Alaska's most populated city, where more than half of the total state's population resides, the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) was created as a result of a 1970 merger between the Anchorage Community College and the Alaska Senior College (UAA, 2015). UAA is the largest campus within the University of Alaska system and includes five community campuses, all of which are designated as open-enrollment at the undergraduate level. The system as a whole was developed to increase access to higher education and meet the workforce needs of a growing state. UAA offers academic programs ranging from paraprofessional occupational endorsement certificates to doctoral degrees. On average, UAA enrolls nearly 15,000 students each academic year (UAA, 2020), serving a highly diverse and *new traditional* student body. Anchorage has some of the most diverse neighborhoods and public schools in the US, including three of the five most diverse public high schools (Farrell, 2018). Students represent broad and diverse social locations across race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, gender identity, first-language spoken, nation of birth, disability status, military- and/or veteran-status, marital status, first generation, and rural and small communities. Additionally, many students are working and caring for children or other dependents while attending the university (UAA, 2020).

As students respond to shifting and competing demands on their everyday lives, our institutions of higher education must also respond by listening to student voices and following through on commitments to put students first. Food and housing insecurity, like the institutions set up to address it, do not occur in isolation. Our campuses can learn from students and from each other to face emerging challenges and meet the

broader needs of our community, state, nation, and world. While UAA is still very much in the grassroots stages of campus and community activism around basic needs, our institutional journey, despite important political, economic, and sociocultural differences, mirrors other colleges and universities in the US, including the CSU. Preliminary research efforts at UAA were informed by the Basic Needs Initiative at CSU, and faculty, staff, and administrative collaborations between our institutions have increased awareness and expanded the reach of existing efforts. Further, despite the overwhelming perception California's liberal politic might nurture a basic needs movement unobstructed, the CSU begins its journey of development as a small group of people who found purchase in the passion of those committed to action and, even as that movement grows, continues to learn and endure despite odds that often seem unsurmountable. Though continued research is needed to clarify correlations between food insecurity and issues of housing insecurity, poverty, educational cost, living wage, and affordable living, it is clear students experience a multiplicity of hardships while striving to earn a university degree. We envision a future where all institutions see this need clearly and imbed strategic responses to these social issues as a part of their missions for student success.

Multi-dimensional Perspectives from Stakeholders

Addressing these complex and multifaceted social issues to ensure transformational change for students requires we work *with* students to ensure their voices are leading and directing the narrative of the challenges they face and the successes they achieve. Further, we are required to learn from them both in how they have responded as participants in research and in real time as advocates of their own change movements.

Collaborative work with students, staff of both on- and off-campus service providers, faculty, and administrators is fundamental in our role to amplify the voices of stakeholders. We define stakeholders as those who are affected by basic needs insecurity or are involved in support of solutions that work toward its amelioration. In this case, they are staff, faculty, students, administrators, community agencies, policy advocates, and legislators engaged in forward movement in this work. Without a community of talented individuals from diverse backgrounds who are working at a variety of touchpoints in the system, the research would not matter. We invited those who have experienced basic needs insecurity and those who have

worked closely with students to keep basic needs initiatives focused on ending hunger and homelessness in higher education. Each person provided rich narratives that root our recommendations for positive changes.

The authors are extremely appreciative of the students and staff who engage in this effort and who continue to support the ways their peers' basic needs are met. To further position the student narrative included in this chapter—and to further emphasize the importance of the student voice in research efforts such as this one that informs practice—it is important to *get to know* our students. The following are excerpts from narratives submitted by students. In these, the student voice is kept as originally submitted.

Li'Shae Childs, Undergraduate Student at California State University, Long Beach; pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Psychology; and served as an Undergraduate Research Assistant studying basic needs:

> While I was growing up, my mother always stressed the importance of getting an education, especially as a low-income first-generation biracial female. As I got older, I knew it was important for me to go to college, but I didn't have anyone in my family to look up to or ask questions about the college experience.

Aracely Guerrero, Graduate Student at California State University, Long Beach; pursuing a Master of Social Work; and served as a Graduate Research Assistant studying basic needs:

> In a family of six, with me as the oldest and the only daughter, my father is the head of the household, and my mother is a stay-at-home wife. We grew up in a low-income community and lived with the basics. I grew up thinking our lifestyle was normal and acceptable when it was the complete opposite.

Muhammad Khan, Undergraduate Student at University of Alaska, Anchorage; pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences; Secretary/Treasurer of the Health Professionals Student Organization (HPSO):

> My journey to higher education started far from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). It began as my father's dream that all of his kids would go on to get higher education one day. After graduating from high school in Pakistan, my father entered a green card lottery to enroll in college in the

> United States. Against all odds, he did receive an immigration visa. […] My dad decided to support his family and live his dream of getting an education through his kids. I was ten years old when that dream was finally realized.

Ashley Hearn, Undergraduate Student at University of Alaska, Anchorage; pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences:

> I'm currently going on my sixth year at UAA, and I've been a full-time student up until about 2 years ago. I'm now 27 and I've been independent and living on my own the entire time I've taken classes. Looking back on my time here, I can certainly say I had my fair share of struggles. I went through numerous job changes, my 5-year relationship ended, and I was in a toxic living situation until I was able to move. In addition to our global collective struggle with COVID, I also experienced the sudden death of my sister. Luckily, these things didn't happen all at once, but of course over the years each situation ended up occurring in the middle of the semester.

Vivian Hernandez, Alumna of California State University, Long Beach; Master of Science in Higher Education; served as CalFresh Outreach Coordinator for the Basic Needs Department:

> In 2017, as an undergraduate transfer student I experienced transfer shock and difficulty managing family and relationship dynamics. Struggling to support my mental illness, I began skipping meals, unable to focus on course material, and eventually lost my stable housing. I reached out for support given, and as a non-traditional, first-generation, Latina with varying abilities, basic needs services were critical to persist in my education.

Institutional Gaps in Support and Transformative Possibilities

While student success continues to be a core value across institutions of higher education, the stories and experiences shared by our contributors highlight several areas where additional support is needed. Research on students' basic needs continues to evolve and explore ways students navigate the college environment and the ways they are supported in achieving their educational aspirations. This work did not happen overnight but rather was the result of years of action-oriented research, community engagement, and commitment to do better for students. However, there remain gaps in our understanding of the systems that impact college students' well-being, and additional research is needed in order to fully

understand the ways students' basic needs are challenged, to develop and implement program and service supports, and to evaluate those supports to ensure they are best addressing students' needs with a specific focus on those that need us the most. Addressing student basic need insecurity requires academic institutions to expand their view and see themselves in a larger ecosystem inclusive of government agencies, community service organizations, housing agencies and advocacy efforts. As such, the following is informed by practice in this work with the foundational knowledge that students' basic needs challenges often stem from limited financial assistance provided through the university's financial aid process.

At the Core: Financial Aid

For most students, financial aid is a necessity in their pursuit of a college degree. The financial aid award is just as important–and some may say more important–than the college acceptance itself, for it provides the resources needed to pay for the tuition and fees needed to attend college. However, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is an intimidating standard application that assumes very traditional and standard family formations. By collecting the amount of money a family unit made, bank account information, and other personal and identifiable information each year before the priority deadline in March, the FAFSA then calculates one of the most important figures in a college student's life (beyond GPA and standardized test scores): the Expected Family Contribution, or EFC. It is this figure that determines a student's eligibility for federal student aid and available financial assistance at the college they will attend. Fundamentally, the EFC represents the amount of money a student's family is assumed—read "expected"—to be able to contribute toward the cost of the college education the year *prior* to their enrollment.

Through its series of questions, the FAFSA determines a student's dependency status in order to then apply the appropriate formula to determine the EFC. Unfortunately, though, the application takes a qualitative approach with all students regardless of a student's non-traditional circumstances. As Li'Shae explained:

> My mom and I hoped that financial aid would cover most of the cost, but it only covered a semester living in the dorms. I realized that going to a university was not an option for me; there was no way my mom and I could afford it.

More and more, this has become a common narrative: students and family units that assumed a college education would be possible *because* of financial aid, later discover financial aid will not be able to cover the true cost of attending college. It is this broken system that is often at the core of the basic needs conversation. If financial aid covered the true cost of attendance beyond tuition, books, and in some cases housing and covered other aspects of a students' college experience, including transportation, technology equipment, and care for children, the conversation regarding supporting students' basic needs would be very different.

One-Stop Shop: Meeting Students' Basic Needs

Beyond entry and responding to financial need, students who strive for graduation while being under-resourced require on- and off-campus supports that must be a coordinated effort. The challenges college students face does not automatically go away upon their enrollment in college. As Aracely wrote:

> As a graduate research assistant and student, I have seen a massive problem with students in higher education that needs to be examined. Learning about different experiences of students and statistics of those who suffer food and housing insecurity made me realize that I also identify as housing and food insecure myself. Knowing what I know now, I realize that there is not enough emphasis on the population trying to obtain higher education while juggling work, being parents, helping their family financially, and getting into debt. I had no idea that food and housing insecurity occurs in higher education and grows constantly. Even though we have resources in place, it is not sufficient.

Our students have multiple intersecting identities—identities that call upon colleges and universities to invest and support work to ensure all students have an equitable college experience. Parenting students, for example, are not only juggling the demands of college, but do so as they care for their children. As such, these students' basic needs now include the essentials needed to care for that young child—be it diapers, formula, and childcare all required and conducive to well-being.

In other cases, students' home lives are part of their college journey. For many students, attending a local community college provides the opportunity to continue to fulfill familial responsibilities, like caring for

elder parents or siblings. Doing this ensures students continue on their educational journey, but not without its challenges. As Muhammad shared:

> I had to support my family along with my dad. At the time, he was the sole breadwinner of our family. He battled several chronic diseases, including coronary artery disease and chronic kidney disease, while also being a type 1 diabetic. His illnesses have been very debilitating as he cannot work long hours. My dad drove a cab for most of his life. Being a cab driver allowed my dad to support his family with his medical history.

Like many students, Muhammad's role in the family was a pivotal one: helping fulfill his parents' desire of attaining the *American dream*. Having to navigate employment and care for a loved one with serious medical conditions is no easy feat for any individual, and clearly not for a college student also navigating coursework. As a member of a communal family, not only was Muhammad caring for his father at home, but was also emotionally invested in the well-being of his terminally ill grandma. As he explained:

> During the summer of 2019, my grandma was terminally ill in Pakistan, and I had not seen her in over five years. I chose to visit my grandma in Pakistan, which didn't sit well with the coaches as they had mandatory summer camps. When I communicated that to my coaches, I never got a response back, which only meant one thing[:] they were no longer interested in me. This was a hard pill to swallow as I had put in countless hours of hard work to improve my [college] football skills. Ultimately, I was okay with my decision. I chose my family over football.

Muhammad's story is a common one. A family emergency arises which calls upon family members to respond and support. However, other responsibilities—like work, school, and school activities—remain. This requires students make difficult decisions about their priorities and creates dissonance among the other facets of a student's sphere. In Muhammad's case, family was his top priority during a time of crisis. Unfortunately, this is a common narrative and colleges and universities are called to respond compassionately to a diverse student body.

Basic Needs Centers, *Basic Needs Hubs*, and campus units of similar names aim to offer students with a variety of resources aimed at supporting their basic needs. In terms of food insecurity, they often provide fresh produce and dairy as well as shelf-stable products. Leveraging community resources, these hubs also rely on referrals to local community organizations that can provide additional support to students and their unique

needs. In California, educating students about CalFresh—the California iteration of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides critical money to individuals and families so they can purchase food—is key to combating food insecurity. Developing these strategies requires creative and innovative thinking. CalFresh eligibility requires most students be work-study eligible or work 20 hours per week regardless of their course load. Vivian Hernandez modeled novel thinking in her role as a CalFresh campus coordinator in supporting students' access to CalFresh during the COVID-19 pandemic:

> Students are often using their financial means to keep housing and internet paid to have housing and access to their education. Which has resulted in students not having enough money for monthly groceries. I advocated for increased staffing by inquiring to increase the CalFresh budget allocation. It is critical for program leaders to identify opportunities in increasing grant funding and use investments to create foundational staffing infrastructures. I identified opportunities that expand student eligibility for CalFresh by examining how to exempt campusbased educational programs that increase employability. CalFresh student eligibility is not inclusive of all students' demographics. It is a disservice to college students if educational leaders are not intentional in advocating for student's intellectual labor as a form of paid labor.

These hubs often also work with the campus' student housing facilities to provide emergency temporary housing to students, as well as hotel vouchers near the campus. Offering a variety of options ensures that students receive the support that would be most beneficial to meet their unique circumstances. As Justin Mendez, Basic Needs Program Manager at Long Beach City College, shared:

> While local, state, and national agencies seek the best funding solution to address homelessness, I believe the best approach includes diverse options to have the flexibility to meet the diverse needs and circumstances of our students.

Justin's community college campus developed a housing program in collaboration with a community-based agency that provides subsidized housing for students who experienced homelessness. Beyond that, he is aware not every student is going to want the same intervention:

> Informed by the needs of our students we implemented an on-campus, overnight, safe parking program to provide a student-centered model that offered a more familiar and convenient environment for our students to utilize during the semester while receiving our intentionally destigmatizing and holistic case management toward a path of long-term housing stability.

More important than ever, basic needs centers on college campuses must also offer case management through a trauma-informed practice (Hallett et al., 2019). Case managers are responsible for engaging with students and ensuring that they are supported via the multiple supports available on- and off-campus. This ensures students receive the appropriate level of care to ensure their overall well-being. However, for case managers to be successful, robust partnerships across and beyond the campus must exist in order to address the multiplicity of student needs. At a number of colleges and universities, the basic needs conversation is in its infancy stage and unfortunately contributes to students feeling left out of the well-being conversation. As Jennifer shared:

> College was a safety net when I first entered. However, the moment I couldn't financially sustain my cost of living and pursuit of education, I felt the net starting to unravel. At the end of my freshman year, I was faced with making the difficult decision to leave the university or stay and become homeless. I decided to stay. I truly believed the university would help me. I had hoped that after learning about my situation they would house me in the dorms or at least help me find a safe alternative. I was wrong. Leaving me to hang on to whatever was left of the unraveling net.

Narratives like Jennifer's highlight the importance of continuing to build campus infrastructure to meet students' basic needs, and the importance of ensuring students regularly help inform campus practice.

Basic Needs Support in the Fabric of the University

As college and university campuses evolve to address students' basic needs, it is important the student experience continue to shape and form the development and expansion of support systems. As research has shown (Crutchfield et al., 2020; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Hallett et al., 2019) there continues to be significant stigma associated with accessing support on campuses. Assistant Coach of the Women's Basketball Team at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Kiana

Robertson, shared the challenges she witnessed while facilitating a college exploration pilot program for underserved youth:

> During this program, it became very clear how much these kids needed support not only for their future[,] but for the present moment. It was at that moment that I realized the lack of awareness and compassion that our society has given to our underserved population, especially our youth. It saddened me, but assisted me to become more attentive that there are kids that struggle at home, but in public put on a front that everything is okay.

The existence of the federal SNAP program, homeless shelters, and food pantries in communities across the country is a result of the need for basic needs resources and support among many members of our communities. It is a need recognized by federal and local governments, to an extent. Shelters and pantries can be the critically necessary bridge for those who are precariously negotiating deep basic need insecurity, but they can also recreate a charity reaction to a poverty model that requires people prove their worth and perform their poverty. Colleges and universities can both recognize the needs of students and creatively and innovatively bypass existing structures, removing barriers to access to goods and services. It is in this recognition and acknowledgment we can destigmatize programs and services aimed at supporting our marginalized and disenfranchised community members. The reality is many of our college students "struggle at home," as Kiana writes, but they certainly should not be in environments where they are forced to "put on a front that everything is okay." In the same way we encourage our college students to seek our resources and support from college units designed to support them when they are struggling, so too colleges and universities must reach out and acknowledge limitations in their support of students in pursuit of *doing better*. And beyond *encouraging students*, we can actively outreach to students who we know need these services the most. We can *award* students who are most *at promise*, rather than *giving* to students *in need or at risk*.

As colleges and universities—and public benefits services as a whole—continue to work toward destigmatizing accessing services and reforming existing policies and practices to ensure availability, it is important to reengineer our ways of thinking and doing. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted the need to ensure websites were up to date with relevant and accurate information to support students. It also pushed colleges and universities to engage with students via virtual modalities,

inclusive of social media platforms. During this time, virtual tours of basic needs hubs posted on Facebook and Instagram, among others, gave students the opportunity to explore and learn about available resources. In addition, live-streamed and recorded videos à la *Iron Chef* taught students nutritious and delicious meals could be made from food received from the food pantry. As Vivian, who was both a graduate student and CalFresh Outreach Coordinator at California State University, Long Beach, shared: "Program leaders must be purposeful in forming consistent partnerships that benefit student's ability to persevere in their education." These types of cooking shows that taught students how to prepare meals certainly relied on partnerships across campus, were incredibly creative, and continue to engage students and teach them critical life-skills that allow them to persist.

Working toward destigmatizing basic needs programs and services is key to ensuring students feel comfortable and safe in accessing services. However, how do we support students who feel safe, but may find that the services are insufficient to meet their needs? Ashley shares more about student agency and empowerment when faced with such a dilemma:

> My decision to stay [in college] made me wonder how many students were in a similar situation? How many were faced with deciding between food or books? It made me ask, how is my institution supporting students who lack basic needs when unexpected issues arise? At the time, my institution had a limited amount of resources available, and I knew this had to change. This was the beginning of a cultural shift on my campus. With the help of others, we created the Hunger and Homelessness Support Network (HHSN). HHSN is a working group of students, staff, faculty, and community members who all believe a college is a place that should be obtainable and sustainable for all who choose to attend. Students should not have to decide between food or books, a safe place to live, or attending college.

Decision making within institutions can be difficult given administrators, at times, are making these decisions with scarce resources and staff who are often working beyond their capacity. Private and public partnerships can be necessary to seek fiscal sustainability for programs not yet institutionalized as a part of the university investments. Brock Grubb, who had a history in philanthropy and now serves as Principal for Clear Moon Consulting and supports colleges, universities, and community-based foundations and agencies shared a major lesson learned, including

challenging major assumptions many people have about how *need* manifests in students and how presumption of those needs influences the perception of available solutions. He said:

> As a white, male, cis-gender, heterosexual, grant maker with an advanced degree, I held a lot of privilege operated on invisible assumptions that were shaped by my identity and life experiences. The first of these was the assumption that capitalism was a good thing. The endowment of the foundation where I worked, like nearly all foundation endowments in the country, came from the dividends of a capitalist enterprise. Though never advertised as such, the invisible assumption was that the system of capitalism "works" and that it should continue "working" in perpetuity. Sure, capitalism may have downsides (e.g., high tuition rates) and need regulation (e.g., accountability for price gouging for-profit colleges), but it was the system we had and should not be subjected to any significant changes in operation.

After attending a conference where students spoke about their college experience, he learned a different narrative:

> The students at this conference weren't asking for "acceleration" to "credentials with labor market value." They were talking about survival. They spoke about tradeoffs they were making between tuition and books and basic necessities like food, childcare, transportation and rent. As I listened to their stories, I slowly began to see the invisible assumptions that I had been holding for what they truly were: a story that was not grounded in lived experience.

As we continue to learn about the student experience from students themselves, we must ensure we continue to approach this work with the notion students are—and will remain—unique individuals with unique challenges and successes. As Justin shares: "Meeting our students where they are at means there is not a one-size-fits-all solution that works for all students experiencing homelessness and basic needs insecurities." Furthermore, this call to action requires us "to be creative and imaginative to develop strategies that have not been done before to address homelessness" and other basic needs insecurities on college campuses.

Reimagining the Transformative Possibility of Higher Education

Commitment to serve students and prepare them for the challenges of the world is the heart of our work. While there are many successes to celebrate and institutional awareness that simply did not exist a few years ago, threats remain. Shifting toward a culture of equity and inclusion in higher education requires transformational change to touch every aspect of our institutions. Doing anything less runs the risk of reinforcing barriers and perpetuating harms.

CSU campuses are responding to these unmet student basic needs. All 23 campuses have food-delivery services and linkages to basic needs resources. Twenty-one campuses have programs that provide support to address the needs of students with experience in foster care, including housing. However, addressing student homelessness has been a significant challenge. The primary response to this need has been on-campus emergency housing and hotel vouchers, which generally includes stays of up to 14 days. This approach may be sufficient for students with short-term needs, but research on youth homeless suggests crisis housing responses like these have little positive impact on long-term outcomes (Pollio et al., 2006). A more durable and far-reaching intervention is required to truly address the student homelessness crisis.

The CSU is breaking new ground with the development of *College Focused Rapid Rehousing* (RRH) to address student homelessness as a long-term commitment to address equity gaps for marginalized groups and increase graduation rates. In support of this effort, the State of California granted the CSU $6.5 million to develop and pilot a Rapid ReHousing (RRH) model that uses federal nomenclature of rapid rehousing, but removes many of the restrictive measures of the federal iteration. College-focused RRH provides sustainable solutions for student homelessness. Resources were allocated to campuses to develop and enhance programs and services for students who face challenges with housing instability and homelessness. RRH requires CSU campuses establish ongoing partnerships with community-based organizations that have a tradition of providing wraparound services and rental subsidies to those experiencing homelessness. The seven inaugural campuses selected for the program were awarded funding based on their demonstrated need, strength of their formalized partnership(s), campus readiness for program implementation, planned use of the funds in an efficient manner, and articulated method for evaluation of program impact. Resources were

allocated to the external partners identified by the awarded campuses to support homeless or housing insecure CSU students. Despite multiple challenges related to implementation during the pandemic, in its first full year the program served 1127 students of which 146 students enrolled in the RRH program.

At UAA, grassroots efforts from committed faculty, staff, and students have gained traction and institutional support. The Hunger and Homelessness Support Network (HHSN) is a loose network of university and community partners that meets monthly to share information and resources, assists with raising campus awareness and connecting students to resources, and coordinates events on campus and within the community. The network maintains an active social media presence and has played a key role in urging campus leadership to respond. Similarly, the Daily Den is a student-run kitchen offering UAA students a space to find and build community, connect with campus resources, and build a supportive environment for learning. The Den has become an essential lifeline for many students and is an engine for campus-wide grassroots advocacy efforts. With close collaboration with the student health and counseling center, campus food pantry, and the Union of Students (USUAA), existing systems of care within our institution are becoming more integrated. While still under-resourced, university leadership is paying attention and showing up to the conversation, which has forced broader consideration of what counts as "student success" and for whom.

While student success initiatives have become commonplace on campuses nationally, tensions remain in practice that leave the promise of higher education largely unfulfilled for many. Institutional commitments on paper often stand in stark contrast to the everyday lived realities of our students. Those most impacted are often the most invisible and many students discontinue their schooling out of necessity without outreach or follow up. How our institutions respond to these failures is just as important as how we lift up and celebrate successes. The stories highlighted in this chapter show creativity, humanity, and resilience in the face of adversity and hardship. What they do not show are the silences, erasures, and words not spoken. These stories are more important than ever as we co-design solutions to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations and reimagine the role of higher education in dismantling historically rooted, institutionally replicated inequalities in access, opportunity, and civic potential.

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CHAPTER 6

Transformative Mentoring Relationships: Engaging Student Voices to Create Emancipatory Change in Curriculum

Edgar F. Lopez and Adrian H. Huerta

Introduction

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic has caused many unforeseen circumstances and drastically impacted the higher education field. Faculty and students experienced major disruptions in their instruction, mentoring relationships, and other activities as they were forced to rapidly transition to an online platform (Levine et al., 2021). Additionally, many graduate students have had to navigate the intense political climate and manage financial difficulties, housing insecurity, racial discrimination, and low access to high-quality mental health services, further disrupting their learning across institutions. As such, many graduate students have considered withdrawing from their institutions altogether due to the added strain, stress, and disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color (Hagedorn et al., 2021).

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The pandemic exacerbated challenges to financial stability and well-being for students, especially low-income and racially minoritized populations (Reimers, 2022). Now, more than ever, graduate programs and departments need to primarily focus on supporting graduate students of color and provide resources to maneuver through challenges that contribute to their overall low persistence and degree completion (Lopez, 2021; Gardner, 2013). For instance, graduate students of color have suffered heavy financial losses yet are expected to persist with minimal financial support, including underpaid labor and high student debt, which impact their academic persistence (Cadenas et al., 2021). Rosenthal et al. (2021) conducted a survey highlighting how the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted graduate students' mental health. They found the pandemic increased already high levels of stress among students and forced them to create new routines for survival, all while balancing full-time work, family needs, and academic responsibilities. Another factor in the low persistence and degree completion rates for students of color is the quality of mentoring relationships that help students navigate their academic journey (DeAngelo et al., 2021). As colleges and universities transitioned to a virtual learning platform, it transformed and complicated how graduate students could develop or maintain faculty-student mentoring relationships. Overall, circumstances associated with the pandemic have derailed graduate students' daily lives. However, research is yet to explore the level or extent of the impact of these challenges.

Many students have managed numerous demands and obstacles besides their academic responsibilities. Before returning all operations and instruction fully to in-person, graduate programs and departments should understand the challenges these graduate students faced during the global pandemic. This chapter captures the unique challenges graduate students of color encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic and provides several recommendations on ways graduate faculty and departments can implement and refine support systems to meet student needs. Additionally, we highlight the transformative mentoring relationships with faculty that have greatly impacted these graduate students throughout the pandemic and share their experiences as a catalyst to create emancipatory changes in the graduate curriculum. For this chapter, we specifically highlight the experiences of Latina/o/x doctoral students as they are historically underrepresented in academia (Gardner, 2013), contributing to their low representation of faculty roles across institutions (Kamimura-Jimenez & Gonzalez, 2018). The number of full-time Latina/o faculty in

degree-granting postsecondary institutions is less than 5% across institution types (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020; Quezada & Louque, 2004). The underrepresentation of Latina/o/x doctoral students and doctoral recipients will impact the ability of colleges and universities to diversify their faculty to meet the increased demands of diverse undergraduate and graduate students.

Literature Review

According to the Council of Graduate Schools (Zhou & Gao, 2021), in Fall 2020, more than 1.7 million students enrolled in graduate programs across 558 US graduate schools. Each year, nearly 26,000 students earn a Master's or Doctoral degree in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2017, 2018, 2019). However, Latina/o/x students have and continue to be virtually absent in graduate education and underrepresented in degree completion (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). One critical component to explore is whether Latina/o/x graduate students have access to opportunities for faculty-student mentoring relationships. The quality of graduate school preparation and faculty-student mentorship of Latina/o/x graduate students is a growing area of concern for graduate departments and university leadership (Hackmann & Malin, 2019; Brunsma et al., 2017). Additionally, more research is needed to fully understand how the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted graduate education.

Defining Mentoring

Mentoring is one critical component of socialization within graduate programs (Bagaka's et al., 2015). Numerous scholars have defined mentoring and its significance for students in academic spaces. Hackmann and Malin (2019) define mentorship as an interpersonal relationship with a more experienced person who guides and supports a less experienced person through a developmental process. Hayes (2005) explains mentoring as an intense relationship between novice and expert that promotes a newcomer's socialization and self-efficacy through teaching, socializing, coaching, protecting, challenging, and role modeling. The mentoring relationship aims to guide the novice individual to eventually become a fully participating member of an organization or profession (Hayes, 2005). Lambie et al. (2014) define research mentoring as the process of a more research-experienced individual facilitating research training, modeling appropriate

research behaviors, and supporting the student in developing research skills. Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) define mentoring as a critical process whereby an individual facilitates personal, educational, and professional development through mutual respect and trust. Mentoring can significantly enhance and increase student outcomes, including their sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy, compared to students who are unmentored (Holloway-Friesen, 2021). Mentoring can make students feel they *matter* and are worth investing in, improving their academic motivation and self-esteem (Huerta & Fishman, 2014, 2019). Thus, mentors become understanding of cultural diversity and assist in the retention of graduate students to their degree completion.

Importance of Graduate Faculty Mentors

Variations across graduate fields matter and especially for students in the science fields who primarily are located in research labs or off-site field labs, whereas students in humanities and social sciences focus on independent research projects or advance scholarship with faculty mentors (Calarco, 2020; Ramirez, 2017; Gardner, 2010). As graduate students persist in their academic field toward degree completion, faculty can facilitate supportive mentoring relationships and help students broadly understand the field, nuances of the sub-fields, and the social norms of academic performance and expectations (Thomas et al., 2007). Graduate faculty are considered gatekeepers as they hold significant power in creating or withholding opportunities for students to succeed in graduate education and the professional opportunities that follow (Posselt et al., 2020; McCoy et al., 2015; Griffin, 2012; Noonan et al., 2007). They have access to supportive networks or resources that can advance graduate students' academic abilities for success (McCoy et al., 2015). However, when faculty actively withhold opportunities or disinvest from their mentoring relationships with students of color, it can lead to students being under-prepared or discouraged from pursuing career pathways, including faculty roles (Posselt et al., 2020).

Graduate faculty can and should promote a supportive learning environment as they are vital influencers and role models in promoting student retention in graduate programs (Christe, 2013). Faculty-student mentoring relationships are critical in promoting graduate student socialization, preparing disciplinary scholarship engagement, conducting research, and developing faculty career pathways (Felder, 2010).

Additionally, these relationships can help increase cross-cultural competency (Thomas et al., 2007), enhance emotional commitment and investment in success (Baker & Griffin, 2010), and provide structured mentoring training to prepare for future careers (Griffin, 2012). Due to the nature of graduate education, faculty members play a significant role in their students' socialization. Acevedo-Gil and Madrigal-Garcia (2018) define socialization as the process of gaining the knowledge, skills, and values needed for career prospects. Perez et al. (2019) define socialization as how individuals acquire support to become members of at least one social group and understand the complex standards and rules. Mentors are crucial to supporting students in the graduate education socialization process by first introducing them to the norms, values, and beliefs necessary for success within their respective fields of study (Lunsford et al., 2013). Although graduate mentoring relationships have proven to show beneficial outcomes, research has noted the difficulties that graduate students of color encounter in finding and maintaining supportive mentoring relationships with faculty.

Challenges in Finding and Maintaining Supportive Graduate Mentorship

Graduate students of color in academia have historically encountered a series of challenges such as few or limited opportunities to interact with faculty members of color, a sense of isolation and loneliness, racial vulnerability, and (un)intentional acts of intolerance (Smith et al., 2016; Gay, 2004; Brown II et al., 1999; Bonilla et al., 1994). Unfortunately, there are multiple instances in the popular press and empirical scholarship of faculty members behaving poorly toward graduate students of color (Williams et al., 2018; Espino, 2014; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; González, 2007; Solórzano, 1993). One remedy to counter toxic and hostile spaces for higher education institutions is to help Latina/o/x graduate students develop positive mentorship relationships with faculty. In a recent study on mentorship among Latina/o doctoral students, Acevedo-Gil and Madrigal-Garcia (2018) found Latina/o faculty members can act as validating role models to mentor doctoral students and build on their aspirations, especially those who aspire and envision themselves in a tenure-track faculty position.

The high student attrition rates are often attributed to structural barriers that impede students of color from advancing, such as solely navigating

adverse campus climates within hostile or unsupportive academic departments (Griffin et al., 2010). Graduate students of color often experience difficulties finding suitable and sustainable faculty mentors, especially in predominantly white institutions, who may not have multicultural competencies or training (Felder, 2010; Thomas et al., 2007). Additionally, these graduate students struggle to find faculty members who are capable of and willing to provide the scaffolding needed for scholarship and navigating alienating graduate-level spaces (Slay et al., 2019). Scholars have argued that same-ethnic faculty mentors paired with students can improve adjustment, program satisfaction, and supportiveness in personal and career development (Santos & Reigadas, 2002). However, there are simply not enough faculty mentors of color in higher education institutions across the US.

Latina/o/x Graduate Students

Latina/o/x graduate students are severely underrepresented in graduate education (Pérez Huber et al., 2015). For instance, they represent nearly 6% of the student population in doctoral programs (Acevedo-Gil & Madrigal-Garcia, 2018). Despite multiple federal and institutional efforts to increase graduate student diversity, the result is little change in degree attainment and degree completion. Nearly half of entering Latina/o/x doctoral students withdraw and do not complete their programs (Bagaka's et al., 2015; Espino, 2014). In 2019, only 2.5% of Latino men and 2.8% of Latinas earned a doctoral degree out of the total reported recipients, respectively (United States Census Bureau, 2019). However, with the COVID-19 global pandemic constraining educational opportunities and exacerbating numerous challenges (Reimers, 2022), more research is needed to explore in-depth the experiences and repercussions that Latina/o/x graduate students have encountered and their efforts to navigate to degree completion.

Latina/o students across these graduate fields often experience inadequate scholarly socialization and faculty mentorship (Ramirez, 2017). These efforts matter how students develop professional skills and learn their respective disciplines' norms and values (Lechuga, 2011). They require more individualized support to understand their graduate programs holistically to learn how to navigate and optimize their professional outcomes. Many Latina/o/x doctoral students experience racial and ethnic marginalization and negative interactions with faculty, hindering their

socialization processes (Acevedo-Gil & Madrigal-Garcia, 2018). Additionally, they struggle to find individualized support or even opportunities to engage with quality faculty mentors to elevate their socialization into the academic realm (McCoy et al., 2015). Latina/o/x doctoral students often experience cultural isolation, feelings of disrespect, and a need to constantly prove their worth as they encounter racism, institutional inequities, and negative socialization experiences (Acevedo-Gil & Madrigal-Garcia, 2018; Gardner, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Laura Rendón (1994) developed validation theory as a lens to provide researchers with a more in-depth understanding of low-income and first-generation undergraduate students in higher education. Validation theory argues university personnel must take proactive steps in fostering diverse students' academic and social development through intentional support. These institutional agents must build relationships with students to observe and understand how students encounter complex issues (Rendón, 1994). These validating relationships are crucial to acknowledging students as valuable members of college communities (Rendón, 1994).

Validation theory consists of six elements (Rendón, 1994). The first element places the onus on institutional agents to actively reach out to students to initiate an enabling and supportive environment to foster their academic and interpersonal development. In the second element, students build on their self-worth and empower themselves to persist in their learning when institutional agents recognize their knowledge, assets, and potential to succeed. Without this validation, students may feel deprived, discouraged, and disconnected from the college environment. The third element depicts validation as a critical component for student development. When validation is constantly present, students feel more confident about themselves and their capabilities. This validation empowers them to participate in college life. The fourth element highlights validation can occur anywhere, as institutional agents can come from various roles. It can range from in-class agents such as faculty and teaching assistants to out-of-class people such as significant others, family members, friends, and other campus staff members. Regardless of the position, these validating agents can actively support students throughout their higher education journey. The fifth element posits validation as a developmental process without a specific ending. Early exposure and frequently receiving validation can

contribute to students' richer academic and interpersonal experiences at their college campuses. Similarly, the sixth element asserts validation is most impactful to students when they receive it as early as the first few weeks of entering college. More specifically, these validating moments can significantly benefit nontraditional students (e.g., first-generation college students) who may feel lost in navigating campus resources and college life.

Building on Rendón's work, this study highlights how institutional agents facilitate students' goals and shift the onus of responsibility from students to institutional agents to ensure they succeed in higher education. Institutional agents can include admissions representatives, academic advisors, teaching assistants, and faculty members. Thus, graduate faculty members can play a crucial role in supporting Latina/o/x doctoral students as they navigate academic and social infrastructures. Using validation theory can help understand how graduate faculty can actively engage with doctoral students and provide ongoing structural support in learning how to navigate graduate education programs. It is important to determine what graduate faculty can do to support a new model of student learning and development that is more appropriate for the rapidly changing racial and ethnic composition of graduate students entering the academy. This chapter elevates previous scholarship that used validation theory, as most prior studies focused on institutional agents and undergraduate students (Dodson et al., 2009; Gloria et al., 2005; Huerta, 2022; Jehangir, 2009) or community college students (Alcantar & Hernandez, 2020; Bragg, 2001).

Methodology

We conducted a qualitative narrative research study to explore the in-depth experiences of Latina/o/x graduate students, from navigating their doctoral programs to the unique challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bruce et al., 2016). We used purposeful sampling to recruit 40 participants based on the following criteria: (1) self-identify as a Hispanic or Latina/o/x, (2) currently enrolled in a doctoral research program in a social science discipline (e.g., sociology, education, psychology), and (3) have completed at least one year of their doctoral program. The first author shared a recruitment flyer with numerous graduate program coordinators and social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). All 40 participants came from five different doctoral-granting research-intensive (R-1) universities on the West Coast. Eighteen participants self-identified

as men and 22 as women. We assigned each participant a pseudonym to protect their anonymity in the study. Before the interview, participants completed a demographic questionnaire that asked about their race, ethnicity, gender, and educational background.

The authors used thick description, researcher reflexivity, adequate engagement in data collection, and member checks to ensure trustworthiness (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Thick descriptions help describe participants' experiences, which may often provide an opportunity for readers to relate or empathize with their experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Researcher reflexivity helped us become aware of any potential beliefs and biases, which led us to peer debrief on multiple occasions for the purpose of exploring implicit aspects of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The first author conducted two in-depth interviews with the same participants, using adequate engagement in the data collection as a strategy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). We transcribed the interviews, followed by writing analytical memos. The purpose of the analytical memos was twofold: (1) to help process our framework around mentorship and the nuances of mentoring relationships for Latina/o/x doctoral students and (2) to organize our peer debriefing conversations on the logistics of the study. We also kept audit trails to organize all the protocols and procedures of the research design to illustrate how findings were based on participants' narratives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This trustworthiness method helps clarify to readers the rationale behind every decision and shows a logical path of analysis. To ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings, the first author shared the transcribed transcripts with participants when requested. Additionally, the first author shared data points with participants to confirm results. The authors bridged and connected the data from interviews and online questionnaires to ensure triangulation of data sources.

Findings

Based on the narratives of our graduate student participants, we uncovered two major themes in our findings: (1) prioritizing health and wellness and (2) advocating for students remotely.

Prioritizing Health and Wellness

Due to the global pandemic, many graduate students reported experiencing heavy losses or personal burdens that impacted their academic performance and well-being. Victor, a third-year Latino doctoral student attending a public university, shared numerous moments where his mental health and well-being were compromised by his institutions' failure to provide resources, validation, or support to aid him. As a first-generation and low-income graduate student, he experienced multiple forms of racism and discrimination from peers, faculty, and staff that made him consider leaving his doctoral program. During the pandemic, he and his colleagues experienced numerous personal challenges, and they reached out to their graduate program for support and resources. However, weeks went by without any response.

> All these challenges have been big enough to the point that one of my peers that I came in the same year… they committed suicide because of the lack of resources that the university has failed to provide… my friend sent a lot of emails asking administration to do something to help them out, and those emails went unanswered to the point that it took a toll on their mental health and they ended up taking their life.

Unfortunately, the situation eventually took a turn for the worse as one of his cohort members committed suicide. This recent tragic experience impacted Victor's well-being and mental capacity. Victor's graduate program did not immediately acknowledge the tragic situation until the following month and failed to provide any form of counseling or therapeutic support to him or any other affected graduate student in the program. Instead, his program expected him to fulfill his responsibility in entering and completing his qualifying exams without any accommodations or interruptions. Victor felt frustrated his program and faculty did not provide opportunities to check-in or a reliable outlet to communicate his needs, primarily to support mental health and wellness.

Like Victor, other graduate students reported moments when their graduate program failed to understand the overwhelming pressure of managing their academic responsibilities while fearing for their lives in the pandemic. Many participants shared they had family members and close friends who tested positive for COVID-19, and a few had lost their lives. Luis, a third-year Latino male doctoral student attending a private university, shared this experience with mental health issues that disrupted his

concentration throughout the pandemic. The one component where he felt his graduate program stepped up was providing free temporary access to therapy and counseling sessions.

> I mean, the faculty checks in when you're taking classes but other than that …. I didn't see much else. I mean, I was already doing therapy. So, I've been dealing with my therapist and well, I gotta say though that [my institution] includes health insurance in your plan, like in your funding package, when this whole pandemic started, at least [my student health insurance provider] waved all co-pays on mental health assistance. So that was nice because I enjoyed a couple of good months of free therapy.

At his institution, graduate students were mandated to get tested and complete other requirements weekly. Before the pandemic, Luis had enrolled in therapy sessions though he still had a co-pay. Once the pandemic started, his graduate program and student health insurance provider collaborated to secure free services related to mental health for a semester. He said he felt these free services should have been placed and available a long time ago though he was relieved his institution made this major decision to prioritize mental health services, which was uncommon at other institutions.

As previously mentioned, many graduate students have experienced tragic moments from the pandemic, making it much harder to maintain their academic momentum or even concentrate, understandably. Mary, a fifth-year Latina doctoral student attending a private university, shared the loss of her grandfather due to COVID-19 and how it triggered fear for her own well-being, and that of her immediate and extended family.

> My grandpa died of COVID complications in November, and then my dad, who was his son, got COVID … and then he had to go to the hospital the same day he buried his own dad. My dad was in the ICU for too long … and we didn't know if he was going to die or not. I watched the news a lot, so I hear all these stories. And I felt like, because he had diabetes, he had heart problems, that he wouldn't make it. So yeah, from December to February, it was really hard to do work [for my graduate studies].

During our interview, Mary had an emotional breakdown as she shared her fear and anger toward meeting academic obligations, yet feared another family member could pass away from the illness. She also shared her frustration with the underpaid labor as a researcher. With her father in

the hospital, she had to support her family as another source of income though she was barely paid enough to survive herself. She was forced to pick up another job to meet her family's needs. Overall, these severe conditions impacted her mental health, finances, and academic expectations.

Advocating for Students Remotely

Many faculty members are accustomed to checking in with students via in-person interaction, including during office hours, breakfast or lunch, and before or after class time. These spaces provided opportunities for graduate students to network and build rapport with specific faculty members. Many graduate students even developed mentoring relationships with their professors, which was essential to better navigate their programs, create a support system, and prepare for their career pathways. However, the global pandemic eliminated or restricted these opportunities to connect in person.

Vanessa, a fifth-year Latina doctoral student attending a public university, reflected on how her faculty instructor created space during class time to check in with students and encourage them to share their recent achievements or challenges.

> She just opened up, and I remember in every class, she would create space either at the beginning or the end to check in. But to actually check in, not just to be like "Oh, how are you guys? Okay, cool. Let's move on to what we're going to cover." She actually went around [the classroom], and students felt comfortable sharing how they were doing, how they're feeling, what they were struggling through very deep and personal things.

Prior to the pandemic, Vanessa's faculty instructor would have in-person instruction and humanize her graduate students' experiences in an effort to be a validating and supportive mentor. These moments made Vanessa ask her professor to become her mentor and guide her throughout her doctoral journey. After the rapid transition to an online platform, Vanessa and her faculty mentor moved their exchanges to email, text, phone, and Zoom. As a first-generation graduate student, there were plenty of tools and strategies Vanessa had yet to learn; but both knew it was essential to maintain the mentoring relationship despite circumstances.

Given their position, faculty mentors have the capability to advocate for students at a higher level within the institution. By checking in with students, faculty can learn about the conditions of their students' well-being and shift their attention to specific needs. Rebeca, a second-year Latina doctoral student attending a public university, noted many graduate students experienced heavy financial repercussions from the pandemic. She shared a critical moment when faculty and graduate students attended a virtual town hall meeting and advocated for students' needs, primarily on their financial difficulties.

> When COVID really picked up and we realized that this is going to be something that we are going to have to deal with for the long run, there was a town hall within the department and the students [to discuss available financial resources]. We decided that those [departmental research] funds were going to be distributed equally to all the students. I think we each got like $500 or something like that, which was very helpful because it was hard. I wanted to be able to feed myself. I wanted to be able to pay rent, and it can be really stressful when graduate housing is increasing our rents significantly and you don't have a TA position over the summer. You don't have income for like four months. So, it was helpful in terms of like, "okay, I can see that you guys kind of care," but substantively, in those four months where I didn't have any income, $500 is like nothing.

Rebeca, her colleagues, and certain faculty members advocated for more funding to alleviate some financial challenges. After successful advocacy, the department was able to tap into a research funding source and distribute it among graduate students equally as a minor form of aid. Though it was insufficient for many students, Rebeca believed it was the start of the right direction as faculty members and other institutional agents began to remotely support students in partnership and collaboration. Thus, faculty members can bring graduate students' concerns to administrative meetings and help develop actions to respond to those needs.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many devastating outcomes and a long-lasting impact on graduate education and curriculum. Now, graduate departments and faculty mentors can (re)calibrate their priorities and implementation efforts to effectively improve the graduate student experience. Graduate students need faculty mentors and graduate departments

to advocate for their well-being, support, and resources. To adapt to the remote learning environment and for institutions planning to return to in-person instruction, graduate programs and faculty must advocate and create emancipatory changes in the curriculum, mentoring models, and equitable resources to ensure it does not compromise the health and well-being of students. Additionally, though it is evident the global pandemic made access to in-person mentoring relationships unadvisable, faculty members can still expand their efforts to connect and build rapport with graduate students.

Many graduate students noted their mentoring relationship with faculty transformed and adapted remotely to continue checking in and share their personal challenges. Additionally, several faculty members advocated on behalf of graduate students and their personal challenges through administrative actions. These methods can be implemented and incorporated into faculty-student mentoring relationships to further support graduate students. Several other graduate students shared the lack of response from their institutions or graduate program that led to unfortunate outcomes. Faculty members and graduate programs must be accessible and available to graduate students, as many participants shared that they were unprepared for the switch to a remote learning platform while handling their other personal and academic challenges. Several participants shared that their faculty mentors did an excellent job promoting resources and outlets such as counseling sessions to cope with the pandemic and other external situations (e.g., police violence, institutional scandals, etc.).

Validation theory and a narrative methodology guided the development of recommended solutions for graduate faculty and programs to implement or adjust their policies and practices:

1. When developing the curriculum for classes, incorporate time for check-ins and explicitly state available (remote) student support services on the syllabus.
2. Conduct routine checks (e.g., surveys) throughout the academic term to grasp a broad understanding of students' current situations as it can help adjust the workload and pace of course assignments.
3. Encourage the faculty in the department to send out an email to students (e.g., those in coursework, qualifying exams, dissertation stage, etc.) to emphasize opportunities to connect via remote office hours, phone calls, or email as alternative methods to in person.

4. Develop (virtual) outlets such as town halls to provide graduate students and faculty to voice their concerns and create actionable solutions.
5. Develop feedback outlets for graduate students to nominate supportive faculty members for mentoring awards.

These recommendations prioritize student well-being and validate their important contributions from their presence to their work. Additionally, it provides a roadmap for initiating changes within institutions and graduate programs to adapt to the (post)pandemic era. Overall, supportive and encouraging faculty and graduate programs with constant communication will positively contribute to graduate students' empowerment and academic success.

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CHAPTER 7

A Center for Sight and Sound: Connecting Media Representations to Critical Production Training

Kenneth R. Roth and Zachary S. Ritter

Introduction

In 1900, former Portland Mayor David P. Thompson donated a $20,000, three-ton bronze statue of an Elk to be erected along with a fountain in the downtown park blocks of his Oregon city (Kavanaugh, 2021). Thompson wanted to commemorate the majestic Elk that once roamed the area, as well as his good fortune, and the emerging success and notoriety of Portland as a thriving city on the nation's west coast. The monument also provided water for horses and goats that drew carriages through town.

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Fig. 7.1 Portland's downtown Elk statue, donated by Mayor David P. Thompson in 1900 to commemorate the city's past and its growing future

Unlike other statues in downtown, the Elk sat in the middle of Main Street, between Third and Fourth Avenues, diverting traffic around it, as if an integral and organic element of the city. Downtown visitors made a

point to see it, elementary school children visited it on field trips, and in 1974 the statue was designated a historic landmark (Kavanaugh, 2021). In short, Thompson's gift and its placement *represented* a source of pride for Portlanders for more than a century.

However, during the George Floyd protests of 2020, after a Black man was suffocated by a Minnesota police officer who kneeled on the restrained man's neck for nearly 9 minutes, killing him, the statue took on a different representation: as a gathering place for protestors, who used the fountain as a huge fire pit. Night after night, protestors met at the Elk statue, and on many of those same nights, built fires in the waterless fountain reservoirs (KGW Staff, 2022). Damage to the fountain resulted in the statue's removal with the promise it would be reestablished elsewhere in the city (KGW Staff, 2022). But now, according to Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty's office, cars and bicycles are more critical to Portland's downtown culture, so the Elk statue likely will wind up in a museum somewhere, an antiquated artifact (KGW Staff, 2022). However, due to public outcry, city leaders are now looking at rebuilding the fountain and reinstalling the statue in its previous location. (KGW Staff, 2022).

At the same time, throughout the US, other statues and public monuments were torn down, also during protests, because these monuments lionized Confederate Dead, successful slave owners, or others who supported a bifurcated America along racial lines (Treisman, 2021). In these protests, the message was clear: statues of "heroes" during apartheid America are no longer heroes in a multicultural America. These representations were no longer prideful, and instead commemorated a dark memory for many of early US culture. While distaste for statues of Confederate generals at this time in history isn't radical, it's unclear why Portland's Elk statue became a rallying point of protest, beyond its longevity and familiarity. Still, what the Elk previously represented, as a symbol of the history of the land, and the expansion and success of the city, was less valued against its newer representation as a rally point for protesters and an impediment to motor and bicycle traffic.

The late Stuart Hall defined representation as the use of "signs, organized into languages of different kinds, to communicate meaningfully to others" (Hall, 2003a, p. 28). For our purposes and to be consistent with Hall's thinking, different kinds of languages refer to more than just spoken word. A photographer uses the language of capturing light against a light-sensitive computer chip to create images with a digital camera, and a city uses the language of municipal design or preservation to develop a

series of park blocks. "In part, we give things meaning by how we *represent* them—the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them" (Hall, 2003a, p. 3).

Representation, then, is an essential part of the process of making and sharing meaning between members of a culture. Increasingly, these representations are delivered electronically through vast media systems. Their meanings depend on relationships between people, objects, and events, real or imagined, and are not embedded in the object or person, or even in the way we describe them (Hall, 2003a). Individuals construct meaning based on culturally accepted codes which govern the translation of cultural "signs." For instance, consider the three-color traffic light used all over the globe. There is nothing inherent in the color red that intrinsically mandates us to stop when a light is red, or to go when a light is green. These are shared meanings that provide order to auto traffic. But even these seemingly rigid codes of traffic lights are still left to interpretation. One driver may slow and begin to stop at seeing a yellow light, while another may speed up to get through the intersection before the light turns red. The point is, we live in a world of cultural codes and signs we unconsciously internalize, allowing us to express certain concepts and ideas through various systems of representation, such as writing, speech, gesture, and visualization; as well as interpret ideas communicated to us using the same systems.

Hall (2003a) argued "any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning is, from this point of view, 'a language'" (p. 19). Within this definition, a language of particular interest to this chapter is the language of media production, and how it is taught at the nation's top ten colleges and universities specializing in film and/or media production.

Background

Our interest in the course of study of aspiring media makers at the nation's top schools should be obvious. As graduates, these students will seek positions on and populate production teams that generate a lion's share of the more than $700 billion in media and entertainment produced in the US annually (International Trade Administration, 2022). That figure

represents one-third of all media production globally and consists of motion picture, television programming and advertising, streaming content, music and audio recordings, broadcast, radio, book publishing, video games, and ancillary services and products (International Trade Administration, 2022).

Further, the amount of time people engage media on communication devices, such as personal smartphones, is skyrocketing. According to a February 2021 survey, nearly half of respondents indicated spending an average of five to six hours per day using their smartphone. Another 22%, indicated spending three to four hours per day, excluding work-related smartphone use (International Trade Administration, 2022). These figures show an increase in media production and distribution, and a commensurate increase in media consumption across broad swaths of population.

Likewise, since the 1970s, the percentage of students who enroll in film and media production programs has increased 300% (Hawkins, 2007). Essentially, media production and film programs have become what Banks (2019) refers to as *pre-industry* programs, providing students hands-on, practice-based learning experiences in advance of a career position. For our purposes, we use "film" and "media production" interchangeably, since much of the media galaxy—film, television, social media, games, and streaming services—all possess a visual element that relies on televisual production techniques and equipment most often identical to that used to produce filmed entertainment.

With this explosion of digital media formats and near-universal access to production tools, the appeal to students of a career in entertainment is the opportunity to mix creativity with financial gain, recognition, potential celebrity, fame, and access to a "Hollywood" lifestyle, to include annual award events, parties, new release screenings and product drops (Banks, 2019). We argue another appeal is the ability to develop and present personal stories or visions, or document the histories and stories of others. Historically, access to these careers, according to many successful practitioners, has been due to a combination of talent, determination, opportunity, timing, luck, and, often most important, good contacts (Banks, 2019). While success in US entertainment has not been limited to heterosexual, cisgender white men from mostly middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds, this group has benefitted more than others due to greater access to contacts and opportunity, which has facilitated the creation of more good luck (Banks, 2019). As such, the American media

landscape remains *colonized*, whereby most power over what films or products are made, and which ones aren't, who makes them and how much they're compensated, what the story type and setting is, and what talent is used and who shoots, directs, and produces the outcome, all are decided by a rather small group of predominantly white men and women (Hunt et al., 2021). The most likely way to change this calculus, and we believe it must be changed, is to make change at the "pipelines," where new graduates enter the profession. Given film and television positions are relatively scarce in the US at roughly 2.1 million (Motion Picture Association of America, 2022), with a perennial over-representation of white males and likely an associated orthodoxy, film and media programs have an increasing responsibility to, at the very least, ensure graduates have an understanding of the power and nuance of media, and are respectful and responsible in the representations they create and distribute.

With more than 40 years of teaching and producing media experience between us—teaching at the secondary, junior college, and university levels, and producing training films, documentaries, interactive training, and journalism—we argue there is often little to no formal discussion of the way characters within the televisual frame are represented. There may be discussion about a particular emotion—this character is angry and intends revenge after having been done wrong—but even this representation when coupled with other characteristics such as race, gender, abilities, and age can and likely does represent individuals differently, and in some cases negatively, based solely on personal characteristics.

Media production graduates, like all profession-focused students, carry their course of study and experience while learning their craft with them when they enter a career. Further, without interrogation, they also carry with them views held by family, community, religion, and many other "ways of thinking." Given the increased complexity in representing our world and its inhabitants in equal and respectful ways, and the unparalleled access top media production graduates have to jobs and opportunities to shape the representation of others, we were surprised to learn there is a dearth of curricula specifically dealing with representation, semiotics, or critical analysis of both at the nation's top media schools.

Our Sample

We used three lists published by magazines and websites that annually pick the top ten film and media production programs at US colleges and

universities. Two of the lists—*The Hollywood Reporter* annual ranking, and *The Wrap* website annual ranking—are essentially the same list in slightly different order, with the removal of one college program replaced by another. The third list, the annual *U.S. News & World Report* list, evaluated a greater variety of programs under the heading of "timed media," which broadened the list of outcomes, to include schools and programs absent from the other two lists, primarily because the course of study offered was expansive beyond televisual and filmic production. The *Hollywood Reporter*'s list, in descending order, is as follows: University of Southern California (USC), New York University (NYU), American Film Institute (AFI), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Columbia University, Chapman University, California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), Loyola Marymount (LMU), Wesleyan University, and Emerson College (Svetkey, 2018).

The Wrap listed nine of the ten programs identified by *The Hollywood Reporter*, listing them in slightly different order and omitting Wesleyan—USC, AFI, NYU, Chapman, CalArts, Emerson, Columbia, UCLA, Loyola Marymount—while adding University of North Carolina School of the Arts (Rahner, 2021).

The U.S. News and World Report list deviates substantially from the other two lists, as follows: Carnegie Mellon University, UCLA, CalArts, School of the Visual Arts, School of the Art Institute Chicago, Virginia Commonwealth University, Bard College, Harrington School of Communication at Rhode Island University, and University of California, San Diego (US News, 2020).

To determine a list of top ten film and media production programs, we assigned one point to each school for each appearance on each of the three lists. A school appearing on all three lists earned a maximum score of three, while a school appearing on only two lists earned a maximum score of two and so on. While we are less concerned with the order of the top ten schools, the ten schools and programs, as a group, to receive the most points will serve as the top ten film and media production programs for the purposes of this chapter.

Our combined list of top production programs and the number of times they appeared on ranking lists is as follows: CalArts (3), UCLA (3), USC (2), NYU (2), AFI (2), Columbia (2), Chapman (2), Loyola Marymount (2), and Emerson (2). The following schools each received one point: North Carolina School of the Arts, Carnegie Mellon University (CM), SVA of New York, School of the Art Institute Chicago, Virginia

Commonwealth University, Bard College, Harrington School of Communication at Rhode Island University, and University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

Geographically, the list is West Coast-dominant, presumably because of its proximity to Hollywood. While New York historically has been a significant production venue, primarily for film and television, East Coast programs account for only three of the top nine schools in our combined list.

Surprisingly, of the top nine film and media production programs that received more than one mention on a ranking list, only UCLA, with more than 160 courses in film production, covering producing, cinematography, editing, surveys of genres, and other courses, offers four graduate courses examining identity, representation, and media power as part of its film production curriculum. The courses include "critical study of reception and use of television and electronic media and examination of theoretical approaches to culture and audience research," "examines the politics of representation and representation of politics through metaphors," "examination of how women, national minorities, and Third World peoples have been rendered others," "study of ways film affects and is affected by social behavior, belief and value systems," and "study of ways television forms affect and are affected by social behavior, belief, and value systems" (UCLA Registrar's Office, 2022)

The only other film program to offer similar courses is the University of California, San Diego, which did not make the list of top programs, and is not a media production program. Instead, UCSD Film Studies focuses on surveying national film genres, such as Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Iranian, Latin American History and Film, Literature and Film of Modern Africa, fantasy, great performances, and cult films," within its available 50 courses. UCSD classes of interest to this study are Introduction to Semiotics, Film Studies, and Literature: Close Analysis of Filmic Text, Identity Through Transnational Cinemas, and Topics in Cinema and Race, and Gender and Film (UCSD Catalogue, 2022).

Other programs at the top of our list seem to focus instruction on learning the mechanics of media, in terms of how to develop, write, photograph, edit, and produce media. At USC, students are required to take a minimum of 52 units in cinema arts (USC MFA Catalogue, 2022). There are no courses explicitly examining representation, identity, or semiotics. Likewise, AFI lists no courses in representation or semiotics but

"The American Film Institute believes in the power of diverse voices to drive culture forward" (AFI Website, 2022).

Similarly, New York University's Tisch graduate film program "is an intensive three-year conservatory in the Maurice Kanbar Institute of Film and Television that trains students in the art of cinematic storytelling. We focus on helping writer/directors develop a narrative voice and the technical virtuosity to express that voice in cinema" (New York University Catalogue, 2022).

Columbia's School of the Arts Master's degree "is designed for students who have already completed significant undergraduate or graduate work in the study of film or associated fields" (Columbia University Catalogue, 2022). Again, the focus is on mastering technology and storytelling, and not the nuances of how a media maker can unintentionally imbue a work with stereotype or unflattering representations of people who are different from them, and/or different from the intended audience. In the latter instance, we believe it is incumbent on media makers to avoid representations and signs that diminish subjects within the frame, based solely on personal characteristics. While personal characteristics may be important to represent within a media work, the choice of how to represent personal characteristics is even more important, and media makers cannot critically examine their work and improve it if they are not trained to do so.

CalArts, Loyola Marymount, Chapman, and Emerson all lack courses in representation, and each in their own way promotes their specialized facilities and fairly generic program descriptions. CalArts "requires students to take one film theory, criticism and history course each semester for five semesters" (CalArts Catalogue, 2022), but these courses lean heavily toward mastery of technology, and various aspects of cinema history, and lack any interrogation of representation or semiotics. Loyola Marymount School of Film and Television is "one of the fastest growing departments…To accommodate this growth, the university acquired 50,000 square feet of off-campus space in the nearby Playa Vista neighborhood" (Loyola Marymount University Website, 2022). Chapman's film program "explores all aspects of film production through the use of visual storytelling techniques, industry standard tools and best professional practices" (Chapman University Website, 2022). At Emerson, the film program "provides students with the opportunity to develop as creative professionals and media artists, working with image and sound to entertain, inform, persuade, and challenge, using both traditional and

emergent media forms. Students develop an understanding of the disciplines of film, video, audio, and interactive and multimedia production, bringing this understanding to bear on works of film and media art" (Emerson College Website, 2022).

Higher education increasingly is where we turn to address a growing list of cultural and social issues, and in this case, it is an apt site to address gaps in media education that may lead to insensitive or potentially discriminatory representations in televisual content. We believe the absence of training in media production programs to examine multiple ways to represent individuals and groups that are different from us is a critical misstep, and deserves immediate attention.

We See What We're Shown

Visual media in all of its manifestations are arguably a principal window on the world for most individuals, who likely develop perceptions of others and the world around them in part through consumption of media representations (Blackman et al., 1977). Something else to consider is the increasing rapidity with which human action and interaction are globalizing (Chua, 2003; Lieber & Weisberg, 2002; Olzak, 2011; Van Heertum & Torres, 2009). These beg for an associated increase in cultural sensitivity and acceptance across a growing multicultural community and workforce (Dillard, 2001; Kellner, 2011; Leonardo, 2005; Nemetz & Christensen, 1996).

However, if ongoing efforts to increase diversity on college campuses and within underrepresented programs, and by extension the work-a-day world of media production, do not seek to accurately represent the nation's (and the world's) racial diversity and capture it authentically through televisual and other media representations, then America's higher education institutions, and the top media production programs they house, are little more than sites of social reproduction and potential misrepresentation that do disservice to diversity and access initiatives and ultimately certify graduates who are not trained to evaluate the potential meanings associated with their creative work.

Media possess a profound and not completely understood form of cultural pedagogy, teaching us about gender, discussing race, and contributing on almost every level to what we think, feel, believe, fear, and desire, as well as those indulgences we know we should try to avoid (Kellner, 2011). In short, from our first to our last breath, individuals are ensconced

in a media and consumer society that requires understanding, interpreting, and critique (Kellner, 2011).

Audience-centered critical media research argues viewers and readers construct their own meaning from texts, but disparate audiences do not decode messages uniformly, in the direction critics might suggest, or even as authors may have intended (Condit, 1989; Hall, 2011, 2003b). To reach the largest possible audience, media must be polysemic and flexible (Condit, 1989; Fiske, 1987). Polysemic texts are capable of carrying multiple meanings because of intertextual relationships they carry, in addition to the varying constructions or interests of receivers (Condit, 1989). This position represents a linguistic and cultural turn in the interpretation of media texts, from a fixed message and fixed audience position to one that was mutable, pregnant with potential for alternate interpretation, and available for contestation at any point (Kellner, 2010, 2011). What is significant here is cultural meanings, derived from shared signs and the interpretation of those signs, do not reside solely in our heads or even in the text themselves. They tend to take on a "liveness" all of their own (Couldry, 2000). As a result, cultural meanings tend to organize and regulate behavior and have real and tangible outcomes (Hall, 2003b). In effect, they are frameworks for interpretation that have implications for action, in part because of the way we give meaning to and represent experiences, perceptions, people, and other daily practices (Hall, 2003b). Further, media make present particular codes in the public space.

All of this becomes particularly salient in the realm of media consumption, given the role of media in framing the public and the private, the global and the local, and "articulating global processes of cultural imperialism with local processes of situated consumption—where local meanings are often made within and against the symbolic resources of global media networks" (Morley, 1993, p. 17).

While media scholarship has moved away from monolithic interpretations of what media texts mean and how they are read, there appears consensus on the pervasive nature of mass media and its ability to facilitate pleasure (Ang, 1985); set agenda and define issues (Morley, 1992); teach (Horn, 2003; Postman, 1979; Tobolowsky, 2001, 2006); maintain a distinction between itself and ordinary people (Couldry, 2000); create spectacle and advise individuals as to what is cool, positive, and socially unadvisable (Kellner, 1995, 2011; Roth & Ritter, 2015); all the while being "inexhaustible, and coextensive with reality itself" (Houston, 1994).

In addition, Hall (2011) argued media representations, particularly of race, or across race, should be viewed as ideology, since a primary function of media is to produce and transform ideologies. These ideologies include images, concepts, and premises "which provide frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and make sense of some aspect of social existence" (Hall, 2011, p. 81). While ideologies are worked on in various social settings, media are important sites for their production, reproduction, and transformation, since media represent the social world and provide frames for understanding how the world is and why it is the way it is. Media can assist us to grasp meanings of success, freedom, unemployment, and democracy. They also construct representations of race, the meanings of what racial imagery carry, and what the *problem*, if any, of race is understood to be (Hall, 2011).

Some researchers have argued contemporary representations of race in the US were shaped by a nascent television industry in the mid-twentieth century (Gray, 2005a). Others argue it was Thomas Edison's peepshow nickelodeons that set the stage for many negative racial representations, since these peepshows enacted stereotypical and negative characterizations of African Americans as early as the 1890s (Vera & Gordon, 2003). The early formative years of television (1948–1960) helped to maintain and distribute these representations as an ongoing legitimization of a social order built on racism and white supremacy (Cabrera, 2009; Gray, 2005b; Olson, 2008; Vera & Gordon, 2003).

Why We Need a Center for Sight and Sound

Writer-Producer Issa Rae has ushered in a Black renaissance in Hollywood, with her show, *Insecure*, which HBO broadcast for five seasons. One might assume Issa Rae attended a top film program offering courses in Black representation in media, BIPOC/QTPOC character development, and building production environments that are both equitable and ethnic, on and off-set. However, as we've already shown, the most sought-after training in long-established film and media production programs mostly lacks course work specifically focused on the mechanisms and outcomes of representation. Issa Rae took an undergraduate degree from Stanford in 2007, where she majored in African and African-American Studies with a minor in Political Science. Her graduate work was in the Public Theater of New York and New York Film Academy, and it is likely her undergraduate work in African-American Studies and Political Science—disciplines rife

with representation and contested terrains—better prepared her for success with her HBO series than did her graduate film study. Why? Because Rae's work is steeped in her lived experience, her daily routine of navigating her Blackness within a racial hierarchy where *whiteness* is the norm. *Insecure* tells stories of ordinary contemporary Blackness, expanding on themes from Rae's earlier YouTube series, *Awkward Black Girl.* In Rae's case, learning the mechanics of film craft was all she needed to bring her story to the screen. She likely had lived much of her life observing and experiencing signs of how Blackness often is portrayed as a "threat" (Bjornstrom et al., 2010; Chiricos et al., 1997; Howell et al., 2004), so she clearly was fluent in interpreting representations of Blackness, and film school merely taught her how to organize them within the proper televisual format. Rae's path follows writer-director Lodge Kerrigan's description of successful film school students: "Film schools do not produce film-makers; film-makers go to film school" (Lodge Kerrigan: Writer-Director Graduate of NYU Graduate Program et al., 2002). A cursory look at the NYFA website mirrors most of the other program descriptions we've encountered above, once again focusing on mastery of technique:

> We believe that Film directing classes are not theoretical explorations; they are practical classes designed to put candidates in the director's chair as quickly as possible. Candidates are encouraged to take creative risks and find their own voices as visual artists. (New York Film Academy Website, 2022)

This is not meant to be a condemnation of the American academy, but an illuminating moment to consider how and why media programs do not emphasize the potency and potential poison of uninterrogated media representations, particularly when they engage race, gender, shore of origin, ableism, or other personal characteristics.

Similar to Rae, British writer-director and actor, Michaela Coel, has built her career presenting the comedic antics of a sexually frustrated 24-year-old Nigerian-British woman. Her projects, *Chewing Gum* and *I May Destroy You*, have both received critical acclaim. At first blush, one would think and hope her graduate course work informed her nuanced and layered examination of sexual trauma and rebirth in *I May Destroy You*; however, a review of graduate course descriptions at Guildhall School, Coel's graduate institution, are seemingly mute on race, gender, class awareness, and social justice.

At this juncture, we might assert both Issa Rae and Michaela Coel became televisual sensations not because of but in spite of their graduate school experiences. To be fair, both women have recent African roots (Rae's father is from Senegal, Coel's parents are Ghanaian), and with their families have lived in a variety of settings, including Senegal, Britain, and various US locations, on both coasts. While Rae was born in Los Angeles, the family also lived in Senegal for a time and on the East Coast, likely providing Rae an array of different racial experiences. Coel grew up in East London, attended the University of Birmingham and later transferred to Guildhall School of Music and Drama. These experiences helped to shape both women's success trajectory. But, what about film students without similar beneficial backgrounds? What about the predominantly white sector of the film cohort, made up primarily of technology sophisticated male students (Banks, 2019) who gravitate to the film industry because of its allure of riches, aura of fame, or its access to leading-edge technologies? Likely, most of these students know little or nothing about growing up in South Los Angeles, as Rae does, or lashing out and bullying other students in an East London Catholic school due to the isolation of being the only Black girl in her age cohort, as Coel does. The complexity of these experiences and the women's navigation of their Blackness and the ways in which they were perceived in predominantly white settings taught them more about social relations, signs, and meanings than any course in dramatic structure could. But, again, let's remember not all film students have the same degree of access to multicultural spaces and the ability to observe, compare, and contrast one cultural setting against another.

Still, we believe film schools can be sites of great disruptions in thought, that are safe and welcoming spaces, where imagination and authoritative storytelling are currency, and media makers responsibly imbue their work with authenticity and respect for difference. But we're not quite ready for prime time just yet.

Pedagogically speaking, Catherine Fowler (2019) argues for the importance of radical pedagogy in the film classroom. Radical pedagogy (Freire, 2000) re-centers students as the progenitors of knowledge to challenge notions of power, privilege, and oppression not only in society but also in the classroom. Fowler (2019) offers a unique example of radical pedagogy by having students create video essays where they are empowered to remake a classic Francois Truffaut film *The 400 Blows*, while plastering on the screen the words: "Do women have a role in society?" By keeping this question of power, gender, and status in mind, students recreate the short

clips of the film to present a narrative of sexism, objectification, and/or the male gaze when it comes to the French New Wave. Explicitly naming and dissecting where the camera lies both literally and figuratively, we can dissect what is valued in a cultural moment and how new narratives can be weaved.

But, if film schools are not going to teach students how to challenge racist, sexist, and classist moments in education, production, distribution, and exhibition, then how will the film industry ever change?

Banks (2019) argues the American media industry remains exclusive and a main conduit for change requires attention to the pipelines, where career aspirants enter the field. She adds transformational change is arduous because our education system in many ways remains discriminatory and exclusionary, making such change complex and often professionally dangerous. We concur.

Still, film and media production programs are uniquely situated to educate the next generation of media makers and in turn transform the way difference is portrayed in the media sphere. Banks (2019) sees four points of intervention by faculty to change cultures of production within film schools, each point detailing ways faculty are finding to engage topics of power and bias across difference within the context of creative collaboration.

Over the past decade, we have seen a significant uptick in the hiring of administrators and staff on college campuses across the country to identify and ultimately change discriminatory practices. While these diversity thought leaders may be earnest in their task, their numbers remain low. Banks (2019) argues while faculty are usually not called upon to address diversity issues within their classrooms, faculty must earnestly participate in diversity initiatives, or those initiatives will certainly fail. Likewise, while faculty cannot directly influence the industries in which their students eventually work, they can help to transform the culture of their classrooms and give students practice in honing the collaborative skills they need to succeed in the industry.

Bank's four steps to making film school more broadly beneficial to all students is not radical but certainly can be transforming. Higher Ed scholars have asserted for more than 20 years that all students benefit when their cohort composition is diverse, and the scope of their learning is diverse. From arrival at film school until graduation, all would-be media makers need to see the work of women, people of color, people working outside the mainstream, and the work of other artists and creatives (Banks,

2019). At present, nearly all film programs relegate these survey classes to elective offerings, and students likely select such courses based on personal preference rather than to contextualize their education. A corollary to diversifying the curriculum is the diversification of faculty, who possess a diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives. Our own research has found some groups, such as Black males, perform better and persist to graduation when they have at least some instructors that look like them (Roth, 2015).

A second step is developing curricula and projects to help students become master collaborators. Again, in our experience teaching media production at the university, finding ways to build diverse and functional small group collaborations can be a challenge. Americans are steeped in an ethos of individuality and "making it" on their own. Once in media classes, students tend to gravitate to students with similar interests or backgrounds. When paired with unfamiliar students from outgroups, conflicts can arise. One way around these outcomes is for faculty to establish and communicate policies and guidance around on-set behavior. Some practitioners divide class time between examining models of collaboration, building teamwork skills, and dealing with resolving conflicts, while also mastering technique.

A third step is providing equal opportunities to learn. In a study of media production classrooms, Orwin and Carageorge (2001) found, "there is a pervasive attitude that men come to the school already knowing how to use the equipment, while women feel they have less experience or that they have been given less encouragement in this area." Often, when an instructor raises a question or requests a volunteer, a small group of students, typically males, likely will seek to participate in the demonstration. Further, students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may already have experience in operating cameras and sound boards and may feel more comfortable demonstrating their prowess in a classroom. To counter these outcomes, Orwin and Carageorge (2001) recommend faculty determine crew roles ahead of time, ensuring students have equal time in all capacities, in order to learn and practice operating various technologies.

Finally, Banks asserts faculty can take a fourth step to ensure every student is afforded a safe place to learn. Learning isn't easy, and sometimes it's uncomfortable and challenging; but it should not be unsafe. Whether it is establishing protocols for hanging lights and rigging, or on-set behavior, there are industry standards that can be modified for the classroom,

and students should be required to adhere to them as a condition of being part of the university filmmaking community. Banks (2019) also sees opportunities within these strategies to strengthen equitable workplace practices that ensure the current generation of students understands and abides by national policies against sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

These four steps at the very least are a preliminary foundation on which to construct a Center for Sight and Sound. This is not a call for film programs around the country to create virtual centers that mirror these recommendations but rather a suggestion for programs to consider a new "brick and mortar" facility separate from their long-established institutions and programs. While we believe change is possible under almost all circumstances, we also recognize there is only so much elasticity at the program and campus level to transform already-established practices and curricula. A Center for Sight and Sound recognizes the primacy of seeing and hearing to make meaning; but outside the strictures and confines of a long-established and likely turf-driven film program, it can afford students a semester or two to study other aspects of media production and storytelling beyond the practical use and understanding of media technology. We argue various aspects of film production and storytelling beyond the practical use and understanding of media technology are essential to the growth of the media artist, the program where they study, and the industry where they eventually work. Visual media production has been a rapidly evolving enterprise, at least technologically, for nearly three decades. This evolution is unlikely to abate any time soon. With the addition of virtual reality and artificial intelligence, media making has yet to come of age. In fact, we might argue in a few short decades, the art of making media will be virtually unrecognizable to, say, the practitioner working in the industry 50 or 60 years ago. These technological changes have occurred without much formal assessment in terms of questioning whether changes in technology have implications for changes in meaning, and if so, has storytelling and the conventions of movie making kept pace?

Conclusion

Communication between individuals is a complex enterprise. From childhood and throughout our lives we learn and internalize particular codes or signs that assist us to make and share meaning with others. These meanings, however, are not fixed, and can change or be changed by individuals,

circumstances, time, even landscape. Some scholars assert media production and distribution have become coexistent with life itself and assume a "liveness" (Couldry, 2000) all its own. Increasingly, media power must be recognized, examined, and critiqued as a precursor for access to the global media apparatus. We believe college and university programs focused on media making need to do more than just equip students with a mastery of the mechanics of media production. More focus is needed on collaborative skills to train students to work in diverse production teams. Likewise, there's a pedagogical gap in media production curricula with regard to examining and critiquing how individuals and personal characteristics are represented within the televisual frame. As a remedy, we propose a Center for Sight and Sound, a real or virtual facility where students can examine the meanings their constructed images carry or may be perceived to carry within or across culture. Such a center also can enterprise media projects or products that are conceived and cultivated by a diverse team and *intentionally* designed to represent those within the frame with dignity, equity, and authenticity, across both obvious and sublime personal characteristics.

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CHAPTER 8

The Quiet Revolution: Humanizing Institutions of Higher Education in the Wake of Existential Trauma

Christopher J. Kazanjian and David Rutledge

Introduction

In the Wake of Existential Trauma

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has fundamentally altered modern societies, worldwide. According to Calder et al. (2020) "An extreme and universal environment, like the new world order of mass quarantine to prevent the spread of COVID-19, reveals the arbitrariness and privilege of this discrete separation between the mentally disordered and the 'normal'" (p. 641). Modern societies were forced to question what is normal as the existential trauma caused by the pandemic removed their sense of safety, comfort, and knowing. Instead, the psychosocial atmosphere was

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filled with fear, isolation, and death anxiety. Institutions of higher education were affected by the pandemic in administrative operations and strategies, budgets, enrollments, and, most importantly, the current and future student bodies. The death anxiety and isolation that young adults experienced put them at greater risk of developing lifelong habits of hypervigilance and emotional disturbance (Francica, 2020).

The pandemic revealed deeply rooted social, economic, and racial inequalities around the globe, where people of color, women, immigrants, and underserved peoples were most affected by the virus (Luiggi-Hernández & Rivera-Amador, 2020). For example, during the mandatory quarantine requirements, "a notable increase in physical, emotional and sexualized violence against children during recession has been reported" (Fegert et al., 2020, p. 4). These actions of violence were more prevalent for minority and marginalized populations that do not have access to community services, high-quality healthcare or education, economic freedom, and privileges (Blosnich et al., 2020). The lifelong consequences of childhood or adolescent trauma increase the likelihood of cognitive impairments, somatization disorders, socioemotional challenges, mental disturbances, and a reduction in life expectancy up to 20 years (Colich et al., 2020; Kalia & Knauft, 2020; Lorenc et al., 2020; Park et al., 2020; Purkey et al., 2020; Yağci et al., 2020). In addition, the emotional trauma produced by COVID-19 can cause young adults to accelerate in aging, where telomere length is shortened and cell health is compromised (Cozolino, 2014). The natural ways youth have developed coping processes with negative life stressors and actualize time-sensitive developments (e.g., empathy), such as play, sports, after-school activities, were restricted. And, as educators, we recognize these children and adolescents will one day bring these histories into the higher education classroom.

The economic consequences of the pandemic left many college students and their family units without employment or were forced to work in dangerous conditions with the increased exposure to COVID-19. The result for students and their families were distress, mental health disturbances (i.e., anxiety and/or depression), substance abuse, or even abuse in the household (Fegert et al., 2020). Physical distancing was difficult for people in lower socioeconomic conditions, minorities, and underserved populations out of economic necessity, the need for employment to retain access to health insurance, or retaining employment in healthcare or as essential workers (Luiggi-Hernández & Rivera-Amador, 2020). Having family living in close quarters during quarantine meant decreased privacy

for youth, increased exposure to violence or abuse, and more contact with people suffering from mental disturbances.

The socioeconomic status is a major factor for academic success because of its associations with brain development, skill acquisition, mastery of content, and graduation rates in higher education. Studies have found that higher levels of negative stressors equated to higher levels of glucocorticoids inhibited abilities for emotional regulation, controlling impulses, working memory, and having trouble with making decisions (Sapolsky, 2017; Tsehay et al., 2020). Long-term negative stressors make it difficult for students to succeed in higher education because the body has homeostatic challenges, which make learning and neurodevelopment nearly impossible (Mead, 2020). When stressors exceed students' range of ability and resources, the brain cannot function properly and psychological well-being deteriorates (Cozolino, 2020; Kalia & Knauft, 2020). Furthermore, some higher education students are offered enough positive challenges or stressors to initiate holistic growth, including neuroplasticity and body repair systems. However, economic hardships and social challenges redirect the energy and resources needed for brain restoration, function, plasticity, immune system function, and growth to a state of survival and hypervigilance for threats.

As a result of the negative stress, altered psychosocial atmosphere, and associated challenges and restrictions caused by the pandemic, higher education students became estranged from the world they once knew and the curriculum that served it. Therefore, institutions of higher education must consider how to redefine the parameters of skill mastery, global learning environments, and growth-promoting partnerships in order to explore meanings of the existential realities of death, meaninglessness, isolation, and freedom of choice (Calder et al., 2020; Yalom, 1980, 2015). Educators and leaders may provide resources, knowledge, and opportunities, but must work in partnership with students to find meaning amid angst, death, fear, and trauma (Francica, 2020; Gavin, 2019).

The trauma of the pandemic put young adults at higher risk of being diagnosed with a mental disturbance, having current psychological disturbances worsen, and are now faced with new stress-related challenges (Çoban & Tan, 2020; Fegert et al., 2020; Folayan et al., 2020). These risks and challenges are coupled with the normative extra-curricular developmental tasks that include becoming independent, finding identity outside the family unit, managing a social life, and discovering inner-core values (Reinhardt et al., 2020). Failure to succeed at these tasks can result

in social-emotional dysregulations. Higher education graduates may have a greater sense of despair as they enter a world changed by COVID-19, where aspirations and previous career opportunities may have fundamentally changed or are unavailable.

Higher education students may not have had learning spaces to reflect on the trauma and anxieties caused by the pandemic, or opportunities to explore their existential concerns (Luiggi-Hernández & Rivera-Amador, 2020). The degree of trauma experienced can cause destructive habits of thought and behavior that lead to emotional challenges and somatic malaise (Read et al., 2020; Yağci et al., 2020). Youth without strong support systems may seek pharmaceuticals or substances to deaden the senses, or immerse themselves in conspiracy theories, magical thoughts, problematic internet use, or cynicism (Bradford, 2020). The coping mechanisms for the extreme isolation from social-distancing and virtual learning environments may not have been enough to ward off loneliness. Immediate remedies for loneliness and death anxieties were achieved by immersion in social media or culture, materialism (via online shopping), video games, or binge-watching streaming programs. Roughly 42 percent or 3.196 billion people use the Internet for social media for an average of 6 hours a day (Ergun & Alkan, 2020). Although there are populations without convenient access to the Internet, the rate of usage and number of users have steadily increased. For higher education students in Hungary, Prievara et al. (2019) found that on Facebook university groups and Hungarian writing websites, 82 percent used the Internet daily, with an average of three hours a day spent on social media usage on weekends.

The Internet and social media provide escapes for college students by gaming or connecting with similar interest groups. However, researchers have found that the more exposure and time spent on social media, the greater the chances of developing social media disorder (SMD) and problematic internet use (PIU); which include the symptomology of withdrawal, anxiety, health problems, depression, loneliness, narcissism, deteriorating social relationships, mood changes, and dependency (Ergun & Alkan, 2020; Garakouei et al., 2020; Prievara et al., 2019). COVID-19 removed routine and comfort in the lives of students, not only awakening them to existential realities but also to what was taken for granted (Bland, 2020).

In the US, young adults witnessed 500,000 people die in just under a year due to the COVID-19 virus (Huang, 2021). The realities and existential concerns of students must be the same for the institution. Higher

education empowers students in their capacities for choice, meaning-making, skill, and innovation to bring healing and compassion to communities of life around the world. Institutions of higher education have the position to build growth-promoting relationships with students to offer support, resources, and opportunities in which to create meanings within existential concerns. The nature of growth-promoting relationships develops positive attitudes toward social experiences, increases self-esteem, and enhances interpersonal skills (social-emotional intelligences) (Folayan et al., 2020; van Roekel et al., 2018). After managing existential trauma, educators and leaders in higher education can re-evaluate the curricular content, mission statements, course goals, and skills/knowledge that students will need to determine their futures (Kazanjian, 2020; Fegert et al., 2020).

In Praise of Humans

Institutions of higher education were particularly affected by the pandemic with challenges of low enrollment, rapidly creating institution-wide virtual learning environments, altering extra-curricular activities, and serving the community at large within social restrictions (Fegert et al., 2020; Tang & Servin, 2020). In the fragments that COVID-19 pandemic has left the human world, there are possibilities for a revolution in higher education to rebuild social spheres to become more humanistic, existential, multicultural, and phenomenological as a means to actualize potentials of a global human community.

As one seeks to discover the beginnings of humanity, the complex social circumstances of 200,000 to 300,000 years ago were perhaps one of the key elements for the survival of human genes, brain development, longer childhoods, and unique human attributes (Wilson, 2014). Factors such as empathy, relationship building, communication, competition, bonding, and emotional attunement are shared traits with other mammals; and these shared traits have helped human beings form a special group that could create its own conditions in which to thrive. Although ideas of philosophy of humanism began with Epicurus (341–270 B.C.E.) (Greenblatt, 2011), there were quiet revolutionaries in the mid-twentieth century who became firebrands for leading communities into a humane, multicultural, global community. One such firebrand was Carl Rogers (1902–1987), an American psychologist that developed a person-centered approach to psychology, education, and counseling.

During the US Civil Rights Movement era in the 1960s and 1970s, Rogers (1977) knew that diverse growth-promoting relationships held potentials for a global social justice movement, as he stated, "A quiet revolution is under way in almost every field. It holds promise of moving us forward to a more human, more person-centered world" (p. 290). Rogers (1969, 1989) argued that if the approach to the person is ecological, in which the conditions of empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard are present, then true healing and growth are possible (van Deurzen, 2019). This Rogerian method was grounded in growth-promotive relating, in which secure bonds allow the individual to engage in critical self-reflection, exploration, and moving toward growth-promoting ways of being and openness for understanding and connecting with the world. His work with encounter groups explored human diversities to expand our understandings of what it means to be human and actualize potentials. From the influences of existentialism and phenomenology, Rogers and his colleagues decided that the twentieth and twenty-first centuries would achieve what previous analytical and static discourses could not: a humanistic psychology.

Humanistic psychology began with a group of rogue psychologists (Bühler, 1974) who felt it necessitous amid the wave of social justice to develop a new school of psychology that would unshackle the determinisms and fatalisms of human beings. Bland and DeRobertis (2017) distinguished the humanistic psychologists as having a collective "vision of psychology as a holistic, phenomenological exploration of the processes that organically promote psychological health and growth in accordance with people's innate nature and potentials" (p. 1). The five pillars of humanistic psychology were designed to keep it evolving with human diversities and complex circumstances: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; human beings are unique in the universe; human beings have consciousness and awareness of the self and others; people have free will and the responsible to determine their futures; and human beings are meaning-seeking creatures (Bland & DeRobertis, 2017).

The humanistic psychologists contended with the dominant schools of psychology dogma that perpetuated an atomization, patriarchal authority to the therapist, bureaucracy, standardization, and disenfranchisement of the person from society to make personal and democratic changes (DeRobertis, 2015). The Western psychology before the mid-twentieth century was mainly driven by behaviorism and Freudian psychoanalysis. These schools reduced and minimized individuals' desires, aspirations, and

ultimately, the perception of their potentials. However, the humanistic psychologists did not entirely deny psychoanalysis and behaviorism, but rather took their insights into a new phenomenal appreciation of the human being that emphasized meaning and experience (Bland & DeRobertis, 2017). Other schools of psychology did not pay attention to human challenges of the times such as racism, diversity, relationships, existential angst, and often provided misleading understandings. Humanistic psychology became a holistic inquiry, using phenomenological, multicultural, ethnographic, and case studies to learn about the human condition.

Humanistic psychology advocated for multiculturalism because human diversities hold the potentials for growth and understanding (DeRobertis, 2015). Widening the perspectives of Western psychology to include Zen, Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism, humanistic psychology sought to create a worldly existential and phenomenological paradigm (Bland & DeRobertis, 2017). Consilience in these diverse areas would help problematize and critically analyze Western biases and neuroses that estranged people from their nature. Minority voices, particularly from females and other minorities, were important for understanding how race, politics, economics, and culture factor into social justice for human ability (Hoffman et al., 2019; van Deurzen, 2019).

However, humanistic psychology has been criticized for being limited to middle- to upper-class White males, whose status has influenced many interpretations on what it means to be fully human and self-actualizing (Schneider, 2011). However, this critique of humanistic psychology as being culturally blind is limited. The humanistic psychologists, as Bland and DeRobertis (2017) stated, "emphasize the often-unheeded adaptive qualities available within marginalized populations. Furthermore, this criticism overlooks the wealth of humanistic literature involving multiculturalism, crosscultural studies, and gender studies … which arose out of its constructivist focus" (p. 16).

There is less of a chance than ever in global history to be raised in an isolated, unaffected culture (Harari, 2015). As a result, most youth around the globe continue to develop an intersectional identity from a multitude of cultural, historical, social, and economic spectrums (Beins, 2011; Rosen et al., 2017). Intersectionality means that all people carry an infinity of historical and cultural traces that are interdependent within social and cultural contexts/positionalities for comprising an identity, which cannot be undone (Bradford, 2020; Guilfoyle, 2016; Hoffman et al., 2019; Johnson & Vallejos, 2019). The intersectionality of cultural paradigms develops

with diverse relationships to the world (DeRobertis, 2015; Cozolino, 2020; Moustakas, 1956).

Multicultural Humanistic Psychology

This chapter utilizes a critical theory called multicultural humanistic psychology to support institutions of higher education missions to serve multicultural communities, reveal unbalanced power structures that result in inequities, and develop a praxis that brings dignity and growth to communities of life (Kazanjian, 2021). The narratives, subjugated knowledges, and voices of those that have been marginalized come forth in multicultural humanistic psychology (Savery, 2019). With the foundations of existentialism, humanistic psychology, the immersive applications of phenomenology, and the critical praxis of multiculturalism, this paradigm seeks to explore meanings of experience and spiritual connections with the world (Hoffman et al., 2019; Nuttall, 2006).

Multicultural humanistic psychology enables the critical pedagogies and culturally responsive curricular strategies to empower students to develop existential and phenomenological literacies in the world, while gaining the skills to dismantle injustices to create a greater sense of global community (Kazanjian, 2021). This paradigm centers on the processes and conditions of culturally relative self-actualization by engaging the multicultural archetypes endemic in an interconnecting global culture.

The main tenets of multicultural humanistic psychology include:

- Intersectional cultural paradigms contain resources for understanding positionality and perspective.
- Cultures are constantly evolving and cannot be reduced to their parts.
- The human community must seek to establish dignity, equity, social justice, and freedom for all life forms—while developing a global consciousness.
- Multicultural education seeks to dismantle systems of inequality so that marginalized communities can have equitable opportunities for actualizing potentials of the self or community.
- The human community is responsible for empowering youth with the knowledge and skills to take care of the global environments and empower interconnecting global communities.
- Human beings have choice and free will to determine how they wish to create a meaningful life that is inclusive and growth-promoting.

- Culturally relative self-actualization is promoted within an expanding cultural paradigm. (Kazanjian, 2021)

Higher education programs, courses, and organizations can only be effective for student empowerment and self-actualization when the conditions of empathy, positive regard, congruence, and cultural humility inherent in multicultural humanistic psychology are present. Cultural humility is vital for educators and students, as they develop a critical self/community-awareness for calling forth, reviewing, and analyzing assumptions, cultural biases, beliefs, and judgments (Cozolino, 2020).

Post-secondary, higher education students are in need of a multicultural humanistic lens to understand the impacts of racism to help them "not succumb to adverse psychological and academic effects of marginalization" (Grier & Ajayi, 2019, p. 18). Tolerance, through a multicultural humanistic psychological lens, means acceptance, patience, and compassion given to the discomfort that happens when one's own cultural paradigm is challenged with new knowledge or perception in order to learn and understand differing cultural paradigms (Moats, 2019). One does not need to accept or alter the paradigm, but empathically explore others' meanings with regard and honesty. Tolerating the uncertainty and ambiguity of life is a necessity to building the processes of culturally relative self-actualization.

Culturally Relative Self-Actualization

The humanistic psychologists adapted the term *self-actualization* to their paradigm to indicate a being that is fully integrated and living authentically in the face of challenges, overcoming them, and realizing undiscovered potentials (Bland & DeRobertis, 2017; Rogers, 1977). Self-actualization includes the process of needs satisfaction (Maslow, 1971). To identify a basic need, one must realize that without its fulfillment, the being will decline in health; to satisfy it will prevent the decline; when given a choice the being will choose it; and it typically satiated in the healthy person (Maslow, 1998). However, given humanistic psychology's Western biases, many have placed self-actualization in an individualistic cultural paradigm. The simplicity of the basic needs area of the self-actualization pyramid may not best represent the multi-axial needs and challenges of many individuals, such as those with home insecurities,

socioeconomic challenges, economic inequalities, mental disturbances, and physical ailments (Best et al., 2008).

The self-esteem developed in relationships is culturally relative for individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Hocoy, 2019). To feel a sense of value or worth for individualistic cultures may be a personal achievement, whereas collectivistic cultures attain self-esteem by serving the community or family unit. The directional and progressive flow of Maslow's Hierarchy may only reflect Western cultural paradigms and contexts (Vaughan, 2019). Collectivistic cultures, such as Latinx, Hispanic, Asian, African, and Aboriginal, may begin with communal forms in the way of religion, spiritual, or group experiences. Most cultures outside of Euro-American philosophy may see human actualization being realized in collective practices rather than a singular, individual journey. Therefore, a multicultural humanistic psychology posits that a culturally relative self-actualization paradigm is needed to help individuals and groups from individualistic and collectivistic cultural paradigms transcend needs as it is meaningful to their paradigm/circumstance and actualize potentials of the self and community (Kazanjian, 2021).

Within the processes of culturally relative self-actualization, the person finds each moment as an individual or community new, each basic need of life a miracle, and each day is lived in solitary or shared awe, wonder, and joy, no matter how common place it may seem (Moustakas, 1956). Culturally relative self-actualization is not a contained process because it needs the world and others to happen. Regardless of individualistic or collectivistic cultural paradigm, actualization can only take place among a community of beings (humans, animals, plants, etc.). People are dependent upon external players and conditions in order to utilize their resources, realize potentials, and grow—no person can develop without others because "*relationships are our natural habitat*" (Cozolino, 2014, p. 4). Each person has a complex matrix of challenges, in which the growth-promoting relationship provides safety and freedom, which are integral components if one is to discover new meanings and abilities (Moustakas, 1956). When college students feel a sense of freedom to explore and safety to experiment in the higher education classroom, the facades and masks with which they were learned to survive life circumstances are removed in favor of authenticity.

Multicultural Constellations

Institutions of higher education are experiencing rapid changes in cultural diversification and intersectionality more than ever before in world history. According to Taylor et al. (2020), "Over the last 20 years alone, the share of undergraduate students who identify as a race other than White has increased from approximately 30 percent to about 45 percent" (p. 1). The increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the student body is not as high for faculty and staff positions, where post-secondary institutions across the US reported roughly 20 percent of the faculty positions were people of color, but the diversity of new hires has recently been more than it has been in the past.

Multicultural humanistic psychological contributions to higher education seek to incorporate the intersectionality of identity, culture, society, and the diversifying global conditions into the curricular content and processes of the classroom, as well as throughout the administration leadership models. Learning in higher education is exciting and adventurous when it reflects individualistic and collectivistic cultural values—only then does awareness of feelings, focus, and concentration take on meaning (Moustakas & Perry, 1973). When the higher education climate values openness to experience, there is an increased likelihood that students, staff, faculty, and administrators willing to form new diverse relationships, optimistic about life challenges, engage in culturally diverse settings (Moustakas, 1956). For example, levels of ethnocentrism have been shown to decrease over time as individuals have more positive and empathic experiences with out-group members. Ethnocentric levels vary per culture, where although exposure and experiences with other cultures may be one factor to help overcome it; the work to understand and expand open-mindedness is key (Keith, 2011).

Establishing safety in a higher education learning environment creates an openness to experience within college students, not only for new experiences, but also open to being aware and experience feelings, emotions, and attitudes at a foundational level (Moustakas, 1956). An honest interoceptive awareness and mindfulness of emotions generate an awareness of life outside the self, where problematizing judgments and categories create an organic sense of reality. Challenging the absolutes of the self means that not all failures reveal inadequacy, and that life is not always as it appears. Coming to know the world and the self means encountering

things anew and not altering them to fit existing cultural schemes or categories.

Too often, primary and secondary students learned from teachers and peers that creative self-expression or exploration is something to be ashamed of or even punished, or an activity to be done in private (Maslow, 1971). These students enter higher education unsure or apprehensive about how to express and explore their own intellectualism. Although students can demonstrate mastery of content in primary and secondary schooling, the processes of creating knowledge and exploring capacities of the self often lag behind content acquisition. The processes of creating knowledge must be equally as valuable as the curricular content.

Rogers (1969) recognized that curriculum and pedagogy must be centered on "changingness, a reliance on *process* rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world" (p. 104). Higher education students must be creators of knowledge, where the processes of critical analysis and praxis are part of every classroom. Higher education that empowers young adults develops their skills and knowledge to take full responsibility for the challenges that come with an interconnecting world—which includes quality of life not only for humans but also for animals, plants, environments, insects, and other beings. Multicultural humanistic psychology orients the post-secondary educator to proactively establish equity, dignity, freedom, and value for all groups, while dismantling the apparatuses that deny these rights.

The cultural context is key to multicultural humanistic psychology. Higher education curriculum can use this paradigm to become sensitive to how students learn, express, and function in a unique world paradigm and meaning-making system (Hocoy, 2019). Meaning, according to Calder et al. (2020), "involves having an aim or purpose toward which we strive in the daily activities of life, the cognitive ability to understand our circumstance, and the capacity to emotionally appraise the value of a given situation" (p. 642). The cultural paradigms of students are intersectional, complex, evolving, and adaptive. As stated by DeRobertis (2015) "Culture becomes an integral part of the individual organism as part of a lifespan developmental process that involves many time scales and is highly plastic in nature" (p. 18). Cultural meanings in a paradigm allow students a feeling of value and significance, where goals and purposes make sense of life, contribute to identity, and promote holistic well-being as they are actualized in the current contexts, environment, and relationships.

The multicultural movement advocated that people must develop cultural competencies—the ability to learn, value, and function within other cultural paradigms (Jackson, 2019). Cultural competence is meant to be self-reflective of one's cultural biases, free of judgment, and to engage others with empathy. However, although the intention was meant to help create intercultural spaces, insufficient and inadequate trainings had a high risk of "othering" cultural meanings/experiences by indicating there is an expertise that one can achieve. A cultural competence entails that there are levels to be achieved, where one person can be more culturally competent than another, making that person superior. This can be misleading, because there is an inauthenticity of learned cultural meanings and paradigms, while ignoring the greater apparatuses of privilege, marginalization, and power.

Instead, the praxis of cultural humility is more sensitive to the goals of an intercultural society. Cultural humility is a lifelong learning process (of dialectic nature) that seeks the development of open-mindedness, a critical cultural self-reflection, and the development or cultivation of culturally diverse growth-promoting relationships that will enable a person to transcend his/her cultural schema into a multicultural paradigm (Rosen et al., 2017; Soheilian et al., 2014). The *process* is the focus, and the *content* of learned knowledge acts as support or scaffold. Administrators in higher education can develop cultural humility in which to explore the diverse needs and meanings of students and the community. Faculty are able to develop cultural humility as they explore students' worlds and through community partnerships. While students can begin to learn the processes in safe ways through experiential research projects and reflection, cultural humility opens perspective, reveals positionality, deconstructs fatalistic judgments, and opens possibilities for greater empathic awareness (Miller, 2017; Morley, 2008). Institutions of higher education may develop cultural humility through ongoing faculty and staff development trainings/workshops that offer spaces for critical reflection on cultural values and knowledges, biases, and privileges (Johnson & Vallejos, 2019). The goal of the cultural dialogues, sharing, and expressions is to build growth-promoting relationships.

Cultural humility is not a technique, but a way of being, a lifelong journey of reflection on what is known, and a sensitive and sincere exploration of diverse cultural meanings. Ethnocultural exploration must be based on empathy and always valuing the nuances and variations of cultural meanings within a group (Johnson & Vallejos, 2019). Higher educational

professionals and students come to acknowledge the limitations and contradictions of their perspectives and may challenge them when engaging culturally diverse paradigms. Challenging the teleological understandings of cultural competence, cultural humility breaks down reductionisms, problematizes one's cultural paradigm, while learning to become an advocate for diversity and marginalized groups.

Although discussing issues of race can be uncomfortable to discuss in the higher education classroom, they "have the potential of stimulating the kind of self-awareness and perspective that could enhance and promote the development of wisdom" (Cozolino, 2014, p. 317). For example, White fragility indicates the discomfort, frustration, offense, or anxieties that people considered White have when discussing race and privilege (DiAngelo, 2018; Moats, 2019). Weaponizing these concepts to attack Whites in the classroom and privilege does not cultivate growth, as this confrontation heightens the divisions between students, while solidifying the systems that produce inequality and divisions in society. It is important not to minimize privilege, but it is equally important to not use it to make generalizations or attack students who are unaware of privileges. Privilege is a systemic power that creates inequities, and we must learn from one another and work together if we are to dismantle them. Racist ideologies and behaviors generate effects that educators can overcome by affirming and valuing cultural identity, supporting self-esteem, and utilizing culturally responsive pedagogies (Hammond, 2015).

Positive experiences with diverse college peers, faculty, and administrators form a higher education community that values multicultural relationships. Growth-promoting relationships are the foundation for this community and foster a deep sense of safety. Safe and calm learning environments encourage students to develop learning partnerships with the professor, explore inner curiosities, and become optimistic about mastery of the curriculum (Cozolino, 2014). It is important that students understand the professor as an enthusiastic, interested, and caring professional. Otherwise, students that are anxious or traumatized from previous experiences will view faculty as threatening and the curricular material irrelevant. Students that have indifferent or hostile professors have difficulty focusing on the lessons, processes, and patterns of the curriculum; and their inattention often gets misinterpreted as disinterest, rebelliousness, or an inability.

Conclusion

The Light in the Tower, Rebuilding a Multicultural Humanistic Institution

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, minorities, marginalized, and dispossessed populations need social justice action, equitable healthcare, access to higher education, and opportunities for culturally relative self-actualization (Lopez, 2018; Miller, 2017; Morley, 2008). Institutions of higher education are leaders in the hyper-connecting world for understanding the complexities of inequality, power, and privilege, so that social justice can be enacted through understanding, policy changes, democratic participation, and innovation (Unterhalter, 2009). With a multicultural humanistic psychology paradigm, institutions of higher education can rebuild social and educational institutions to serve minority and marginalized communities more equitably, create culturally relevant curriculum, and create healing within communities that were devastated by existential trauma.

Cultural and human diversities hold multiple insights into the potential for growth as a human community, especially for exploring existential concerns and creating meaningful relationships. With a multicultural humanistic psychological paradigm, institutions of higher education can establish equitable opportunities for growth and learning, dignity, value, and freedom for all groups, while deconstructing the barriers to these goals (Kazanjian, 2021). However, there is a lacuna in the research literature between humanistic psychology and social justice in professional and educational settings, and how students are engaging in global social justice (D'Andrea, 2011). Multicultural humanistic psychology focuses on human ability, resilience, and potential that empower students to make constructive decisions and innovations to overcome adversities. For example, students may open counter spaces (Grier & Ajayi, 2019). Counter spaces are areas where students of color can experience cultural and racial affirmation, value, and be able to mitigate anxieties and stress that come with race-related issues to promote a positive racial climate (Grier & Ajayi, 2019). Humanism is at the heart of this approach, as Grier and Ajayi (2019) argued that "humanism provides a valuable framework for helping Black students tell their stories and make new meanings in ways that resist oppression and deficit notions of people of color" (p. 20).

With humanism, multicultural education champions the sharing of stories and creating narratives for healing, meaning-making, and overcoming racial trauma, where students of color have suffered (seen and/or been victimized) humiliation, violence, or persecution because of their race/appearance. Narratives promote interhemispheric communication and neural network integration in the brain because memory systems, knowledge, emotions, sensations, and behaviors must be integrated to make sense of one's narrative as well as the stories of others (Cozolino, 2014). From this, narratives offer schemas and strategies to coordinate and understand contexts and subjects. Hearing or seeing the stories of others offers a chance for students to practice similar scenarios, using imagination, coping mechanisms, while emotions are stimulated. Narratives are important to higher education students in developing preventative and protective factors for resilience to the stress and anxiety that comes with issues with racial adversity (Grier & Ajayi, 2019).

For higher education faculty members, multicultural humanistic psychology means facilitating a learning climate where empathy, difference, value, and authenticity are foundational. Learning from each other is equally as important as curriculum content—the focus is on the processes of learning, relationship building, and discovery (Elkins et al., 2013; Henriksen, 2006; Miller, 2011; Rogers, 1977). To empower students means to serve as a resource and facilitator of growth and actualization for all groups of students, ensuring equitable opportunities. For special populations, such as immigrant communities, faculty can assist students in becoming literate in the new host country's healthcare, education, economic, and legal systems, as a means to succeed and access support networks (Ansion & Merali, 2018). It is essential for faculty members to understand how implementing cross-cultural conversations is more nuanced, complex, and delicate than just implementing cultural heroes and stories into the main curriculum (Henriksen, 2006). Stories and heroes are part of the processes of learning and not the end (Soheilian et al., 2014). In the end, when studies and initiatives focus on serving only one specific demographic, such as members from the Black or LGBTQ+ community, they must realize the broader spectrum of diversity within any category and the limitations in thinking there is a standardized way to engage all those members under a nominal umbrella term (Rosen et al., 2017).

Institutions of higher education have the potential to become firebrand establishments that cultivate transformative justice. Multicultural

humanistic psychology is the framework in which to achieve this process. Within this paradigm and praxis, higher education will embolden students to embrace a changing multicultural world and create quiet revolutionaries that transform the world with cultural humility, creativity, compassion, and empathy.

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CHAPTER 9

The Latina *Madre* and Her Journey to Baccalaureate Degree Attainment

B. Abigail Tarango

Introduction

La madre es la ancla de la familia. The mother is the anchor of the family.

The *El Paso Times* ran a news story in the Sunday edition of Mother's Day in 2002; the newspaper's front page was a photograph of my *madre*, my *titita* (*abuela*/grandmother), and me. That photograph is forever etched in my memory and serves as a *testimonio* to me. It influenced my educational trajectory, my educational aspiration, persistence, and attainment journey. My *madre* attained a baccalaureate degree from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP); it took her nine years. She was the first in her family to do so; she was 43 years old. Her journey began in 1993 when she was 34 and a mother of 4 daughters between 5 and 14 years. Like many other Latina/o parents, my *madre* believed education held the key to opportunities, *a better life*. What is more is I, too, joined in that journey parallel to hers. I earned my baccalaureate degree that same weekend, Mother's Day weekend, in 2002. I earned my baccalaureate degree from

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a neighboring university, I was 23 years old, it took me five years to attain. Through our parallel journeys, she would say I motivated her, but she, in fact, motivated me.

On that Mother's Day weekend, my *madre* and I shared a special day, a special bond. We both walked across similar stages to be awarded our baccalaureate degrees. We did not attend the same 4-year institution, but the 57 miles dividing us only served to bond us. As I watched her that day, she laughed, she cried, but she was also silent. It was evident, in reflection, she knew that what she had aspired to do, despite the many barriers, challenges, or costs associated with the attainment, she did it. It was her journey, I was lucky to have witnessed it, and been influenced by it. My *madre* altered the trajectory of my educational attainment path because of her own aspiration, persistence, and attainment. Despite dropping out of high school, marrying, and starting a family at a young age, she aspired to attain a baccalaureate degree no matter what. She persisted, even while raising four daughters, *madres* like her are not alone.

Rodriguez et al. (2000) focused on Latinas because, as a group, they have been largely ignored by higher education researchers. As a result, there is a lack of knowledge of Latina students' needs and concerns in attempting to address the attainment gap (Rodriguez et al., 2000). In their article, "Latina College Students: Issues and Challenges for the 21st Century," Rodriguez et al. (2000) suggested, to promote the success of Latina college students institutions must demonstrate a commitment to Latina students by valuing their contributions. Institutions must make an honest effort to better serve these often "invisible" women (Rodriguez et al., 2000), but we must know more about their lived experiences to do so.

The Study

As a Xicana scholar and a Latina *madre* interested in the lived experiences of Latina *madres* and their baccalaureate degree attainment journeys, this chapter presents the lived experiences of ten Latina *madres* from the Southwest Borderlands. It utilizes a Chicana feminist epistemology to offer a transformative perspective that contributed to understanding their educational experiences. The research is significant, given that Latinas are ever-increasing in population and Latina *madres* degree attainment experiences are severely underrepresented in the academic literature. Where literature exists regarding Latina *madres* and formal education, it suggests

that the impact is problematic to the children. It is important to address the deficit-thinking and these problematic narratives that parental education level hinders children's education persistence and outcomes without considering the complexities and the nuances parents contribute to their children's educational success.

Place

With the preceding in mind, it would be helpful to contextualize the Latina population, the Southwest Borderlands, and descent so the connections between the Latina *madre* student population and their experiences can be better understood. Women of Color today comprised of 20.3% of the US population (Census, 2020), an increase from 18.4% from 2010 (Census, 2020) and the Latina population being the largest female minority group (Census, 2018). Moreover, this specific population is expected to increase to one-third of the US female total population. Today, Latinas account for almost half (49%) of the total Latina/o population, and the US Census (2018) is projecting that Latinas in the US will reach 51 million by 2060 (U.S. Census, 2018; Llagas & Snyder, 2003; Nora & Crisp, 2006). The largest Latina subgroups comprise 64% of Mexican descent. More Latinas of Mexican origin tend to be located in the Southwest; however, there are large numbers in the Midwest (Gándara, 2015; Motel & Patten, 2012).

Beginning with borderlands, in this study focused on Latina *madres* who resided in a place called the Southwest Borderlands. Xicanisma provided a framework to understand these Latina *madres'* educational lived experiences in the borderlands. The Southwest Borderlands is binational and rests between three states and two countries. For these Latina *madres* their geographical location was unique, some of the participants lived close to the literal country borders of the US and Mexico, while others lived closer to the state borders of New Mexico and Texas. Some made no mention of one or the other, but instead referred to the place as *all that they have ever known*. When considering the borderlands, insofar as their identities, the Latina *madres'* gender roles, bilingualism, and consciousness were acknowledged from the participants' personal multi-perspectives. They presented three ways in which their identities were influenced (to varying degrees) in the borderlands: traditional Mexican and American culture, Mexican culture, and American culture. These influences shaped how Latina *madres* were raised, what gender norms, and roles were

ascribed to them, whether they were bilingual, and how their consciousness and identity were shaped. The Latina *madres* shared unique experiences from multiple perspectives.

The Latina *madres* lived in the Southwest Borderlands, straddling two countries, and resulting in unique experiences. Using Xicanisma provided a lens to understand how these borders and borderlands influenced their individually lived experiences.

As reflected in research by Trueba (2004), Xicanisma provides a lens to better understand the lived experiences of the Latina *madres* in two or more cultural environments. The findings of this study revealed that the Latina *madres* each had different experiences, but offers possible theoretical expansion. The participants acknowledged cross-geographical borders and trespassed emotional and behavioral boundaries (Espín, 1999), finding themselves caught between two worlds, living "binational lives" (Trueba, 2004, p. 118) and having binational experiences. Participants shared experiences of being from "traditional" Mexican heritages or homes, but also from American cultures. In their experiences, they often described not realizing there were differences between cultures until they were older. The summation of their lived experiences was realizing they had boundaries and delineations not only geographically, but also emotionally and behaviorally. Again, Latina *madres* shared many examples of finding a balance, a middle ground for their emotional and behavioral compromises because of expectations set by their cultures, their *familias*, and gender roles. Some of the participants described experiences of parents or *familia* treating them differently because they were females. For example, females were expected to do more housework, such as cooking and cleaning and preparing for marriage, not college. Whereas their brothers or [male] classmates were not required to cook and clean or prepare for marriage, they could aspire to attend college. As reflected in Anzaldúa's remapping of our understanding of what a "border" is, presented not as a simple divide between here and there, them and us, but as a "psychic, social, and cultural terrain that we inhabit, and that inhabits all of us" (2012, p. 25). Exploring the unique experiences of the Latina *madres* without ignoring the here and there and intersectionalities of their cultural, *familia*, educational, and economic struggles allows us to challenge Latina *madres'* stereotypes across the lines of gender, culture, class, and sexuality. Moreover, acknowledging their shared experiences allows us to expand our understanding of different cultural contexts; in this case that

of the Latina *madres* lived experience in their educational journeys in the borderlands.

Findings

Drawing from Chicana feminist thought, Xicanisma, to honor Latinas' diversity while also emphasizing the similarities of their experience, this chapter frames the experiences of the Latina *madres* without ignoring the intersectionalities of their gender, ethnicity, and culture. By identifying the overarching themes that shed light on how the Latina *madres* experienced their journeys, this chapter posits transformational and aspirational ways to engage these students and aid in their attainment. By advancing these intersections of how we might consider supporting Latina *madre* student populations, we are called to create a more inclusive learning environment for these historically excluded populations.

As explored through the lived experiences of the Latina *madres'* journey of her baccalaureate degree attainment, the following themes emerged: *familia*, culture and gender, barriers and challenges, and resolve. The Latina *madres* did not conceal the aspiration or the persistence it took to advance to educational attainment. The Latina *madres* were clear in what carried them to achieve their baccalaureate degree. Not the motivational or aspirational kind of resolve, but a raw self-determination (self-belief, self-perception, and even self-talk) to put oneself through whatever was necessary to persist. The overarching themes found in the study included the following: a praxis of culture and gender as it influenced *familia* and the expectations set for Latina *madres*; the similarities in the barriers and challenges the Latina *madres* faced (childcare, time, energy, and financial burdens); the Latina *madres'* resolve, as represented in her will, resoluteness, and determination to achieve her desired goal; and ultimately the essence that empowered the Latina *madres* to aspire, persist, and attain her baccalaureate degree. The Latina *madre's* educational experiences deepened the understanding of the complexities of negotiating gender, ethnicity, culture, and other intersections straddled with the barriers and challenges experienced with being a Latina, a student, and a *madre*. This was the essence of the findings of this phenomenological research study.

Familia

Inconsistent with previous literature (Ceja, 2001; Gándara, 1995) that argued while family relationships appear to play a strong role in encouraging the Latinas to go to college, the Latina *madres* did not seem reliant on *familia* to accomplish their educational goals. Even when the Latina *madres* received strong support regarding advancing their education, they receive equally as strong, if not stronger, messaging regarding their *familial* obligations. Negotiating a balance between academic expectations and cultural obligations to family proved challenging. This was an important point of intersection in the research study and calls for further research. Literature has found *familismo*, as fostering a strong sense of support and involvement from family members, resulting in close family ties that are integral to student success (Quiñones & Kiyama, 2014; Ruiz, 2007). This was true when the *familia* supported the Latina *madre*, it did foster a strong sense of support and involvement. Moreover, the extant literature on the importance of *familia* in Latina/o students' educational pathways exists and highlights the important role female family members hold in the Latina/o family as educational advocates. However, in this study, *familismo* did not seem to determine the Latina *madres*' persistence or attainment.

Culture and Gender

The two intersections, and at times dependent themes, were described in ways reflecting the influences of *familia* or how perhaps culture and gender influenced *familia*. As I read the data, the weaving of these themes retold the lived experiences of living while being under the constructs of being a female, being Latina, Mexican-American, Hispanic, or Chicana. However, the influence of culture sometimes seemed to supersede the influence of *familia*. I could not discern which was more dominant as they weaved together, often indistinguishable from one part of their stories to the next. The influence of both the Latina *madres*' culture and gender shaped their lived experiences and what they knew to be true.

Moreover, to persist in school, Latina *madres* balanced their culture and gender with their university cultures, systems, and environments. However, in reading through the data, intersections were found to be signifigant between Latina *madres'* culture and gender. This study illuminated two main points of intersection between the study and the

literature: regarding *familia* and the influence over the participants' culture and gender and vice versa. The two points of intersections were as follows: (a) Latina *madres* experienced ascribed gender roles based on cultural values, and (b) Latina *madres'* self-imposed gender norms and roles associated with and influenced by their culture.

When reflecting on the data, Latina *madres* shared numerous examples where they themselves struggled with their own obligation and assumed practices of ascribed gender roles based on cultural values. Scholars contend Latina students are at risk of experiencing adverse psychological outcomes (e.g., depression, anxiety, interpersonal problems, and social adjustment) due to conflict from changing their gender role beliefs (Baron & Constantine, 1997; Vasquez, 1982). Such conflict can occur both within and outside the individual, especially when the Latina *madre* tries to integrate two sets of dissonant values and beliefs.

Barriers and Challenges

The data supplied a wealth of information that often disclosed barriers and challenges such as relationships, home conditions, resources to include food, childcare, and finances, to name a few. Throughout there were many versions of how other constructs also manifested as barriers and challenges such as time, energy, abilities, and capacities.

Previous research (Gault et al., 2016) posits parenting has significant implications for students' ability to attain degrees. Research points to the importance of acknowledging and addressing the unique time-related, financial, and logistical challenges facing students with caregiving responsibilities. The following discusses the three most persistent barriers and challenges shared by the Latina *madres.*

First, all ten of the Latina *madres* shared a consistent and significant barrier and challenge during their baccalaureate degree attainment journey: childcare. As noted by Markle (2015), nontraditional students, especially single working mothers, face a number of unique barriers in their quest to attain baccalaureate degrees, none larger than childcare. Student-parents have the additional challenges of balancing childcare responsibilities with work and study. Gault (2016) found childcare is crucial for the 4.8 million parents in college, but it is difficult for students to find and afford. For many parents who leave school without a degree, better access to childcare may have helped them to persist. Terry Long (2017) wrote in a policy proposal,

> For the 4.8 million college students who are parents, high-quality, reliable, and affordable child care is essential…the availability of high-quality child care for parents pursuing postsecondary credentials (student-parents) …will have long-term benefits for both the student-parent and their child. (Abstract)

Second, I found financial burdens were substantial barriers and challenges present in Latina *madres'* baccalaureate degree attainment journey. Previous literature (Rodriguez et al., 2000) is consistent with this finding for Chicanas. These financial concerns included debt incurred by loans, lack of money for bills, personal expenses, hours spent on outside employment, and uncertainty of receiving financial aid. Financial burden is a barrier and challenge for many students, but in this study they were especially a burden. Jeffreys (2007) found nontraditional students reported finances as a significant barrier to their academic success, and an article written for the Lumina Foundation (Headden, 2009) asserted finances might be a barrier to obtaining an education and the system of loans and grants discriminates against working adults.

Last, this study found Latina *madres* struggled with time management. This finding is consistent with research on women and college. Dependent care takes up a significant amount of student mothers' time, which can compromise their academic success (Miller et al., 2011). Markle (2015) found women were oppressed by time; participants in the study stated their success in each of their various roles was directly related to the amount of time spent performing role-related behavior. Women had insufficient time to devote fully to any of their roles, which caused them stress. Markle also found this time pressure made women anxious about their ability to perform the student role and led them to consider withdrawing. Women are more likely to reduce their course load or work hours to remain in school, and some persevered because they wanted a better life for their children (Markle, 2015; Miller et al., 2011). All of the Latina *madres* in this study expressed the motivation for going to college was their children—the desire to be role models and provide them a better future. As a result, Latina *madres* grappled with significant demands on their time. In addition to time spent in class and studying, most student-parents juggle paid work and substantial time caring for children. With these pressures, college affordability for students with children becomes an issue of time and money. Support strategies must consider how to help student-parents devote the time for academics that it takes to succeed.

Resolve

The fourth and final theme was resolve. This theme focused on the Latina *madre's* overall resolve, or will of determination to attain her baccalaureate degree. The theme represented the resoluteness and the decidedness the Latin *madres* possessed. Latina *madres* found themselves balancing family, culture, identity, finances. Negotiating all of these factors (and more), accruing to a unique lived experience. As the fourth and final theme in these findings, resolve was momentous. Participants explained they wanted better lives for their children and shared mantras that kept them going: "I just did one thing at a time, day by day until I finished."

Research Limitations

The limited scope of the study, to a particular region, geographical location, the Southwest Borderlands does not claim that it can be generalized to other populations of Latina *madres* in different locations. Latinas are not a monolithic group, they are a diverse population. The findings were limited by only generating new knowledge that contributes to a specific population mostly based on geographical limitations. The findings of this research study cannot tell us about other Latina *madre* populations, however, the findings of this study should be considered informative and an addition to our understanding of the lived experience of the Latina *madres* and their journeys of baccalaureate degree attainment.

Similarly, this study can help us better understand how borders and borderlands influence the individual lived experiences of Latinas and how [Latinas] "function effectively in two or more cultural environments" (Trueba, 2004, p. 47). However, we know that not all Latinas may have the same or similar experiences. Thus, Latinas may differ in their lived experiences, specific to place, culture, *familia*, and self actualization. These limitations point to future research that may be helpful in furthering the understanding of Latina *madres* and their experiences in baccalaureate degree attainment.

Implications for Practice

Educational leadership has significant effects on student outcomes and the quality of the institution. Moreover, educational leaders are responsible for continuing learning, growing, and evolving as better

student-centered advocates every day that they serve at institutions. Exploring the lived experiences of Latina *madres* and their baccalaureate degree attainment journey was essential to understanding how we can do a better job from recruitment to retention and persistence to attainment. Higher education institutions engage with Latina/o students all the time. However, understanding how to develop practices that best serve Latina *madres*' different needs was imperative.

The first implication for practice is the importance of seeking to understand students' experiences. We serve diverse and unique student populations at our institutions, from traditional students to nontraditional students (ever-increasing), from different backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, genders, sexual identities, socioeconomic, geographic locations, and ways of knowing. Considering geographical, social, economic, ethnic, cultural, generational, and other factors can help to sensitize educators to serve students better. For example, as educators, researchers, and scholars, we have many tools to help better inform our institutions about whom we serve. Developing student focus groups, standing committees, or creating other spaces, such as groups convening to have coffee with leadership, faculty, or fellow students, to hear student voices, understand their needs, and answer questions about what the institution is doing well or can improve, is a good start. Another example is utilizing regular surveys, admission intakes, and quarterly follow-ups and engaging in exit interviews to understand students' stories, identities, interests, needs, and their *why*.

Developing programs that can help transition, support, or enhance student experiences can help retain and encourage student persistence. Higher education institutions need to help students understand their social capital and leverage it to succeed in higher education and beyond. Moreover, as Arbona and Nora (2007) have argued, true access to higher education cannot be defined simply as the enrollment of students in higher education institutions but rather their persistence in degree attainment.

The purpose of providing access to postsecondary education is to provide pathways to life opportunities. However, for many students, access alone is not enough to mitigate the challenges some students face while on the path to obtaining a degree. As indicated by this study, Latina *madres* faced challenges tied to family, culture, and gender norms that are exacerbated when they are coupled with institutions structured to serve traditional student populations in traditional ways. While institution policies and services do not change overnight, student support service, academic

schedules, and teaching pedagogies focused on supporting and engaging nontraditional students can be adopted to give Latina *madres* a sense of belonging. Doing so provides a sense of support, both in and outside the classroom.

The second implication for practice is exploring ways institutions can offer consistent and affordable childcare. Women in Latina/o families may face different challenges than Latino men, and interventions to improve Latinas' academic outcomes must be considered, especially if they are *madres.* In this case, student-parents, like Latina *madres*, rely on affordable, reliable childcare arrangements to manage the many demands of their time while pursuing a baccalaureate degree. For example, all ten Latina *madres* shared similar thoughts around childcare, time, energy, and financial burdens regarding their lived experiences. These Latina *madres* identified these sentiments as the bulk of their barriers and challenges. Childcare was a constant stressor for the Latina *madres.*

Moreover, what if institutions focused on not only childcare but also robust early childhood educational programs?

The third implication for practice is the need for support services. Academic recruiters, admissions, retention, and particularly Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) should find this study relevant to their missions, serving students, and their needs to attain baccalaureate degrees. There is a need to improve postsecondary education systemically to help Latina *madres* persist and explore support systems to ensure attainment. With increased attention and outreach to all students, the nation's postsecondary institutions can build on their legacy of providing educational opportunities to Latina *madres.* Regarding time sand energy, every participant also shared these two resources presented barriers and challenges. Every participant shared multiple examples where their time and energy were limited, taxed, pressed, or in deficit. In education, we can always apply what we learn about our students' lived experiences, how their experiences intersect with our plans for retention, and how those intersections play a part in our students' persistence and attainment.

Finally, many Latina *madres* pathways toward a degree began at a community college, and when considering the previous literature (Alexander et al., 2007; Fry, 2004; Sólorzano et al., 2005) regarding Latinas/os as overrepresented in community colleges, I offer one last implication for practice. Students report poor advisement, financial loss, loss of time and nontransferable credits, and other experiences when navigating from their two-year college experience to four-year institutions. It is essential for

practitioners at four-year institutions to proactively and constantly assist students, advising and informing them to see them persist from two-year institutions to four-year if they aspire to do so.

Research indicates (Fry, 2004) that many Latina/o students enrolled in community colleges only attend school part-time, delaying or prolonging their college education into their mid-20s and beyond. As such, three things institutions can do include (1) on the academic side, have clear articulation agreements, (2) on the student support services side, develop strong bridge programs, and (3) enforce stouter, consistent advising relationships with students. This would suggest that clearly, aligned articulation agreements will support Latina *madres* in degree attainment. As the cost of attending college increases and student debt concerns become more present in students' minds, the two-year to four-year pathway should be considered as both recruitment and retention strategies. We must practice intentional programs and agreements to develop strong pipelines to see students persist and attain the education levels they aspire to attain.

Personal Reflection

Perceived as a pivotal family anchor, mothers of Mexican origin often serve as the primary source of maintaining family values (Valdés, 1996). This is true of my *madre*; she is our *ancla*. Literature has shown Latina *madre*s' ways of knowing contributes to how Latina *madre*s reclaim their existence. I can affirm Latina *madres'* ways of knowing, like my own *madre's* ways of knowing, helped her reclaim her existence, and was important to her future generations. They [Latina *madres*] are the reasons some of us stand here.

I have thought long and hard about this research. For years, I have reflected on why this research matters. It was not until I heard the participants' stories that I was convinced this was the right research area for me. When I embarked on this research journey, it competed with life's barriers and challenges, but the participants' stories motivated me to move forward. This study has not only shed light on the journeys of other Latina *madres'* educational attainment journeys, it also has shed light on my own. It is my hope that this research would reveal something and expand my awareness surrounding my research interest. It has done that and so much more. It has made me stronger, wiser, more resilient, more passionate, and in love with the research, the literature, Xicanisma, and phenomenology. I am a learner still, and always will be.

Soy Una Latina Madre

When I started this study, I had no idea what the participants would share. I knew what the literature and theoretical framework argued, but I did not want previous work to imbue this project. I wanted the participants to feel free to share, reflect, and be heard. I never expected they would get so passionate about recounting their experiences or emotions. If I could summarize a sentiment that was felt throughout the interviews, it was that none of the *madres* really believed, one way or the other, *they just did it*. They just found a way to get to class, get their homework done, and pay tuition with money they did not have. Imagine constantly feeling pulled in multiple directions while trying to balance life as a college student and a *madre*. Keeping up with readings and devoting time to studying while also working to pay for childcare and tuition can often force choices that put both roles in question. Whether a student *madre* is missing a child's soccer game for a course or missing class because of a sick kid, these are all common struggles students who are *madres* faced daily. Student *madres* have very challenging roles to balance. The guilt of not being present as a *madre* with the constant student demand of papers, exams, and class expectations can leave student *madres* exhausted and at risk of dropping out. Latina *madres* reminded me of where I come from, where I've belonged. I think sometimes we can get lost. They did it for their children, something my *madre* still says, "*I did it, and so you have to do even better*." We know a mother's education level has a long-lasting effect on her children and goes beyond the hard facts of economics, academics, and health. While this research describes at length barriers and challenges, it also can be understood from it's outcome. I understand in its simplest form, as Marian Wright Edelman said, "You can't be what you can't see."

Xicanisma

I honor the diversity of Chicanas, Mexicans, Latinas, and Hispanic women while also recognizing the similarities in our lived experiences. Rooted in indigenous mestiza-based culture and the in-betweenness among language, borders (both geographical and symbolic), and the nepantla of being a woman of mixed ancestry who "straddles cultures, races, languages, nations, sexualities, and spiritualties" (Bernal, 1998, p. 561). I embrace the feminism that is relevant to and developed within "[my]

workplace, social gatherings, kitchens, bedrooms, and society in general" (Castillo, 1995, p. 11), and that represents "an uncompromising commitment to social justice rooted in a woman-centered indigenous past" (Ruiz, 1998). Anzaldúa (1987) encouraged women to "live in fronteras [without borders]/be a crossroads" (p. 195) between three cultures of relevance to Chicanas: the Indian, White, and Mexican cultures. I am a *Mestiza*, and Xicanisma extends my understanding of a rooted legacy of struggle and as a holder and a creator of knowledge. As the Chicana, best positioned to describe and define her own reality (Córdova, 1994), how educational research is conducted can significantly contribute to what and whose history, community, and knowledge are legitimated.

Findings

While the findings were a culmination of the research, this transcendental phenomenological research study, specifically the essence, is somewhat difficult to explain in its fullness, completeness, and thoroughness. A lot goes through your consciousness as you work with the data, live with it, immerse in it, and reflect on it. Then you tap into your intuition and consciousness. Husserl (1931) explained this in *Ideas*; however, *now* I truly understand. I understand it is allowing thoughts to form, the interpretations, and then the knowingness that essence shows itself. At the same time, the beingness and knowingness of the phenomenon are both tangible and not tangible. Something that resonated with me at the end of this research study was that as a phenomenologist, as Van Manen described, "…in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary of a phenomenological study. To summarize a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem itself is the result. The poem *is* the thing."

Source of Inspiration

I return to the original source of inspiration for this study: my own *madres'* lived experience. It was Mother's day, and she was 43 when she was awarded her baccalaureate degree. Her journey began in 1993 when she was 34 and a mother of 4 daughters between 5 and 14. Despite dropping out of high school, marrying, and starting a family at a young age, she aspired to attain a baccalaureate degree, *no matter what*. It took my *madre* 9 years to attain a baccalaureate degree from the time she began. Like

many of the participants, my *madre* never used the word fear, she believed education held the key to opportunities, and she wanted a better life. My *madre* altered the trajectory of my educational attainment path because of her own aspiration, persistence, and attainment. Mothers like her are not alone. Yet, little is known about their experiences.

I am connected to the research participants as a Latina, I witnessed my *madres'* baccalaureate degree attainment journey. My educational path is a testament to my *madres'* resolve, as will, my daughter's be to mine. I locate myself in relation to the participants of the research study as a member of the population, an insider and outsider, and co-researcher. The experiences of the Latina *madres*, from the loyalty to the *familia* to their culture's imposed gender norms, and the very real barriers and challenges they all shared resonated and impacted me; but it was their resolve that moved me. Their resolve to do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes. It was remarkable. There is no way to articulate what I witnessed, what I heard, what I felt when resolve showed up in our interviews, in the reflections. All I know is when a *madres* walks onto the stage on graduation day, she is not walking alone. She brings her children along and her children's children. As she reaches for her degree, she is also reaching for better employment, higher earnings, and greater stability for her *familia*. Latina *madres* aspiring and attaining baccalaureate degrees bring a counter-story of resilience as they defeat marginalized experiences in a patriarchal society. When Latina *madres* persist in their education, their children persist. I want my children to understand that I, too, believe that.

No one can take your education away.—Mi Madre

Conclusion

Over the years, there have been contributions, scholarly and otherwise, which have attributed various cultural values to Mexican Americans. Typically, these have been ascribed as being generic "Hispanic" values, with little or no attempt to differentiate among the various origins or subcultures or even delimit them by various geographical location. Latina *madres* come from diverse social, economic, and geographic backgrounds, making them all very different depending on their family heritage and national origin. In studying Latina *madres* who attained their baccalaureate degree in the Southwest Borderlands, a tri-state, binational border region, similarities were found in their lived experiences. The Latina

madres described their culture as patriarchal, valuing *familia*, predefined gender influences, roles and norms, and *respecto* and *educación* as ways of knowing and understanding. The participants defined a consciousness that acknowledged machismo, but navigated it's exclusion despite their own aspiration and their educational attainment goals. They based their navigation on gender norms influenced by their culture. The Latina *madres* rejected marginalization based on the values and standards of one's own culture, especially with regard to gender, ascribed behaviors, customs, and other cultural identities while emphasizing their tendencies toward interdependence and cooperation that transcended any gender, class, race, or geographic boundaries (Castillo, 1994).

The challenges faced by Latina *madres* on account of their gender cannot be understood in isolation from their culture, for the norms that dictate how women and men ought to think and behave is culturally determined and thus distinct from different cultural groups. Challenging stereotypes of Latinas across intersections and reclaiming the Latina *madres*' stories and existence helped explore the unique experiences of the Latina *madres* without ignoring the intersectionalities of gender, ethnicity, and culture that might help us better understand their educational experiences. Including how to better support them in their educational attainment aspirations. As such, this study posits that the understanding of Latina *madres*' lived experiences of their baccalaureate degree attainment journeys provides new knowledge and contributes to thought and approaches that can help inform persistence, retention, and completion (Voigt & Hundrieser, 2008), among other things.

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CHAPTER 10

Why Race Matters in Financial Literacy Education

Daniel Harris

Introduction

The financial promise of higher education has been eviscerated. Instead of graduating with expansive options for social and economic mobility, students are leaving college with crippling debt at alarming rates (Cunningham & Santiago, 2008; Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016). A large proportion of student loan debt directly results from a pernicious and predatory student loan process (Dundon, 2015). A process designed to promote college access and affordability in theory, but in practice, suppresses the financial mobility of graduates' future.

The student loan process is unequal. Black and Indigenous students are most likely to rely on student loans, and as a consequence, are subject to a disproportionate amount of debt burdens after college (Miller, 2017). Student loans, and the indebtedness associated with financing higher education, often lead to an intergenerational cycle of debt. Black and

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Indigenous college-seekers are most vulnerable to this trend (Cunningham & Santiago, 2008). Systemic and structural inequalities constrain the ability of these groups to build wealth (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013; Shapiro, 2017), access gainful employment (Gould & Wilson, 2020), and stave off debt associated with college costs (Hamilton & Darity, 2017).

Indeed, financing higher education is an existential crisis requiring immediate remedies. Higher education institutions have a direct responsibility to prepare students for the financial implications of their undergraduate experience and identify long-term strategies for financial health and well-being. Even inadvertently, ignoring this responsibility undermines the democratic ideals ostensibly inherent within these institutions. In this chapter, I will discuss the *need* and the *how* for a financial literacy course in the undergraduate curriculum. Included in this discussion is a set of recommendations these institutions ought to consider to advance this knowledge base among a diverse student body.

The Cost of 'Undergrad': A Crisis

The cost of earning a bachelor's degree has skyrocketed. The average price of earning a bachelor's degree at a public four-year institution in 1987 was $3190 (College Board, 2017). In 2017, college tuition was more than three times that amount ($15,160). During this same period, earnings stagnated, inequalities along racial lines persisted, and college affordability shrunk (Kirshstein, 2012). Black and lower-income students are disadvantaged by the growing lack of affordability of college education. These students typically derive from families who have fewer options to finance their education without relying on student loans (Delisle & Cooper, 2018).

In some instances, higher-priced institutions, which are typically well-resourced, are not accessible to Black and lower-income students. Price and not merely ability alone is the main restriction limiting their access. In place of higher-priced institutions, less-selective institutions and lower-cost options are often prescribed to these students despite their academic profile demonstrating readiness at more selective institutions (Dillon & Smith, 2013; Sander & Taylor, 2012). It is incumbent upon institutions of higher education to address the gaps in college affordability (Granville et al., 2019).

Indisputably, the global economy requires students to have at least a bachelor's degree (Snyder et al. 1991). Rising college costs, however, make this feat more challenging for degree-seekers. At a systems level,

rising costs at public four-year institutions have contributed to a growing proportion of the population priced out of higher education entirely. These students are often forced to enter the labor force with fewer job-specific resources, networks, and credentials to compete within a competitive labor marketplace (George-Jackson and Gast, 2015). Compared to degree earners, those who do not earn a degree often contend with lower wages, stagnated advancement, and fewer employment prospects (Snyder et al., 1991).

Rising college costs affect all students. Black and Indigenous students, however, are disproportionately impacted by a widening lack of affordability (Hamilton & Darity, 2017). The seemingly poor financial choices and decisions of Black students have been the routine focus of existing research (Andruska et al. 2014; Cude et al., 2006; Grodsky & Jones, 2007; Kezar & Yang, 2010; Markle, 2019). Scholars have challenged these claims and have identified how persistent inequalities impede their ability to amass wealth and afford college without relying on loans (Choy & Berker, 2003; Douglas-Gabriel, 2015; Hamilton & Darity, 2017). The ballooning costs students are responsible for have only exacerbated this issue, particularly for Black and lower-income students who are not insulated by wealth. Consequently, they are more likely to leave college (with or without a degree) with a higher debt burden crippling their economic mobility (Seamster and Charron-Chénier, 2017).

The nation's student loan debt issues extend beyond Black and Indigenous degree-seekers. In 2021, the student loan debt (including all degree-seekers) had topped more than 1.7 trillion dollars (Hanson, 2021). To place the sheer enormity of student loan debt in context with other consumer-based debt, student loan debt is the highest non-mortgage-based debt in the United States (Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2020). In sum, student loan debt has outpaced all other secured debts, including credit card (.79 trillion) and auto loan debt (1.42 trillion). There are at least two characteristics which distinguish student loan debt from other debt types. First, student loan debt is not asset-based debt. After paying the loan, the borrower is not entitled to any entity of equal market value in part or whole. Second, only recently has student loan debt been eligible for discharge through bankruptcy, but only in the rare case of "undue hardship" after ten years of the first loan payment is due (Durbin, 2021). These two characteristics make student loans particularly distressing since there are few options to offset student debt costs.

In 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) act provided immediate loan relief for all federal student loan borrowers. Before the CARES act of 2020, more than 43 million Americans held student loan debt, and 15% (or 9 million borrowers) were in default (Hanson, 2021). The default rate would have been even higher during the COVID-19 pandemic if the federal government had not paused principal and interest collections on federal student loans. While a universal cancellation of student loan debt has been hotly contested in political debates, many consumers are still awaiting legislative approval. In the meantime, private philanthropy has expanded debt cancellations to a subset of borrowers.

Still, more than 90% of student loan debt remains even with this recent attention to debt cancellation from public and private sectors. Student loan debt cripples college graduates' options to pursue wealth-enabling opportunities in real estate, the stock market, and entrepreneurship (Houle & Warner, 2017). Students with higher amounts of student loan debt are less likely to be in a position to take on higher-risk (and often more profitable) investments, readiness in case of health emergencies, and secure stable housing (Jackson & Reynolds, 2013). Student loan debt ironically infringes on what it was designed to protect, quality of life.

The cost of earning a bachelor's degree extends beyond the cost of enrollment. There are both professional and personal costs of earning a college degree. On the professional side, most undergraduate students pursuing a four-year degree forgo or delay other noble professional (perhaps more lucrative) options to focus on their education. Such a focus on education also leaves little room to pursue personal pursuits such as marriage, family planning, and other familial particulars. Consequently, college graduates are entering the workforce, starting families, and financially chartering their future later in their life course when compared to peers who do not seek a college degree (Schneider, 2009). For students who enter college, the financial stress associated with financing higher education exacerbates their health and wellness during college and after they graduate (Joo et al., 2008). Even worse, some students drop out of college before completing their degree and leave burdened with the weight of navigating a world in which a degree is touted as the path toward upward mobility, financial security, and overall wellness (Nguyen, 2012).

One of the primary drivers of inequality within higher education is college affordability. Affluent students are better positioned to rely on their wealth and not student loans to afford college than their lower-income

peers (Charles et al., 2007). Without the burdens of student loans, more affluent students enjoy unabated privileges to explore majors, careers, and investments that recycle and build their wealth for future generations after graduation. Less wealthy students are not protected by their wealth and are more susceptible to the tragedies associated with student loan indebtedness (Hamilton & Darity, 2017). Wealth distribution continues to reflect a racial stratification of US society (Shapiro, 2017). Whereas white families and their students are more likely to be wealthy, their Black and Indigenous peers are frequently experiencing higher concentrations of poverty.

Although conventional wisdom assumes whites earn their wealth through self-driven means, the reality is they benefit from systemic and structural advantages aimed at ensuring they amass and pass down their wealth at larger rates than Black and Indigenous families (Hamilton & Darity, 2017; Rothstein, 2017). At the same time whites' privileges and possessions are protected, and perverse policies and practices have continued to undermine the wealth-building opportunities for Black and Indigenous families (Harris, 1993; Oliver & Shapiro, 2013; Shapiro, 2017).

Higher education institutions have been complicit, if not explicit, in their role in widening wealth inequalities and exacerbating college affordability (Harris, 2021). Lower-income students, and mainly Black and Indigenous degree-seekers, have fewer options to pay for college expenses than their more affluent peers (Hamilton & Darity, 2017). As more students from these backgrounds seek higher education, an increasing percentage of students rely on student loans to fund their education. This is a problem higher education institutions have created and are best positioned to solve. One approach to the solution involves adopting a more equitable approach to college prices and financing (Davis et al., 2020). Another approach, which this chapter focuses on, includes providing students with the educational foundation they need to navigate the demands of higher education and their financial responsibilities after graduation.

Financial Education: Where Did It Go?

Financial education programs at four-year universities are sparse. In 2013, only 11% of four-year colleges had a financial literacy course in the undergraduate curriculum (Crain, 2013). Of those with a financial literacy course, most of the courses were offered as an elective. Nearly ten years later, the total percentage of four-year institutions with a financial literacy

course has remained virtually unchanged. The lack of investment in financial literacy programs in an era of increasing challenges to college affordability is troubling and, perhaps, intentional.

Today, students seeking a four-year degree borrow at higher rates and larger amounts for a bachelor's degree (Hanson, 2021). Black and Indigenous, often lower-income students, are disproportionately impacted by tuition increases. The challenges they face are double-barreled. Upon entry, they have less access to wealth-building avenues to guard against the need for loans (Hamilton & Darity, 2017; Shapiro, 2017). Even after they graduate, they are responsible for more debt while enduring more prolonged and more significant bouts of unemployment and underemployment than their similarly credentialed white counterparts (Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016). In some instances, Black and Indigenous students have been excluded from the entire financial vastness of American society and are further hampered by a higher education system refusing to include financial literacy in the general education curriculum.

The dearth of financial literacy courses on college campuses undermines the democratic ideals of higher education. Democratic ideals of higher education are steeped in the belief the public college or university is designed for the unique purpose of preparing a citizenry with the democratic values, virtues, and skills necessary to advance a democratic society. The public university is considered a public good (Calhoun, 2006). In this view, the public university is intended to be beneficial for the greater good of society. On the contrary, a private good is designed to be for the benefit of an individual or private party.

Most, if not all, social institutions (such as libraries, churches, and government agencies) are considered public goods (Strayhorn, 2005). The public university, however, is believed to be intentionally designed for three main democratic functions: (1) the social reproduction of democratic values, (2) sustained economic development, and (3) the generation of new knowledge. Aligned with these democratic functions, graduates are encouraged to participate in democratic processes, public dialogue, and social justice in a multicultural and pluralistic society.

In this chapter, I take the view that an undergraduate curriculum bereft of financial literacy is antithetical to the democratic aims of higher education. Without the proper financial training, graduates are not well-equipped to navigate the financial demands of college and participate in the global economy at full scale. Black and Indigenous students who are likely to derive from lower-income families are routinely underserved by public four-year institutions and are relegated to a collective,

subordinate socioeconomic position that they are ill-equipped to disrupt (Davis et al., 2020).

College Students Lack Financial Literacy

According to more than two decades of research on college students' financial literacy, the majority of students attending four-year institutions lack financial literacy (Avard et al., 2005; Danes & Hira, 1987; Mandell & Hanson, 2009). The lack of financial literacy has both academic and overall productivity implications (Britt et al., 2017). Scholars argue a lack of financial literacy is associated with lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates (Artavanis & Karra, 2020; Chen & DesJardins, 2010). Students with fewer financial literacy skills are also more likely to have higher debt burdens and default rates even after leaving college (Jackson & Reynolds, 2013).

Improving financial literacy among the masses is a matter of national importance. At the time of this writing—Spring 2022—the United States, similar to the global economy, is facing an unprecedented financial crisis exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic. National and state leaders, big and small business owners, and consumers alike must learn to adapt to ever-changing health, economic, and environmental issues plaguing society. The expectation must be students graduating with a four-year degree are adequately prepared for the financial pursuits and challenges at all levels of society.

Scholars have found distinct patterns in the financial literacy of college students. Incoming Black and Indigenous college students fare the worst on financial literacy assessments (Chen and Volpe, 2002; Murphy, 2005). In contrast, white students tend to perform better on financial literacy assessments, even though they also lack financial literacy overall. As argued previously (Harris, 2021), the financial literacy assessments are primarily based on white middle-class ideas of financial topics and concepts (many of which are systematically out of reach for Black and lower-income consumers). Devoid of financial literacy, lopsided wealth accumulation will persist in the United States (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013; Shapiro, 2017).

Trends in financial literacy between gender groups are as anticipated. Men, compared to women, are believed to have more financial literacy (Chen & Volpe, 2002; Edwards et al., 2007). The amount of financial literacy men have compared to women, however, is largely due to the gendered expectations related to money and finance. Men typically earn more money, are held to higher financial standards, and are expected to be

financially independent compared to women (Edwards et al., 2007). Despite these differences, financial literacy assessments and theories underlying existing financial literacy studies have remained race and gender-neutral. Consequently, the types of financial literacy college students need in college informed by race and gender epistemologies are limited in existing bodies of research on financial literacy education.

Undergraduate students must be exposed to a financial literacy education designed to help them navigate the financial demands of college and prepare them for their post-college pursuits (Harris, 2021). In the interest of reducing students' exposure to debt, and thus the national student loan debt, undergraduate students should be required to enroll in a financial literacy course as part of the general education program. Auxiliary services and student affairs offices on college campuses focused on providing financial support (i.e., financial aid offices, financial wellness centers, financial institutions) are essential to students' financial literacy development, but these offices often fall short of providing the types of exposure to financial literacy necessary for student success (Eichelberger et al. 2020)

I outline two main issues within an auxiliary model for financial education at the undergraduate level. First, not all students use these resources. Students who use these services likely do so out of necessity (Lim et al., 2014). Students who rely on financial aid, for example, are likely to seek out the resources available at financial aid centers on campus (Lim et al., 2014). Their counterparts who do not rely on financial aid are not likely to use the center's resources. Since auxiliary services are dependent on student action to pursue these resources, not all students are served. The second issue with relying on auxiliary resources for financial literacy support among undergraduate students is based on their set of offerings. Financial resource centers on college campuses are not designed to be a part of the formal education of students. Support staff tend to serve the immediate need of students, which is often transactional. The understanding of financial literacy, including the historical, contemporary, and theoretical underpinnings, is often missing in auxiliary financial support on college campuses.

Faculty are uniquely positioned to provide the scaffold and learning environment needed to develop students' financial literacy (Eades et al., 2012). I outline three main reasons. First, faculty—particularly tenure-track professors—are less disrupted by employment changes than their contract-based counterparts (Adams, 2006). With a dedicated faculty base, students are more likely to be exposed to financial literacy that is

relevant and timely to society's current and future needs. Second, unlike their contract-based counterparts, faculty are more likely to engage in original and empirical research. In this sense, faculty members studying financial literacy and how it interacts with other segments of society would advance what we know about this topic and perhaps expand opportunities for a diverse student body to engage in discoveries related to financial literacy. Students also benefit from the financial networks faculty develop as they seek financial or investment information (Chung & Park, 2014). Lastly, faculty compared to staff are better positioned to expose students to the historical and contemporary intersections of financial literacy. Since faculty are more likely to receive training in curriculum development (Echols et al., 2018) and can require students' attendance, they are more likely to expose students to the ways different demographic groups experience and practice financial literacy in a capitalistic society.

With a dedicated faculty base, students are more likely to be exposed to financial literacy that is relevant and timely to society's current and future needs. Second, unlike their staff peers, faculty are more likely to engage in original and empirical research. In this sense, faculty members studying financial literacy and how it interacts with other segments of society would advance what we know about this topic and perhaps expand opportunities for a diverse student body to engage in discoveries related to financial literacy. Lastly, faculty compared to staff are better positioned to expose students to the historical and contemporary intersections of financial literacy. Since faculty are more practiced in curriculum development, and can require students' attendance, they are more likely to expose students to the ways different demographic groups experience and practice financial literacy in a capitalistic society.

Recent research conducted by this author showed financial literacy is multifaceted (Harris, 2021). How traditional financial literacy is cultivated, understood, and practiced in an individual and group setting is rooted in racial injustice, inequality, and struggle. Undergraduate students must learn and unlearn the many ways financial literacy can benefit and impede students' social and economic growth during and after college. A weakened and fragile economy demands students graduate with a financial literacy that can promote financial growth and well-being at the personal and community level for all students.

Critically Examining Financial Literacy

The inclusion of financial literacy in the core undergraduate curriculum is critical to the democratic aims of higher education. Most courses engaging in financial literacy are available to students pursuing business majors (Beierlein & Neverett, 2013). However, less than 20% of undergraduate students study business (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). In essence, a critical mass of undergraduate students matriculate through K-16 without being exposed to financial literacy in a formal educational setting. With a large proportion of these students forced to rely on student loans to finance their education, four-year colleges and universities must take responsibility for developing students' financial acumen. To this end, I argue all undergraduate students should be required to pass at least one financial literacy course to unravel the many facets and dimensions of financial literacy in a global society.

Using critical race theory as a guide, faculty should identify and challenge how race, gender, class, and other intersections of identity influence the types of financial literacy students develop and need to achieve their academic and lifelong pursuits. Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the late 1980s from legal scholarship designed to address racial injustice in the legal system. Legal scholars using CRT have applied several constructs that illuminate ways structures and systems enable racial inequality, particularly along the Black-white racial paradigm. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) note at least eight such constructs of CRT: (a) interest convergence, (b) whiteness as property, (c), intersectionality, (d) critique of liberalism and colorblindness, (e) racial realism, (f) expansive notions of equity, (g) counternarratives, and (h) social change. Expansions to CRT have demonstrated the utility of these constructs across the racialized experiences of women, Latinas/os, Native Americans, and Asian Americans inside and outside of legal settings.

CRT has demonstrated the need for a pedagogical and curricular structure that accounts for the role race and racism play in the United States. Similar to the democratic ideals of higher education, the purpose of CRT is to eliminate all forms of subordination in education and society. Toward this end, there are at least five tenets of CRT scholars employ to advance the pedagogical and curricular goals of education: (1) intersectionality of race and racism with gender, class, and sexuality; (2) challenge to dominant ideologies; (3) commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of

experiential knowledge; and (5) utilization of interdisciplinary approaches (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

While CRT has been met with great resistance by right-wing politicians, voters, and activists attempting to stymie racial progress, the need for CRT in advancing the financial literacy curriculum is certain. The economy is weakened on all sides by an insurmountable debt burden crippling progress, opportunities, and hope at the individual, group, and community levels. The typical "banking method" of education, where students acquire knowledge through deposits and society withdraws that knowledge from students to reproduce itself, is antiquated and unproductive to closing the debt ceiling (Yosso, 2002). The reliance on traditional methods of educating students on financial literacy has not worked. All students, particularly those who are disproportionately exposed to student loan debt, require an education that analyzes the raced and gendered epistemologies of financial literacy. From a critical race perspective, intersections of race are not merely a description of differences but represent the transmission of power, politics, and oppression. When CRT is applied to curriculum development, students can learn about these dynamics and are empowered to challenge traditional ideologies.

CRT curriculum is not new. Scholars have articulated the way CRT can be used to design the structures, processes, and discourses of a college course (Yosso, 2002). The traditional curriculum in comparison tends to "distort, omit, and stereotype" Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color instead of fully including these perspectives. Instead of the traditional approach that has only reproduced typical outcomes along racial lines, a critical race framework for designing the financial literacy curriculum is needed to unravel how financial literacy is racialized in society.

Methods

Critical approaches to financial literacy curriculum development in higher education are sparse. The bulk of studies exploring college student financial literacy focus on assessing students' financial literacy using formative and summative instruments. Only a select few studies have examined students' perceptions of their financial literacy relative to their background and current experiences as college students (Harris, 2021). The data informing this chapter fills the gap in the literature.

Aligned with CRT, this chapter views students as experts of their own experience in navigating the financial demands of undergraduate education. The financial demands of undergrad education are unique to the current population of college students who contend with the unprecedented costs of college with few options to avoid student loans and associated indebtedness. Data for this chapter is provided by the experiences of 12 first- and second-year Black students attending a financial literacy course at one large public university in the Pacific Northwest, which focused on race and gender epistemologies of financial literacy.

Black students are relegated to the lower rungs of society's not as a matter of ability or knowledge but as a function of a liberal democracy bent on racial dissonance (Bell, 1992). Their perspectives are critical in the pursuit of understanding the complexity of college affordability and student loan indebtedness. Twelve first- and second-year Black students were selected based on literature that suggests college students' exposure to financial literacy programming earlier in their college career has a considerable impact on student success (Xiao et al., 2014). The 12 students represented just under half of all students attending the financial literacy course. Their participation in the study had no bearing on their grades or standing in the class.

Of the participants, the majority identified as Black women. Thus, the narratives informing this chapter largely reflect the experiences of Black women college students enrolled in a financial literacy course. About half of the participants self-reported their parents' socioeconomic status as low-income. The other half indicated they came from middle-class backgrounds. None of the participants considered their parents' socioeconomic status as upper-class. All participants were not business majors.

The financial literacy course was offered to all first- and second-year students, regardless of major. To gauge the impact of the course on their financial literacy, the participants informing this chapter participated in one-on-one interviews at the end of the 12-week course. There were three parts to each interview. The first part of the interview focused on participants' financial literacy background before entering the course. In the second part of the interview, participants shared stories and experiences with financial literacy as current college students. In the last part of the interview, participants shared at least one aspect of their financial literacy that was developed by the course.

The data was analyzed using a CRT lens to examine how the financial literacy course utilized race-centered techniques in the design and

implementation of the content. Identity markers such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status were paired with other relevant codes which emerged from the data. Examples of relevant codes include curriculum design, course content, course assignments, activities, and course environments. These coding mechanisms helped identify how domains of power, privilege, and oppression influence participants' perspectives of financial literacy as a result of the course. The findings included in this chapter are not generalizable to the broader undergraduate population at large. Still, the data provide evidence that financial literacy courses support student success for undergraduates (Eichelberger et al., 2020). Additional research is needed to fully unpack the value of a financial literacy course for all students.

Findings

The findings from the data informing this chapter are structured around three main themes: (1) *countering white normativity in financial literacy*, (2) *budgeting, saving, and preparing for the future is student success*, and (3) *buying Black and addressing inequality*. In each theme, I will discuss the *need for* and *how* to develop a financial literacy course in the undergraduate curriculum. Included in this discussion is a set of recommendations of *what can be* and what institutions should consider to advance this knowledge among a diverse student body.

Countering White Normativity

Most of the discussion on financial literacy education is centered on what students should know and understand about financial topics. Historically, financial topics have been believed to be race-neutral. Existing research has challenged this claim and has argued that financial literacy is often dependent on students' racial background (Hamilton & Darity, 2017; Miller, 2010). Findings presented in this chapter confirm this claim and suggest financial education programs should provide opportunities for students to make sense of how their own racial background informs how they view financial literacy in a classroom setting. Joy, a first-year Black woman, discussed her experience with financial literacy:

> My understanding of financial literacy came from my upbringing … I came from a single-parent household. And so, watching my mom, you know, go

> paycheck to paycheck … scrambling … and go to those payday advance places kind of sucks. Not seeing my mom being able to save played into [how I assessed] my financial literacy.

Growing up, Joy watched her mom struggle financially as a working, single parent. Sometimes Joy's mom had to rely on payday advance loans to cover costs when money was short. Watching her mom scramble to make ends meet was an indication to Joy her mom lacked financial literacy. While it may be true her mom did lack financial literacy, Joy's assessment of her mom's financial literacy was solely based on the financial behaviors she observed from her mom.

Many other participants assessed their parent's financial literacy based on the financial behaviors they witnessed. For example, Zoe, a first-year student, shared:

> I remember, growing up, my mom couldn't save money 'cause she had to pay for bills, she had to pay for gas, [and] she had to pay [for] car insurance. So, it was like, sometimes it's tough for people to save money because they don't make enough money to save money.

Similar to Joy, Zoe also shared how she watched her mom, a single parent, live from paycheck to paycheck. It was often the case for Zoe's mom that the bills exceeded how much she earned. Indeed Zoe's view of her mom's inability to save influenced how she assessed her mom's financial literacy. Aligned with the conventional wisdom on financial literacy, these examples underscore the importance of financial literacy education, but this chapter takes a divergent view as to why.

Undergraduate students like Joy and Zoe should be required to take a financial literacy course not because they are born into lower-income families but because the types of financial literacies that are needed to traverse the challenges of lower-income communities are different than their more affluent counterparts. These types of literacies need to be taught, discussed, and contextualized for all students. Examples from Tiffany and Carter demonstrate the importance of understanding financial literacy within a racialized context. Tiffany, a second-year student, offered:

> For Black people, that as a whole, it's not necessarily our fault, but as a whole, [our] experience[s] with money [are] a lot different, right? So [our] experiences with budgeting it, how to use it, and how to even get it right

> [are] a lot different from somebody else's. Right? So, there's kind of that separation. I think, often, it's not even just financial literacy; there's often a separation. Black people are treated as different, second-class citizens if you will. So, I think that's where the distinction lies.

For Tiffany, the course helped her contextualize why lower-income communities and Black families, in particular, have different experiences with money management. Tiffany learned from the course Black people are treated as second-class citizens, which influences the types of financial behaviors they present. However, not all students in the course needed the course to arrive at this distinction. Before entering the course, Carter was one student who knew Black people are treated differently systemically:

> I've always known, historically, [that] Black people have been systematically disadvantaged in this country. But going into finances and seeing how general people of color are disadvantaged financially through different methods. The one that stood out to me was the way [that] there are certain taxes for specific areas that can just be a little bit harsher depending on if there's like oil in the ground and whatnot.

Carter points out how Black communities are disadvantaged systemically. He underscored one example of racialized segregation and the differences in tax structures levied in these areas during our one-on-one conversation. Although Carter knew this before the course, it was obvious his knowledge and experience contributed to the course discussions impacting all students enrolled. Carter was able to share these perspectives during in-class discussions and influence the perspectives of his peers.

What Can Be

Financial literacy education for undergraduate students should expose students to the historical and contemporary racial implications of local, state, and federal programs. These implications explain why differences in financial literacy exist along racial lines. With this exposure to historical and contemporary racial implications of financial literacy, students should engage in classroom discussions to inform their understanding of financial literacy. In-class discussions can focus on race and gender epistemologies of financial literacy and empower undergraduates to challenge white normative assumptions of financial behaviors and narratives.

Budgeting, Saving, and Preparing for the Future Is Student Success

Approaching financial literacy education programs as a knowledge base alone is not sufficient to ensure students are successful in their academic and postgraduate pursuits. Undergraduate students must be exposed to the financial behaviors and attitudes needed to succeed in higher education and beyond. The ability to budget, save, and prepare for the future is among the top priorities for undergraduate students. These financial-based topics are critical for student success. Carter shared:

> I just really came to that realization fairly recently only because of the financial literacy course. In the course, we had to do a budgeting project, and we tracked our [overall] expenses and made certain budgets for ourselves. And when I was able to actually implement that budget, I was amazed by how much more financially stable I felt with my own finances. Also, [with] how much money I was able to save. Also, I just felt way less stressed [financially] … It opened my eyes to see how just cutting back by taking, you know, a couple of dollars away can overall add up and allow me to pay for something even bigger in the future. The power of budgeting. That was super, super big for me this year.

As pointed out earlier, Carter has had more exposure to financial literacy than his peers, but he too often felt stressed about his financial situation as a middle-income undergraduate. Enrollment in the financial literacy course helped to reduce his stress and empower him to achieve his financial goals. One of the main topics discussed in the financial literacy course that aided his development was budgeting. Carter recalls how the budgeting project required he track his expenses, which illuminated the frivolous spending habits he had. By identifying these defeating financial habits, he was able to implement a budget that put him on a track to success.

Similar to Carter, Chelsea also credited the financial literacy course for putting her on a track to save money and prepare for her future post-academic journey. When asked about her experience in the financial literacy course, she said:

> I learned a lot when I went to that financial literacy course. It helped me to save money for things that are coming up. So, if I have to pay for housing, then I'll save up a little bit to help my mom, or I will have money [for] things [that] are going to come up. Like, I wanted to study abroad. So, I'm going to save for that.

There are many costs undergraduate students are responsible for, often for the first time. As Chelsea alludes to, undergraduate students are not always financially prepared to manage these costs. For Chelsea, though, because she enrolled in a financial literacy course she was able to learn how to anticipate these costs and manage her money more astutely. As a testament to her time in the course, she started to identify extracurricular learning experiences—a study abroad program—she would not have considered otherwise.

What Can Be: Financial literacy education programs for undergraduate students should focus on experiential learning grounded in key financial principles. Budgeting, saving, and other tools to prepare for the future are the kinds of topics undergraduates need to learn about in a financial literacy course. These learning experiences help students strategize for their academic and postgraduation goals. Without a financial plan, students may be more vulnerable to the type of financial stress that impedes their academic success. Black and Indigenous students are most vulnerable to these proclivities due to systematic and structural inequality.

Buying Black and Addressing Inequalities

A financial literacy curriculum for an undergraduate audience should expand beyond personal finance topics and concepts. Undergraduate students should be exposed to identifying and addressing inequalities in financial literacy. As part of the solutions, college graduates—who are the future leaders at the local, state, and national levels—investing in and protecting Black community wealth is essential to the democratic aims of higher education. For instance, Chelsea mentioned how important this topic was to how she saw her role in addressing inequalities in financial literacy.

> Black people specifically make so many things popular and are really influential culturally. What [Black people] spend our money on is really important, especially if we circulate our money throughout the Black community, as opposed to everywhere else. I think we could build a stronger community that way. Just becoming aware of our finances and being able to teach that to our children is really important.

Chelsea credits the financial literacy course for building her financial awareness. More specifically, the financial literacy course helped her track where she spends her money and the implications of her spending habits on both personal wealth development and wealth development in the

Black community. In her one-on-one interview, she shared how enrollment in the financial literacy course empowered her to develop a sense of community wealth. The ability to track her spending habits helped her identify how she could build Black wealth by making small tweaks in her financial choices.

Building a sense of community wealth is an important topic for the participants informing this chapter. For example, Jupiter shared:

> Learning about buying Black kinda gave me some confidence with [my financial literacy]. My dad talked to me about how to [invest in Black communities]. The financial literacy class also said it was necessary to do that because you need to see your community's growth. You want to build each other up.

Learning about ways students can intentionally spend their money in Black businesses empowers participants like Jupiter to have confidence that their financial decisions matter. For Jupiter, investing in Black communities and spending money at Black businesses was not a foreign concept. Instead, the course reinforced her belief community wealth is important.

What Can Be: Undergraduate students should be exposed to identifying and addressing economic inequalities in a financial literacy course. These exposures help students hone their own financial literacy while also developing the tools and strategies needed to promote equity, advancement, and democracy in society at large.

Implications

At a time when college costs have increased, state and federal aid for public institutions have not kept pace (Franke & Purdy, 2012), leaving many college degree-seekers vulnerable to financial debt at unprecedented levels. Scholars tracking borrowing patterns have found stark differences along racial lines. Black students compared to their white peers are more likely to rely on student loans to finance their education (Cunningham & Santiago, 2008), and borrow more than their white peers for the same degree (Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer, 2009), while holding substantially more debt whether or not they earn their degree (Addo et al., 2016). The lack of financial literacy among this group has been systematically used to

disparage the seemingly poor financial choices of Black students, and for the rise in student loan debt and default rates (Hamilton & Darity, 2017).

Using Critical Race Theory as a framework, this chapter reframed the issue facing Black and lower-income borrowers and seeks to hold institutions accountable for preparing graduates with the tools needed to advance the democratic ideals of society. In this chapter, I argue that four-year colleges and universities ought to prepare undergraduates with the financial knowledge, experiences, and opportunities to grow socially and economically. At the college level, this must be done by centering the intersections of race in curriculum development, content design, and class assignments. This recommendation represents a departure from existing discussions on financial literacy in the undergraduate curriculum.

Much of the existing literature related to financial literacy has sought to address gaps in students' financial acumen in a race-neutral or colorblind way. As a result, discussions on racial inequality are missing, and white middle-class ideals of finances are perpetuated. Findings from this chapter provide evidence of the utility of examining financial literacy education through an intersectional lens. Participants informing this chapter were students enrolled in a financial literacy course. The findings suggest they often assessed the financial literacy of others and themselves through the lens of white middle-class ideals often without an understanding of the systemic challenges that reify inequalities along racial lines. For example, when assessing the financial literacy of their parents, participants often detailed how little their parents were able to save and attributed their parents' lack of savings to a lack of financial literacy. Blacks typically have a higher savings rate than whites (after controlling for household income) but have fewer opportunities to utilize their savings to traverse the rising costs of ongoing expenses (Gittleman & Wolff, 2004).

In sum, the findings from this chapter support existing calls for financial literacy education (Lee & Mueller, 2014; Kezar & Yang, 2010), particularly for incoming students (Xiao et al., 2014). First- and second-year students often enter higher education with lower levels of financial literacy than what is needed to navigate the financial demands of higher education (Mandell & Hanson, 2009). While research is mixed on the efficacy of existing financial literacy supports on college campuses (Lee & Mueller, 2014; Willis, 2008), findings included in this chapter articulate the types of learning experiences students need to promote student success during their undergraduate education. Specifically, college students should have

the opportunity to engage in experiential learning opportunities that help students budget, save, and plan for their future endeavors.

Financial planning is not a skill set higher education institutions have traditionally focused on. At most four-year higher education institutions, only business majors are required to take a personal finance or financial literacy course class (Beierlein and Neverett, 2013). As a result, a critical mass of students is likely to graduate from undergrad and not have the opportunity to develop the financial knowledge they need to pursue their aspirations beyond college. As fragile as today's democracy is, higher education institutions must require all students to take a financial literacy course as part of their undergraduate training.

Further, as part of a financial literacy course, undergraduate students should be exposed to race and gender epistemologies of finance and help students identify solutions to systemic inequalities. Findings from this chapter support the claim Black communities are disproportionately impacted by systemic and structural inequalities, which impedes wealth accumulation and stagnates economic growth overall (Hamilton & Darity, 2017; Oliver & Shapiro, 2013; Shapiro, 2017). By engaging in these topics in a financial literacy course, students have the opportunity to reimagine the possibilities of a community wealth that is equitable and sustainable, disrupting the symbiosis of deep-seated racism and liberal democracy (Bell, 1992). After all, college graduates are slated to be the future leaders at all levels of society and need to be equipped with the skill set to pursue financial equity.

Conclusion

The promise of an accessible education is becoming increasingly fleeting. Increasing college costs have outpaced inflation, the earnings of the average middle-class family, and the wealth of most lower-income borrowers (Hamilton & Darity, 2017; Hanson, 2021; Shapiro, 2017). Despite the strain students and their families are experiencing in affording a quality education, cost increases for college persist. At a systems level, the increased costs and reduced aid have ensnared many degree-seekers into a cycle of debt, default, and defeat even after graduation. Public four-year institutions have a responsibility to thwart this cycle in the pursuit of a more democratic and equitable society.

Inherent in the responsibility of these institutions is to prepare students with the skills they need to advance democracy. Financial literacy is one set

of knowledge that is often overlooked in the undergraduate curriculum. Part of the omission of a financial literacy education has been steeped in common misconceptions about what financial literacy is and how to develop it in a classroom setting. Conventional wisdom has treated financial literacy as race-neutral, ignoring the historical and contemporary ways financial literacy intersects with race and gender. Evidence from this chapter underscores the importance of financial literacy and offers key ways a financial literacy curriculum can promote student success, reduce student stress, and address systemic issues with regard to wealth and income inequality. With the knowledge and tools to achieve their goals, graduates will be better equipped to succeed, close the wealth gap, and advance themselves and their communities economically.

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CHAPTER 11

Philanthropic Funding and the Future of HBCUs

Felix Kumah-Abiwu

Introduction

The distinctive role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in providing opportunities for higher education for Black Americans not only make these institutions unique in America, but the role HBCUs have played in the upward mobility of African Americans cannot be overstated (Redd, 1998; Gasman, 2013; Kumah-Abiwu, 2021). While HBCUs were established to educate Black citizens at a time when they were denied entry into mainstream higher education institutions, these institutions have admitted and continue to admit students from other races and ethnicities, to the extent that about 24 percent of students currently enrolled in HBCUs are non-Black students (Gasman, 2013; NCES, 2020). Some notable public/private HBCUs are Florida A&M University; Howard University in Washington, D.C.; Morehouse College

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in Atlanta, Georgia; and Xavier University in Louisiana, among others (Brown, 2013).

Notwithstanding the accomplishments of HBCUs in providing access to higher education for Black Americans, these institutions continue to face challenges such as recruitment/retention of students, especially Black males (Brooms, 2017, 2021; Fletcher & Moore 2021; Kumah-Abiwu, 2019, 2020) and the growing concern of the dominance of Eurocentric ideas/ethos in the matters of HBCUs (Allen et al., 2007; Albritton, 2012; Kumah-Abiwu, 2021). More importantly, the lack of funding for these institutions represents one of the major challenges confronting them (Gasman, 2013). In the midst of these challenges came the widespread mass protests that swept across America in the summer of 2020 following the murder of George Floyd. The protests galvanized public awareness of the longstanding racial discrimination/injustice facing Black Americans (Alexander, 2020). The 2020 mass protests led to what could be described as a racial awakening in America. It also led to record-breaking donations from philanthropists and major corporations to social and economic organizations and educational institutions in Black communities across the country. Described by some observers as the "George Floyd Inspired Donations," some HBCUs received huge donations and have continued to receive these record-breaking donations from philanthropists and corporations since 2020 (Saul, 2021; Gasman et al., 2021).

For example, Netflix CEO donated about $120 million to the United Negro College Fund, Spelman College, and Morehouse College in June 2020 (Saul, 2021). Other tech giants such as Google and TikTok gave a combined amount of $60 million to these institutions (Saul, 2021; Goldmacher, 2020). In addition to these donations to HBCUs from tech giants and corporations, the most recognizable donations came from MacKenzie Scott, ex-wife of Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos. She donated about $560 million to 23 public and private HBCUs in 2020 alone (Gasman et al., 2021; Adedoyin, 2021). The details of these donations and their implications for HBCUs are discussed later in the chapter. The aspirational aspect (*what can be*) of these donations is the possibility of greater funding for HBCUs and the opportunity it provides for them to better serve their students.

Two important questions of interest to explore are: First, what explains the rationale for these record-breaking donations? Second, what do the record-breaking donations mean for the future of HBCUs? In other words, this chapter examines the rationale for these donations and "what

can be" for the future of HBCUs in terms of how these donations can be effectively utilized. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an overview of the historical evolution of HBCUs with a focus on their funding landscape. The second section situates the discussion within the context of the widespread mass protests that swept across America in the summer of 2020 following the death of George Floyd. The final section discusses the novel or new trends/features in philanthropic funding as revealed in the donations from MacKenzie Scott, ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, to HBCUs (Gasman et al., 2021).

Funding Trends of HBCUs

To understand the funding trends of HBCUs, it is vital to review a brief history of these institutions. As earlier noted, HBCUs are higher educational institutions of learning in the United States with the purpose of providing education to African Americans (Redd, 1998; Allen et al., 2007). According to Gasman (2013), HBCUs are the only institutions in the United States established solely to educate Black citizens given the centuries of their denial to education during slavery. Even after slavery, Jim Crow laws continued to deny access to quality education for African Americans (Redd, 1998; Gasman, 2013). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2022), there are 101 HBCUs located in 19 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Virgin Islands, as of 2020. Out of these, 52 are public institutions and 49 are private or nonprofit institutions (NCES, 2022). It is vital to reiterate the point that HBCUs were solely established to educate Black students, but these institutions have been enrolling non-Black students for decades. As of 2020, as earlier noted, non-Black students represent about 24 percent of the student enrollment at HBCUs as compared to 15 percent in 1976 (NCES, 2022).

One of the fundamental elements in the evolutionary process of these institutions is what Albritton (2012) describes as the funding question or dilemma facing HBCUs. This funding question is important from two viewpoints. First, the dilemma surrounding the discourse on the origins debate of HBCUs and their funding issues. Second, the question on the funding landscape of these institutions (Albritton, 2012). For many scholars, the central role played by philanthropists and religious organizations from the northern parts of the United States in their support for the establishment of these institutions can hardly be overlooked (Palmer & Gasman,

2008; Gasman & Tudico, 2008). At the same time, the question of funding/control of these institutions has not disappeared from scholarly attention. The puzzle of interest becomes: Why is the funding/control argument so essential to the discourse on HBCUs? This is where it becomes necessary to explore the history of the funding landscape of these institutions. To do this, we discuss funding sources from the standpoint of the origins or initial funding debates and the rationale for the ongoing support of these institutions.

The initial funders of HBCUs were religious denominations, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African American Episcopal Zion Church, and the American Baptist Home Mission Society (Redd, 1998; Albritton, 2012; Kumah-Abiwu, 2021). While acknowledging some support from white missionary organizations in the establishment of these institutions, Albritton (2012) argues that the purpose of some of these funding organizations was to help educate Black citizens to become a "class of morally upright citizens who knew how to live among white society" (p. 314). Cantey et al. (2013) have expressed similar ideas on the funding question using the Hampton Institute, which was founded in 1868, is a case in point. For Allen and colleagues, the funding from white missionaries and philanthropists helped most of the early HBCUs keep their doors open. At the same time, these funding organizations had a "great deal of control over the curriculum and educational goals associated with attending an HBCU" (p. 267).

Marybeth Gasman's work on funding approaches for HBCUs in the post-establishment era provides further insights into the changing trends of funding for these institutions (Gasman, 2010). In her work, entitled "Comprehensive Funding Approaches for Historically Black Colleges and Universities," Gasman (2010) argues that HBCUs do not only have a proven track record of providing higher education opportunities for African Americans, especially students from low-income backgrounds, but given the country's changing demographics in the United States and resulting in a majority of minorities, it is vital that HBCUs are well-positioned with adequate resources to flourish. The fundamental question is: How can HBCUs lead in the upcoming new era of a majority of minorities country, as Gasman (2010) has suggested, without adequate funding? This is where the relevance of equal and consistent funding from the federal, state, and private sources becomes crucial to creating strong and viable HBCUs. We draw on Gasman's (2010) ideas to examine the

funding trajectory of HBCUs from the federal and state governments as well as private sources.

In describing the federal funding landscape of HBCUs, Gasman (2010) is of the view that the Freedmen's Bureau was the first federal investment in HBCUs, but this approach was neither systemic nor reliable. As a result, the Higher Education Act of 1965 could be considered the starting point for reliable federal funding for these institutions. Despite the Higher Education Act of 1965, funding gaps still exist in the funding calculus between Historically White Institutions (HWIs) and HBCUs (Gasman, 2010). Sav (2000) also has expressed a similar argument on the history of low funding from the federal government for HBCUs. Sav (2000) argues many of the public HBCUs that emerged under the Supreme Court's so-called separate-but-equal in the Plessy v. Ferguson case were anything but equal to historically public white institutions. Many studies have documented these inequalities regarding facilities, equipment, libraries, academic programs, and financial support since the 1900s (Sav, 2000). A series of lawsuits were brought to challenge the "separate-but-equal" doctrine and succeeded to partially open access to Blacks to attend white institutions, but these court rulings did little to remove the financial inequalities between HBCUs and HWIs (Sav, 2000). Even after Brown v. Board of Education (1954) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a de facto segregation remained intact, especially in federal funding for public higher education throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Sav, 2000).

The increase in federal funding for HBCUs came in 1980 when former President Jimmy Carter signed Executive Order 12232. The Executive Order noted that the increase in funding for these institutions was "to overcome the effects of discriminatory treatment and to strengthen and expand the capacity of historically black colleges and universities to provide quality education" (Gasman, 2010, p. 1). This was a major/positive step in the politics of federal funding for HBCUs. Unfortunately, this positive step did not continue in successive administrations.

Recounting a 2008 report by the Congressional Research Service on the HBCU funding problem, Gasman (2010) highlights how HBCUs have continued to face difficulties in competing for federal research dollars with other research-performing universities. While acknowledging some increase in funding (i.e., absolute terms) from the federal government for HBCUs within the last few years, the total funding for HBCUs is still a small fraction when compared with the total amount awarded to other colleges and universities, particularly HWIs (Gasman, 2010).

The funding for these institutions at the state-level government is not too different from the federal government, especially in most Southern states where many HBCUs are located. Minor's (2008) report on the funding trends of HBCUs is another revelation worth reiterating. Minor (2008) observes that most HBCUs are doing the lion's share of work in educating Black Americans, as well as other students, but they tend to receive only a fraction of state education funding. Citing an example from the state of North Caroline, Minor's (2008) report reveals the following:

> In North Carolina, for instance, both the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University independently receive more of the state's appropriation than all five of the HBCUs combined. Together, UNC-Chapel Hill and North Carolina State enroll approximately 4,145 African American students. North Carolina A&T State University (an HBCU) alone enrolls twice as many African American students but receives a fraction of the state's appropriation. (p. 23)

A similar case occurred in Alabama. For example, African Americans constitute about 8 percent (1883) of the enrollment at Auburn University, which received $228 million in state support in 2007. In the same year, Alabama State and Alabama A&M, two of the state's public HBCUs, collectively enrolled 11,641 African Americans and together received $87 million (Minor, 2008; Gasman, 2010). As Minor (2008) pointed out, as others such as Colon (2003), Palmer and Gasman (2008) and Williams and Davis (2019) will concur, these funding disparities represent a form of discrimination against African Americans and their institutions.

On the part of Cantey et al. (2013), HBCUs have continued to successfully graduate Black Americans in areas of high demand, such as science, engineering, and mathematics, despite their funding challenges. For these scholars, the funding question constitutes one of the central elements of the ongoing debates on the relevance of HBCUs. In most cases, as Cantey et al. (2013) have articulated, HBCUs are only surviving with grants, student tuition, and limited corporate and individual donations (Cantey et al., 2013). They also are heavily dependent upon Pell grants, grants-in-aid, campus work aid, among other need-based (financial) scholarships. The unstable nature of these funding sources given its reliance on government agencies opens the door for persistent budget deficits these institutions will continue to encounter (Cantey et al., 2013; Evans et al., 2002).

A recent study, entitled "Public and Private Investments and Divestments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities," by Krystal Williams and BreAnna Davis provides insight into the seriousness of the funding issues confronting many HBCUs. Providing a useful context, Williams and Davis (2019) argue that over 70 percent of students at HBCUs have limited financial resources to pay for college. Williams and Davis' (2019) categorization of the funding landscape of American colleges and universities will be useful here. The four categories are:

1. Public sources (i.e., federal, state, and local appropriations, grants, and contracts)
2. Private investments (i.e., gifts, grants, and contracts)
3. Tuition and fees
4. Other income (i.e., auxiliary income)

While both HBCUs and non-HBCUs depend on each category of these funding streams, the sources of funding for these institutions vary in degree (Williams & Davis, 2019). One finding from the Williams and Davis (2019) study shows an overarching imbalance in funding for HBCUs and non-HBCUs. This imbalance confirms the continuous legacy of inequitable funding of HBCUs by the federal and state governments. Another finding is HBCUs tend to depend heavily on federal, state, and local funding (54 percent of overall revenue vs. 38 percent) as compared to their non-HBCU counterparts (Williams & Davis, 2019).

Boland and Gasman's work (2014) on America's public HBCUs and state-funding priorities connects quite well to the broader debates on the relevance of HBCUs. The authors referenced the recession of 2008 and its impact on US higher education, especially on HBCUs. While it is not uncommon for reduced funding from federal and state authorities argue that the 2008 recession did not only create further funding challenges for HBCUs, but the fact that policymakers in most Southern states floated the idea of allocating funding based on performance targets, such as degree completion rates, further complicated the already difficult financial position of HBCUs. For Boland and Gasman (2014), the idea to promote efficient distribution of funding based on quantifiable evidence sounds worthy, but what these policymakers fail to recognize is a large number of students who attend HBCUs are drawn from low-income families and

first-generation students who will likely have more difficulty completing college (Boland & Gasman, 2014).

In essence, a funding metric that allocates exclusively on performance targets such as rates of degree completion will adversely impact HBCUs (Boland & Gasman, 2014; Mercer & Stedman, 2008). Moreover, the so-called performance target discourse seems to occur alongside the loud critics in academia, government, and media who have continued to view HBCUs as "anachronistic appendages of a racist past" (Boland & Gasman, 2014, p. 2). In other words, these critiques are questioning the continued relevancy of HBCUs under the pretext of emerging into a "post-racial world" where these institutions might not be needed (Boland & Gasman, 2014). It is interesting, as this chapter observes, that the so-called post-racial era most Americans were "expecting" to see when Barack Obama was elected and re-elected as President of the United States seems to have disappeared after Donald Trump emerged on the political scene.

I concur with Boland and Gasman (2014) that those who have continued to question the relevance of HBCUs are failing to understand and recognize the role these institutions have played in several decades of contributing to the upward mobility of African Americans and other racial groups. W.E.B. Du Bois captured this reasoning several years ago when he noted that without the Negro college or HBCUs, Blacks would not have been able to achieve their social and economic advancements (Exkano, 2013; Kumah-Abiwu, 2021). Challenor's (2002) ideas on the significance of HBCUs are equally important to reiterate at this point. Challenor (2002) argues that HBCUs have since their establishment not only played a fundamental role in the socio-political mobility of Black Americans but also continued to serve as strong undergraduate institutions for African Americans. These institutions also are well-noted for their graduate education programs in professional fields such as medical sciences, engineering, law, and business administration (Challenor, 2002).

With the recognition of the value of HBCUs to many African Americans and other groups, their continued unequal funding treatment cannot be ignored. While there has been some increase in public funding for HBCUs, these institutions also have been receiving record donations from private sources (Gasman et al., 2021) after the death of George Floyd in May 2020 (Alexander, 2020). The next part of the chapter discusses these record-breaking donations within the context of the widespread protests that swept across America in the summer of 2020. I discuss this through

the prism of the complex intersections between race and social justice issues.

The traumatic experience of the public death of another human being as America watched the disturbing video of George Floyd's murder (Dixon & Dundes, 2020; Bailey, 2020) serves as a reminder of the several decades of denied justice to Black Americans (Karenga, 2010; Kumah-Abiwu, 2016). George Floyd's death generated widespread mass protests against police brutality and systemic racism in Minneapolis and many other cities across the country in the summer of 2020. This was a historic moment of nation-wide social movements not seen since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (Alexander, 2020). Who was George Floyd and what happened to him?

George Floyd was a resident of Minneapolis, Minnesota. On May 25, 2020, he was accused of using a counterfeit bill of $20 for payment at a local convenience store and the Minneapolis police was called to handle the situation. Four police officers arrived at the scene where they saw Mr. Floyd seating in his parked car. He was approached by the officers based on the description given to them of the suspect (Dixon & Dundes, 2020; Bailey, 2020). Reports indicate that Mr. George Floyd did comply with orders from the officers to exit his parked vehicle, but as the account reveals, he became terrified and repeatedly asked the police officer directly dealing with him not to shoot him. Bailey (2020) reports that Mr. Floyd tried to cooperate with the police officer but was so much afraid of them, to the extent that he told the officer he had had COVID-19 virus and was concerned that he might die while in their custody due to his claustrophobia/anxiety problems.

Mr. Floyd was handcuffed and placed in the squad car, while displaying a slight resistance due to his anxiety problems. He also reassured the officers of his intention not to harm anyone (Dixon & Dundes, 2020; Bailey, 2020). The report further notes that Mr. Floyd complained of breathing difficulties in the police squad car, which resulted in his removal from the car unto the ground. One of the officers, Derek Chauvin, who was attempting to control Mr. Floyd, pressed his knee on his neck for 9 minutes 29 seconds (Levenson, 2021). Mr. Floyd was in great pain/agony and indicated to the officer he could not breathe, but officer Derek Chauvin failed to see Mr. Floyd's humanity to lift his knee from his neck. George Floyd became unconscious and died (Dixon & Dundes, 2020). The medical examiner cited the cause of George Floyd's death as cardiopulmonary arrest which was connected to how his neck was subdued, restrained, and

compressed by officer Derek Chauvin (Dixon & Dundes, 2020; Bailey, 2020).

George Floyd's murder is a reminder of what Isabel Wilkerson's recent book titled *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* describes as the unresolved racial problem and pervasive framing and "criminalization" of Blackness and Black bodies in the history of America. According to Wilkerson (2020), America's caste system can be equated to an old house where race does not only do the heavy lifting for a caste system, but human division, in this case, racial divisions, is central to this caste system. Like an old house where you cannot see hidden things, the American system, as Wilkerson (2020) argues, is characterized by unseen skeletons that have sustained racist ideas and practices for centuries. Wilkerson's (2020) reasoning connects very well with a similar sentiment Michelle Alexander has expressed about how America needs to get its house in order in terms of the racial issues before the country risks losing its democracy. In the words of Alexander (2020), America has been trapped in a cycle of sporadic racial progress which is often followed by vicious backlash that often comes with new systems of racial and social control.

As revealed in the preceding discussion, George Floyd's murder in May 2020 could be argued as the main driving force for the widespread mass protests across the country with demands for racial justice. Another important element of George Floyd's death was the racial awakening to address the systemic racial injustice against Black Americans. The record-breaking donations to Black organizations, agencies, schools including HBCUs (Saul, 2021; Gasman et al., 2021) could be argued as part of the societal "atonement" that engulfed the consciousness of the country after the death of George Floyd. We should note that the racial awakening that partly inspired the record-breaking donations or what this chapter describes as "atonement giving" should not be confused with the concept of reparation. The concept of reparation, which is defined as an established mechanism or compensation of redress for egregious injustices, is not new to the discourse on Blacks and their experiences in America (Rashawn & Perry, 2020; Mastin et al., 2005). While the concept of reparation is not within the scope of this chapter, a brief discussion of it will provide a better understanding of the record-breaking donations to HBCUs after the death of George Floyd.

In their thought-provoking piece on why Black America needs reparations, Rashawn and Perry (2020) revisited the old argument on how "slavery enriched white slave owners and their descendants, and it fueled

the country's economy while suppressing wealth building for the enslaved" (p. 1). It was estimated in 1860 that the value assigned to the physical bodies of enslaved Black Americans to be used as free labor and production was over $3 billion, which was far more total money that was invested in factories and railroads (Rashawn & Perry, 2020). Sadly, as Rashawn and Perry (2020) have noted, America has yet to compensate descendants of enslaved people of African descent for their labor, let alone atonement for the lost equity from Jim Crow segregated laws and other anti-Black practices in housing, transportation, and business (Rashawn & Perry, 2020).

Teresa Mastin and colleagues have also provided useful insights on the media coverage on reparations. According to Mastin et al. (2005), the debates on reparations for descendants of enslaved people of African descent moved from the sole space of Black activists and intellectuals into the mainstream media from the late 2000s. The reparation issue also emerged on the global public agenda when it was extensively discussed at the United Nations in 2001. Mastin et al. (2005, p. 202) identified five historical eras in which reparations have been actively sought: (a) the civil war reconstructionist era, (b) the turn of the twentieth century, (c) Garvey Movement, (d) the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s to 1970s, and (e) the post-Civil Liberties era from 1989.

Mastin et al. (2005) have also noted that the public attention on reparations in the United States have gone through four main eras. First, the 1988 apology to Japanese Americans interned during World War II with a $20,000 per person compensation from the U.S. government. The second attention on reparations occurred in 1989 when former U.S. Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan) introduced a bill in the House calling for an appointment of a commission of inquiry to investigate reparations (Mastin et al., 2005). Although the bill never made it out of the House Judiciary Committee, the issue received greater media/public attention in the late 1980s throughout the early 1990s. The third era started with the publication of Randall Robinson's book titled, *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*. This book also helped to increase public/media attention on the reparation issues in the 2000s (Mastin et al., 2005; also see Robinson, 2000). The fourth era begun on March 26, 2002, in the Brooklyn U.S. District Court, when a first time ever class action lawsuit was filed to seek compensation from U.S. companies that have profited from the slave trade (Mastin et al., 2005).

One could also add the fifth era after Ta-Nehisi Coates published his essay on the case for reparations (Coates, 2014) and the recently

introduced bill from Senator Cory Booker to investigate slavery and reparations (Buck, 2019). Despite these efforts, African Americans are the only group not to have received reparations for slavery and state-sanctioned racial discrimination (Rashawn & Perry, 2020; Coates, 2014). With the failure to pay reparations to Black Americans, one wonders whether the record-breaking donations from private corporations and philanthropists to Black organizations and institutions, including HBCUs, are partly shaped by the reparation debates and considerations. The next section explores philanthropic funding and HBCUs in the context of the record-setting donations to HBCUs after the death of George Floyd.

Philanthropic Funding and HBCUs

As earlier noted, HBCUs have not only been the historical focal point for education of the Black middle class, but they have continued to provide the pathway for upward social/economic mobility for African Americans. Denise Smith got it right when she observes in her recent work that HBCUs are having their moment and finally getting their well-deserved recognition for their contributions to the American society as recognizable alumni of HBCUs are assuming influential political and other leadership positions in recent years (Smith, 2021). This is where Vice President Kamala Harris' name comes to mind as well as other notable leaders such as voting rights activist Stacey Abrams, Senator Raphel Warnock, and White House senior advisor Cedric Richmond, among others (Smith, 2021). While it is worth celebrating the well-deserved recognition of alumni of HBCUs, these institutions have continued to face challenges such as funding, student enrollment as well as the recruitment/retention of faculty members (Kumah-Abiwu, 2021).

Although the debates on funding challenges facing HBCUs often center on federal- and state-funding issues, we should note that these institutions have also had limited access to private and philanthropic funding sources. Smith (2021) argues that financial inequity for HBCUs is such that even robust private giving can hardly fill the gaps that could help close the funding holes of these institutions. HBCU leadership, according to Smith (2021), have also not developed an impressive fundraising or capital campaigns for several years, but efforts are being made in recent years by the leadership of HBCUs to increase their endowments. As noted, this final section of the chapter seeks to examine the rationale/implications for the record-breaking donations from philanthropists and major

corporations to several HBCUs after the death of George Floyd. The questions of what explains the rationale for the record-breaking donations and whether the philanthropic funding can be sustainable as part of the financial future of HBCUs come to the fore for discussion. To understand these issues, this chapter explores the evolutionary process of what has become known as the "George Floyd Inspired Donations."

As previously stated, George Floyd was killed on May 25, 2020, for allegedly using a $20 counterfeit money for payment at a local convenience store in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Dixon & Dundes, 2020; Bailey, 2020). Massive protests followed the unjust and inhumane killing of Mr. Floyd across the country and many other parts of the world on why Black lives should matter to all. Given the renewed social justice movement and societal awakening of the systemic injustice, anti-Blackness, and other forms of institutionalized racial discrimination, millions of donations started flooding racial justice groups and Black social, economic, and educational institutions, including HBCUs. As early as June of 2020, after the death of George Floyd in May, Shane Goldmacher of the *New York Times* reported that the killing of George Floyd and the nation-wide wave of protests that followed have generated "a record-setting flood of donations to racial justice groups, bail funds and black-led advocacy organizations across America, remaking the financial landscape of black political activism in a matter of weeks" (Goldmacher, 2020, p. 1). According to Goldmacher (2020), the record-setting flood of donations were coming so fast and unexpected to the extent that some group began to redirect donors to other social justice/advocacy groups. A record amount of donation of $90 million was, for example, given to the bail funds alone within a short period of time (Goldmacher, 2020).

The "donation frenzy," as I describe it, was not limited to racial justice groups and Black-led advocacy organizations, but one of the historic institutions of Black America (HBCUs) were not left out. These institutions have continued to receive donations since 2020 (Goldmacher, 2020; Saul, 2021). Andrew Sorkin's report which was published in June 2020 on the $120 million donation from Netflix CEO to HBCUs deserves to be mentioned here. Sorkin (2020) notes that Mr. Reed Hastings, the co-founder of Netflix, and his wife, Patty Quillin, gave $120 million to the United Negro College Fund, Spelman College, and Morehouse College. As compared to other educational institutions such as the Ivy League universities where their endowments are in the tens of billions of dollars (i.e., Harvard University's endowment tops $40 billion) and many others, well-known

HBCUs have endowments that are just in millions of dollars. Spelman's $390 million endowment is a good example (Sorkin, 2020).

The donations to HBCUs not only continued into the year 2021, but the landscape of these donations in terms of the amount and sources kept increasing. In addition to the $120 million from Netflix, other tech giants such as Google and TikTok gave a combined amount of $60 million to these institutions (Saul, 2021). In fact, Saul's (2021) description of the unprecedented donations as "money pouring in" stems from the additional financial support that was provided by the Biden-Harris Administration to educational institutions. For example, HBCUs received about $5 billion in pandemic rescue funds from the federal government. This funding constitutes part of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund program under the American Rescue Plan/Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which was signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021. The rescue package also included a provision to erase about $1.6 billion of debts owned by 45 HBCUs (Saul, 2021; U.S.-DOE, 2021).

While recognizing the significance of these private and giant tech donations as well as the federal government support for HBCUs, the most recognizable donations, as earlier stated, came from MacKenzie Scott, ex-wife of Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos. She donated about $560 million to 23 public and private HBCUs in 2020 alone. Other advocacy groups of HBCUs such as the United Negro College Fund and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund also received millions of dollars in donation from author and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott (Gasman et al., 2021; Adedoyin, 2021). There is no question that these huge donations constitute one of the largest single financial gifts that many HBCUs had ever received (Saul, 2021; Gasman et al., 2021). A recent report on the data landscape of MacKenzie Scott's donations to HBCUs by Gasman and her colleagues noted that most HBCU presidents are of the view that MacKenzie Scott's generous donations were not only the largest their institutions had ever received, but these donations would transform their universities and colleges (Gasman et al., 2021).

Two fundamental elements are clear from MacKenzie Scott's donations to the 23 HBCUs. First, her decision or donation calculus appears to be systematic/data driven. Second, the flexibility or no strings attached aspect of her donations represents a novel feature of charitable giving that needs to be underscored (Gasman et al., 2021). I draw on the ideas of Gasman et al. (2021) in discussing the fundamental elements of MacKenzie Scott's

donation calculus. I discuss this from two standpoints. First, the systematic/data-driven standpoint and second, the flexibility or no strings attached standpoint. From the systematic/data-driven standpoint, the empirical question that guided the study by Gasman and colleagues was to explore why 23 HBCUs of the more than 100 across the country received donations from MacKenzie Scott while others did not.

To Gasman et al. (2021), HBCUs that have received donations can be explained from the interplay of student enrollment, retention, higher tuition/fees, and graduation rates. For example, the study reveals that the 23 HBCUs that have received donations from MacKenzie Scott, on average, attained a median enrollment of new students of more than 300 students greater than HBCUs that did not receive funding (Gasman et al., 2021, p. 6). The study further reveals that the "median enrollment for first-time degree-seeking students in the entering classes of institutions receiving donations was 716 students compared to 349 students for institutions that did not receive donations" (Gasman et al., 2021, p. 6). In terms of student retention, the study finds that "on average, institutions selected to receive donations attained retention rates fifteen percent higher than institutions that did not receive a donation" (Gasman et al., 2021, p. 8). Higher tuition and fees also played a role in the donation calculus as the study has revealed. Based on a 2019 data, the median combined in-state tuition and fees for HBCUs that received donations were around $10,861, that is $2293 higher than the median cost of HBCUs that did not receive funding from MacKenzie Scott (Gasman et al., 2021; Adedoyin, 2021). Graduation rates have also shaped the donation decision of MacKenzie Scott and her team of experts. For instance, HBCUs that received a donation attained six-year graduation rates of about 16 percent higher than those that did not receive a donation (Gasman et al., 2021).

The second standpoint is the flexibility or no strings attached element of the donation. I examine this from three sub-elements. First, as Gasman et al. (2021) have articulated, the decision by MacKenzie Scott to donate with no strings attached was systematic and based on what Gasman et al. (2021) have described as "Scott's informed perspective" (p. 4). They recounted the published piece in the *Medium* by MacKenzie Scott on her donation as saying, "we do this research and deeper diligence not only to identify organizations with high potential for impact, but also to pave the way for unsolicited and unexpected gifts given with full trust and no strings attached" (Gasman et al., 2021, p. 4; see also Scott, 2020). The second sub-element is the way MacKenzie Scott decided to make the

donations upfront, which suggests that she and her team of experts not only trusted these institutions, but she did not want to place any further burden on them with endless reporting or micro-managing the donations (Gasman et al., 2021). The rationale was very well-captured in MacKenzie Scott's post. She writes, "because our research is data-driven and rigorous, our giving process can be human and soft. … Not only are non-profits chronically underfunded, they are also chronically diverted from their work by fundraising, and by burdensome reporting requirements that donors often place on them" (Gasman et al., 2021, p. 4; see also Scott, 2020). The third sub-element is the fact that the donations from MacKenzie Scott to the twenty-three (23) HBCUs were non-discretionary funds (Gasman et al., 2021). What this means is that these institutions can use the donations for whatever they consider appropriate to meet their needs. As stated in her post, MacKenzie Scott, in her words, notes, "all of these leaders and organizations have a track record of effective management and significant impact in their fields. … I gave each a contribution and encouraged them to spend it on whatever they believe best serves their efforts" (Gasman et al., 2021, p. 4; see also MacKenzie Scott, 2020).

The preceding discussions show interesting new trends and nature of philanthropic giving. Gasman et al. (2021) captured the new trends or new thinking of philanthropic giving by noting:

> Over the course of history, some philanthropists have approached giving to colleges and universities with the idea in mind that they are rewarding high performing institutions. Other philanthropists have been interested in stimulating growth and thus, focus their donations on lower performing institutions. We believe that HBCUs deserve both philanthropic approaches, and that both strategies are needed to sustain HBCUs as a whole into the future. We also believe that access to data is essential to inform and strategize philanthropic giving. (p. 5)

It is clear, as the discussions and analyses have revealed throughout the chapter, that the funding landscape of HBCUs in terms of donations they have received and continued to receive from philanthropists and other organizations are changing very fast and more likely to positively transform these institutions. What is unclear, on the other hand, relates to the question of what the implications of these record-breaking donations might have on the future of HBCUs? In other words, *what can be* for HBCUs in terms of these record-breaking donations?

Conclusion

It is undisputable that the year 2020 will occupy a special place in the history of the United States when it comes to the issue of racial awakening and social justice issues following the death of George Floyd. For many social thinkers, Mr. Floyd has not only paid the ultimate price, but his death also has awakened American consciousness on the persistent legacy and enduring nature of racial injustice in our society. The socio-political effect of George Floyd's death or what others have described as the "George Floyd effect" in energizing mass protest movements against institutionalized racism and racial injustice will likely be sustained for some time (Alexander, 2020). Part of the socio-political effect of George Floyd's death is the ongoing transformation of the philanthropist landscape where several HBCUs have been receiving record-breaking donations since 2020. Given the importance of these donations and their likely impact on these institutions, this chapter examined the central question of what the record-breaking donations mean for the future of HBCUs within the context of this important/timely volume on *Emancipatory Change in US Higher Education*. To understand the dynamics of these issues, the chapter discussed the historical evolution of HBCUs with a focus on their funding history and challenges. The chapter also discussed the socio-political environment in terms of the social justice protests that swept across America in 2020 after the death of George Floyd and how his death shaped the record-breaking donations to HBCUs.

On the question of "what can be" for HBCUs in terms of the record-breaking donations, it is clear, as this chapter argues, and well-captured in the recent study by Gasman et al. (2021) that the donations to these institutions, especially the huge donations from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, will be transformational. I agree with the transformational idea in terms of what can be for many HBCUs that have received such donations and those yet to receive. As earlier noted, the aspirational aspect (*what can be*) of these donations is the possibility for further funding for HBCUs and the opportunity it will create for these institutions to better serve their students. While recognizing the importance of the transformational idea of what can be for these institutions, I argue, from a policy standpoint/policy recommendation, that HBCUs need to develop strategic plans for these donations to be effectively utilized in the medium and long terms. In addition to supporting students with these funds and other projects that need to be accomplished with these donations, it is important for HBCUs to develop other plans and strategies.

For example, HBCUs need to devote some of the funds to establish academic centers and institutes that will be used to the study of race and social justice issues. I have articulated this idea in a forthcoming scholarly work on how HBCUs need to establish academic centers and institutes to the study of race and social justice issues (Kumah-Abiwu, 2022). It is important to underscore this point in this work as well. With the growing change in philanthropic giving with a more flexibility or no strings attached aspect (Gasman et al., 2021), HBCUs can take advantage of the flexible of donations to establish these academic centers and institutes. It is imperative to also reiterate the argument that the study of race, racism, and social justice issues in spaces such as HBCUs will not only enhance the epistemological standing of these institutions, but given the "natural domain" of these institutions to sustaining the Black culture and identity, it is the view of this chapter that HBCUs will be well-positioned to use the increasing trends of the record-breaking donations to develop strategies and sound policy ideas that will help these institutions in the long term. This will help achieve the emancipatory change in higher education at these historic Black colleagues and universities.

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CHAPTER 12

Forging Community: Reflections on a Colloquium for Critical Scholars of College Sport

Siduri Haslerig and Kirsten Hextrum

Introduction

When we set out to write about radical possibilities within college sport, we struggled. Although we have many research-based ideas about how to improve equity, ethics, and justice within college sport, our research also leads us to question whether institutionalized college sport can be "saved" or reformed into something generative rather than simply providing

Authorship is alphabetical rather than a reflection of effort. This chapter, like the colloquium, was a collaboration in which both authors contributed equally.

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varying degrees of harm mitigation.[1] Further, our faith in the outcomes possible from the intensive intellectual labor of critiquing college sport has been shaken through our years of experience with this system. In our various professional and scholarly roles, we have pushed for reforms to various levels of college sports in venues beyond our scholarly publications. To name a few, we have worked within college sports, providing academic support to college athletes; served on university taskforces to provide policy recommendations; written briefs for college sport-related legal cases; served on and chaired a university Athletics Council; collaborated with the media to shape national debates on college sports; and educated and trained future athletic staff and administrators. Across these various terrains, we were disillusioned with our ability to provide actionable or, indeed, productive solutions in the current context, even if we had the perfect solution.

College sports have endured frequent and sweeping reforms. But these changes often repurpose, retrench, and protect existing power relationships rather than provide a revolutionary rearrangement of existing power relations. Two national reform efforts, which responded to decades of criticism of the racialized exploitative labor conditions underpinning intercollegiate athletics, ultimately maintained rather than altered the underlying extractive relationships among universities and players. The first reform effort targeted academic conditions. In response to activism, legal efforts, and critical scholarship pointing to the abysmal graduation rates for college athletes in revenue-generating sports, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) passed the Academic Progress Rate (APR) in 2003 (NCAA, 2022). The metric unveiled a new academic monitoring and reporting system, APR or the Academic Progress Report. The new NCAA requirements to track the college athletes academic progress promised to "hol[d] institutions accountable for the academic progress of their

[1] Though we never want to discount the deep importance of harm mitigation (cite), "what could be" invited us to imagine a more radical aspiration.

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student-athletes through a team-based metric that accounts for the eligibility and retention of each student-athlete for each academic term" (NCAA, 2022, para. 1). In reality, the new regulations effectively led to more surveillance and isolation of athletes, as well as profound insularity of athletic professionals and departments (Hatteberg, 2018).

The second, more recent example of reform, relates to college athletes' rights to their Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL). After over a century of the NCAA suppressing college athletes' rights to their own personhood, state legislatures superseded the NCAA's authority by passing laws that gave players limited and contingent abilities to profit off their athletic talent. In the summer of 2021, as state laws were set to go into effect, the NCAA finally acted, passing an interim policy for NIL. The guidelines permit college athletes to accept compensation from third-party endorsements, advertisements, and social media agreements but expressly prohibit any direct payments for on-the-field athletic performance. In other words, NIL extends the prohibition on college athletes being paid by universities for their athletic labor that generates billions of dollars annually (Jacobs, 2019), while also negating arguments about exploitation by providing an alternative route to payment that fundamentally leaves the core structure in place. Further, many state laws and institutional policies restrict the products college athletes can endorse and the types of deals they can sign (California State Legislature, 2019; NCAA, 2021). Thus the policies provide important-yet-limited rights, but also perpetuate and strengthen the exploitative economic system of college athletics by off-loading compensation of athletes to third-parties, while undercutting exploitation critiques of the existing system.

Our own research has grappled with how higher education can provide more equitable working and learning conditions for college athletes (e.g., Haslerig, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2020; Hextrum, 2019a, 2020, 2021; Navarro et al., 2016). To do so, we have engaged with research across disciplines such as sociology (Carrington, 2013; Coakley, 2015; Eitzen, 2016), economics (Clotfelter, 2011; Eckstein, 2017; Zimbalist, 2001), history (Ingrassia, 2012; Martin, 2010; Smith, 1988, 2011; Thelin, 1994), and law (Carter, 2000, 2006; Colombo, 2010; Osborne, 2017). We are hardly unique in pulling from these diverse fields in order to apply rigorous scholarly inquiry to college sport. Rather, the field itself is interdisciplinary and diffuse. Because of this interdisciplinary nature, college sport scholars—particularly those from critical orientations—are often

marginalized in more traditional disciplinary homes and their (our) research may be denied legitimacy as an independent field of inquiry.

In response to these twin challenges in the field—seemingly intractable critical issues and the frequent disciplinary isolation of scholars fighting their retrenchment—we proposed, externally funded, designed, and implemented a *Colloquium on College Sport (In)Equity*. We sought to gather a group of critical scholars of college sport to collaboratively re-envision scholarly approaches to equity, focusing on three areas: scholarship, praxis, and media engagement. We imagined individual scholars, as well as the diffuse field, could benefit from generative collaboration and critical engagement at the colloquium.

In designing the *Colloquium on College Sport (In)Equity*, we were inadvertently responding to the many demoralizing and exhausting setbacks of doing critical scholarship and service interventions within college sport. Simultaneous with our proposal to hold this colloquium, we applied for a larger grant to support an initiative trying to change college sports from the inside that was both chronically underfunded (which is to say, entirely *unfunded*), and perpetually asked to give and do more for the institution/athletic department. Starting in the summer of 2020, Kirsten Hextrum led an anti-racist programming effort for the University of Oklahoma's (OU) athletic department. As the summer went on, and the programming expanded—in time commitment, vision, and scope, as well as the credit the department took for it—she was continuously rebuffed by the athletic department about providing resources to support the initiative. Despite their lack of material support, the department used the program for both internal and external public relations, expecting Dr. Hextrum and her co-facilitators to continue (pro bono) while routinely undermining the wonderful work she was doing.

The need for soul-feeding experiences and intellectual community within academia cannot be overestimated. However, we believe there are several aspects of this imperative that are particular to college sport research, generally, and to *critical* researchers of college sport, specifically, that require differentiation and elaboration. Critical scholarship within college sport is simultaneously: (1) desperately needed; (2) routinely exploited; (3) undervalued and expertise is dismissed, discounted, and insulted; (4) frequently co-opted to serve the interests of the institution; (5) consistently an uphill battle; and (6) both hyper visible and *invisibilized*. These overlapping conditions mean critical scholars are subject to abuse and hypervisibility while also having their expertise and

contributions dismissed. These experiences tend to isolate critical scholars and make them more vulnerable to subsequent harm and/or critique.

Working alongside one another as scholars and colleagues at OU, we consistently discussed our personal and professional frustrations engaging in critical college sports research. Over several years collaborating on program leadership, curriculum development, and collaborative writing spaces, we saw the value in having a trusted, safe, and intellectually rigorous community (albeit a community of two) to sustain us through such challenges. Our rich and generative partnership inspired us to invite others to collaborate in building a larger, more robust community with us through the colloquium. While we have not given up on systems-level change, we recognized the need to create a more insular, supportive community. That community will help build all our resilience and resources for when we return to the often soul-crushing work of both public-facing scholarship and trying to transform athletics from the inside (whether athletics or higher education institutions, more generally). Through our sustained conversations, we began to develop a vision for a college sport colloquium.

In this chapter, we share our experiences designing and implementing the program. While we have built a case for some of the unique challenges those of us who are critical college sports scholars face within the academy, we believe our findings could apply across disciplines and fields. In the forthcoming sections we discuss how we designed the grant, conceptualized the colloquium, and enacted our programming. We offer lessons throughout each phase and conclude with visions for our colloquium outcomes. In the final section, we consider how the colloquium could become a model to create humanizing, collective, and enriching academic research, programming, and presentation spaces.

Colloquium Origin and Design

We proposed the colloquium as a reimagining of conference spaces and intellectual community. In our proposal, we incorporated several important distinctions from "traditional" academic conferences that we believed were necessary to create a space for critical scholars of sport to challenge and push each other in ways that were generative. We imagined a liminal space that differed from our daily experiences, but also and importantly, one that significantly differed from the norms of academia. Although the need for this space was acute because of the unique tensions born of being

a critical scholar who works on sport issues, addressing that need required we rethink the purpose, structure, and outcomes we expected from an academic conference.

Previous research has argued in-person academic conferences are: (1) expensive—in terms of financial cost (Rowe, 2019), time and opportunity cost (Nicolson, 2017), and environmental costs (Desiere, 2016); (2) inaccessible (Nicolson, 2017), in ways that perpetuate inequity—particularly in terms of disability (Niner & Wassermann, 2021), gender (Bos et al., 2019; Corona-Sobrino et al., 2020), and the differential impact of cost of attendance on different populations (Bos et al., 2019); and (3) sites that may entrench and/or replicate patterns of exclusion and/or incivility (Settles & O'Connor, 2014). Some have posited conferences as an exemplar of the impact of neoliberalism on academia (Nicolson, 2017). Collectively, these studies suggest broad issues with modern in-person academic conferences that undermine (and indeed work at counterpurposes to) the purported purpose of academic conferences as sites of learning, engagement, and professional development.

We tried to address the harms of academic conferences through several, interrelated strategies. First, we used the grant to mitigate financial costs. Rather than charge people to present—or *pay to play*, to borrow an idiom from sport—we used the grant funding to waive any fees. We then went one step further and *paid* attendees for their labor, providing compensation to all presenters and/or facilitators. We were able to do so because of a second—and vital—part of our conference visions. We created a closed colloquium. From the start, we were clear with the Spencer Foundation this must be a private, invite-only virtual event. We did this primarily to protect this space and to enable it to be somewhere in which academics could bring work-in-progress. Far too often, works in progress are either outright rejected in the conference proposal process (e.g., for their "incomplete" nature) and/or in the unlikely event they are presented during a conference are often subject to unfair public criticism. Two of the largest educational conferences, for instance, require presenters submit a 2000-word abstract (nothing "abstract" about such a document) that can demonstrate "results" to the reviewers. These standards have led scholars to submit nearly complete research, negating the opportunity to build ideas collectively, with meaningful feedback from the conference format and engagement. Even when presenting completed research, we have encountered mean-spirited, self-aggrandizing, and hostile questions from the audience—all of which can stymie research and creativity. We wanted

to minimize the posturing that frequently occurs at conferences, as well as a safe space for better-known academics to think through ideas and share, where earlier-career scholars need to know and engage with those senior academics in ways that were reciprocal.

Finally, we were able to minimize costs by hosting a virtual conference. Researchers have suggested virtual meetings as a solution to inequities in academic conferences like cost and accessibility concerns (Nicolson, 2017; Niner & Wassermann, 2021; Rowe, 2019). While the global pandemic tipped the scale inexorably toward a virtual event, we found the format allowed our colloquium to dialogue synchronously across national borders; eliminate capital costs like travel time, hotel/lodging, dialogue in multiple formats (e.g., live verbal discussions as well as parallel public and private chat threads); and incorporate closed-captioning (Malisch et al., 2020; Rubinger et al., 2020).

Context

College sport is frequently positioned as both indicative of and a vanguard for racial progress (e.g., Kaliss, 2013; Lumpkin, 2013; Martin, 2010). Yet, college sport also (re)produces and normalizes racial stratification and inequity within athletics and beyond (e.g., Eitzen, 2016; Haslerig et al., 2019, 2020; Hawkins, 2013). Athletics are inexorably tied to racial equity projects, given their (1) prominent place embedded within US higher education (Bass et al., 2015; Clotfelter, 2011); (2) historic and ideational role in expanding college access for people of color and women, including their visibility as a site of both integration and Title IX enforcement (Martin, 2010; Suggs, 2005); (3) role in race and gender socialization and ideological construction processes (Haslerig et al., 2019, 2020; Hextrum, 2019a, 2019b; Ternes, 2016); and (4) racially disparate impacts and outcomes for athletes participating (Harper et al., 2013). Despite the racial possibilities and retrenchments within college sports, scholars often skirt this complexity and provide simplistic or single-issue analyses. This colloquium attempted to advance racial equity on several fronts by pushing the field toward more nuanced, intersectional, and impactful analyses. To that end, we assembled an interdisciplinary group of critical scholars of college sport for a series of three virtual meeting sessions to interrogate the limitations in current approaches and propose shifts to the theoretical, methodological, pedagogical, and media engagement approaches used by college sport scholars.

Colloquium Format

The colloquium was held virtually, spread over a series of three sessions, via zoom. While this decision was influenced by the pandemic, the opportunity to meet virtually also provided opportunities by enabling us to lengthen the time between meetings, giving ideas space to breathe. Although the content was roughly equivalent to a two-day conference, the format enabled and encouraged a dialogic tone, the building of authentic relationships, and participant engage with others' scholarship throughout.

Invited participants included academics across disciplines who exemplify *critical praxis* (Freire, 1996) or the commitment to intertwining critical scholarship, teaching, and activism to achieve social transformation. We defined "critical" as contesting the normative practices, standards, and assumptions in a given field. Critical empirical work challenges the "barriers to social change and transformation, inequity, structural inequality, and democracy in ways that resist reproducing ideas, values, and assumptions of groups that are privileged and dominant" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 105). Critical scholars embrace criticality throughout the entire research process: project formulation, design, implementation, and dissemination. Praxis is inherently dialogic across teaching, scholarship, and activism. Praxis also requires dialogue beyond the classroom, students, faculty, and researchers (Freire, 1996). Invited scholars, thus, must be committed to dialogic praxis in their own spaces of research, writing, and activism, and committed to dialogue in this colloquium and future field-building work.

Having a closed colloquium meeting was important to protect the collectivist, working, and generative quality of the colloquium. As such, only invited authors, presenters, and discussion facilitators participated in the colloquium. We did invite invitees to include coauthor(s) (those coauthors were subsequently considered invited). In the future, we suggest emphasizing this option more, particularly to encourage invitees to coauthor with more junior or marginalized scholars. The entire colloquium was recorded. We are currently working to edit the video and intentionally distribute edited recordings, in a range of lengths and formats, for a variety of audiences. Participants will have the opportunity to approve the edited video recordings prior to dissemination.

Broadly, participants presented in a panel format and each was assigned a discussant from among the senior scholars. Both presenters and discussion facilitators were responsible for posing questions to shape the

discussion, and all participants were repeatedly invited to bring their expertise into every discussion, in contrast to a more traditional question-and-answer format. Lastly, we built in generative time at the end of each day; this format focused across the panelists and was aimed at generating recommendations regarding the day's theme. The ongoing dialogic engagement, as well as structured collaboration, created a different environment than traditional academic conferences, encouraging us to dynamically rethink together, and also enabling us to create and disseminate collective recommendations that emerge from the colloquium. We initially intended to explicitly offer opportunities to coauthor summative section-conclusion chapters for an edited volume, but as the colloquium evolved we went in a slightly different direction. By encouraging collaboration after the conference, we are scaffolding professional relationships and helping the field be more collectivist in the future.

Profile of Colloquium Participants

Invitees had demonstrated their willingness to engage critical scholarship and meaningfully use it to reimagine college sport and challenge the status quo. Participants' disciplinary homes and scholarly expertise varied; however, they were selected based on their deep engagement and potential to contribute to a generative dialogic space in which to move our collective thinking and scholarship forward. Participants' scholarship frequently bridges ethnic, labor, legal, and/or women's studies. All participants conduct intersectional research; we also explicitly invited experts in topics and identities that are often excluded from sport scholarship, even when it is ostensibly focused on diversity and equity, such as class-based analysis and trans* athletes and disabled athletes. As we discuss below, some scholars were less likely to participate than others. Our intention in bringing together experts who are committed to intersectional work, but who have divergent topical specialties, was to push each other's scholarship forward and foment productive collaborations. Additionally, we proposed and were able to assemble an intergenerational and interdisciplinary group of participants.

Proposed Assignments for the Participants and Colloquium Outcomes

With this interdisciplinary group of scholars we hoped to generate several tangible outcomes to collectively build the field of college sports. We proposed to develop the field along four areas. First, we hoped to enhance scholarly or academic research on college sports. We proposed to do this by requiring all invited participants to submit working, truly in-progress papers a few weeks prior to the colloquium. We were clear in all communications with participants these papers must be in-progress and should be revised *after* the colloquium based on our collective feedback and dialogue sessions. Our intention was to model what we hope could go on to become critical yet supportive feedback for scholarship carried into other portions of our profession. As one of the colloquium outcomes, we proposed coauthoring/editing a book of participants' contributions.

Second, we proposed the colloquium could develop innovations for curriculum and teaching of practitioners that will foment improvement in participants' pedagogy. We dedicated one session of the colloquium to discussing how to hold critical discussions in classrooms for undergraduate and graduate student. We also discussed how to create curricula for athletic professionals. We see teaching—formally and informally—as vital to the expansion of a field and believe discussions surrounding praxis should be foundational to academic conferences.

Third, we suggested creating a space for scholars to discuss media engagement. As part of the hyper visible aspect of college sports research, the media frequently covers—often in inaccurate, superficial, and inequitable ways—our areas of study. We proposed holding discussion with experts from the fields of media and with those who regularly engage with the media to strategize on how we could better develop external outreach strategies to shift media conversations toward more nuanced and productive conversations regarding equity, Title IX, race, and athletics.

Bridging our first three aims, we imagined creating a public-facing website with curated content from the colloquium. This content could be used for research, teaching, and/or media engagement, and would hopefully move the field in our desired directions. In this sense, the colloquium was only closed during the first wave of discussions. We asked all invited participants for their permission to record all sessions. We informed them that we intended to create clips from the colloquium that would be shared publicly. We would only share clips after obtaining their permission to do so.

By designing these four objectives, we hoped to invite participants into the process of field building. As the grant recipients, we did not want to be the main voices or gatekeepers of knowledge production—a process that could inadvertently arise as the funding agency signifies us as "Co-Principal Investigators." We hoped that these tangible outcomes, collectively and individually authored by a range of participants, would demonstrate the value of generative, collaborative intellectual dialogue.

Insights from the Colloquium

Our grant for the colloquium spanned May 2021 through May 2022. We spent much of the summer of 2021 in organizing and planning mode which involved hiring a graduate assistant to work with us throughout the grant, finalizing our list of invitees, and researching digital tools to run a virtual conference and host a website, among other administrative tasks. At the start of the fall, we began our first major task: inviting participants. We originally invited 18 faculty members to participate across disciplines during the Fall of 2021. This proved to be one of the most challenging moments of the global COVID-19 pandemic with the Delta variant raging across communities. Additionally, what began as a seemingly temporary-increase in pandemic work responsibilities within our profession (e.g., changing class formats from in-person to virtual, increasing time spent on graduate student advising, additional administrative responsibilities in responding to ever-changing COVID protocols) had become endemic to our roles. Like all labor in society, these burdens continued to fall disproportionately on those from multiple, intersectional, marginalized communities. We felt this harm personally and in our lived realities in the academy. And we heard this harm reflected in our initial outreach efforts to participants. Despite our best efforts to have a diverse group of participants, including additional rounds of invitations based on what areas of scholarship were still underrepresented after some invitees declined, there were notable trends in who was ultimately un/underrepresented at the colloquium. The most consistent demographic group to decline our invites was Black women, often citing overwork. Additionally, trans* and disabled scholars were not represented in the participants, despite outreach and our intent to include them. Of these groups, those who responded expressed an interest in the programming but were too overburdened to participate.

Our initial grant proposed creating an intergenerational space for dialogue across graduate students, early career, mid-career, and senior scholars. We initially imagined graduate students could be invited participants (not presenters) in the colloquium. When we tried to redress the lack of participation, particularly from scholars of color, we extended invitations to present to a few graduate students. Upon reflection, we should have always seen graduate students as vital contributors to the growth of the field. Their contributions were some of the most rigorous and intellectually engaging of the entire colloquium. They brought in theoretical frames rarely used in college sports, posed questions critical of senior scholars' past research, and presented about marginalized and understudied populations in the field. In this sense, their expertise reflected a "coaching up" of our profession as the senior scholars engaged with and learned from the up-and-coming researchers. Elevating graduate student work is vital to field building as they are the next generation of scholars; putting them in conversation with luminaries in the field, while also valuing their expertise, enabled all participants to build reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships.

Our initial outreach efforts to participants—many of whom expressed an exhaustion and sense of overwhelming workload—also led us to modify the length of the colloquium. Originally, we proposed to host four iterations of the colloquium, over the months of January, February, and March 2022. We intended to have two-week intervals between each session. This would allow participants a chance to reflect and ruminate on ideas raised, and hopefully bring new insights into subsequent days of the colloquium. We kept the interval format but reduced the number of days. We held three sessions, each four hours long, occurring on February 4, February 18, and March 4, 2022. This change led to more presenters each day, scheduled so the sessions were thematically convergent and explicitly in conversation with one another. This led to more generative discussion across the sessions as the audience continually recalled previous presentations and points in their comments and questions.

As previously discussed, in inviting participants, we informed them that their labor would be compensated. We spent the majority of the conference grant on our graduate research assistant; honorarium for all presenters and facilitators was the second largest expense. If someone was a presenter and a facilitator they received compensation for both roles. This was an intentional decision on our part to subvert the costly and extractive model of academic conferences. The lack of transparency about where fees

for traditional conferences are spent was exacerbated at times within the pandemic, when conferences were frequently virtual yet still priced exorbitantly, revealing conferences' reliance on both uncompensated scholarly labor and on charging the same academics for the pleasure of giving away their work for free. Thus we wanted to make visible the laboring of academics that often (always) goes unpaid. As labor was a central theme of our colloquium, we ensured that naming and compensating work was foundational to an alternative to existing academic norms.

We also took a collaborative approach in designing the colloquium's programming. After we solidified the participant list, we sent out a brief vision for the colloquium. We offered expansive themes for their contributions and encouraged them to take risks in their scholarship. We asked all invited participants to submit their abstracts prior to the winter break, during which time we would review their proposals and generate a draft agenda. We also asked participants to pose questions about their research and/or what they hoped to receive feedback on related to their work. We used their papers and questions to generate themes for each colloquium day, and each session per day. We sent drafts of the conference agenda to participants, again requesting their feedback and revisions. Through this communication we engaged in expectation-setting, reminding participants of the vision of the colloquium, priming them to prepare for engaging dialogue, and beginning to dismantle pre-existing beliefs about conference norms.

In designing the colloquium we also reimagined the facilitator role. Rather than serve as a reviewer and critique the papers—as so often happens in academic conferences—we invited facilitators to host a dialogue between presenters and the audience. We intentionally paired facilitators with sessions who we felt could push the authors and audience to think beyond the presented content. We also gave the authors agency by allowing them to send questions in advance for the facilitators to ask of them and the audience. This allowed the authors to feel as though they could somewhat prepare for or anticipate the impending dialogue. Asking authors to submit questions in advance also set the tone that the work is in progress and should change through the dialogue and communication in the colloquium.

Finally, in designing the colloquium, we imagined we would need to use breakout rooms to generate additional dialogue. During the first day of the colloquium, the conversation was so spirited we went over-time on the sessions, cutting into our scheduled breaks. We chose to pivot and

eliminate the use of breakout rooms and instead hold all-group discussions following each session. We believe the success of the dialogues following each session came from a combination of factors. First, our strategic planning and invitation of guests. We selected people based not only on their expertise but also on their history of generous collegiality and curiosity. We had observed many of these members in other spaces, including at conferences and on social media. We knew they could pose thoughtful yet provocative questions to elevate a conversation. We also believe the dialogue emerged through our tone-setting and communication in advance of the colloquium. Each email we sent to participants reminded them that their duties included engaging and dialoguing across the presentations. In other words, they could not be a passive observer in the colloquium space. Finally, we encouraged participants to use the chat function in zoom throughout the colloquium. This allowed for cross pollination and generated additional dialogue, enabling more voices to enter the conversation.

Colloquium Outcomes

Our work now turns to our planned outcomes. We are reviewing footage from the events and selecting highlights that could be made publicly available. Yet again, we are seeking collaboration from participants. We are requesting that they also suggest what they recall as the most impactful moments of the conference. We will also share our initial selections to see what we missed and/or could add to the final website. Once we have approval from all participants on the materials to share on our public-facing website, we will request all colloquium attendees share the content widely. Since this is an interdisciplinary team of scholars, our hope is the content will reach a broad audience. We also hope that many participants will carry the content into their teaching practices and media engagements.

During the final day of the colloquium we discussed potential academic publishing opportunities for the content presented during our event. The group collectively decided to not pursue an edited volume, as this approach can limit knowledge dissemination (e.g., you have to purchase a book to read the content) and does not equitably distribute authorship (e.g., the editors may receive more credit for their contribution than the authors). However, participants were committed to having some kind of academic product from this colloquium (in addition to the other open-access materials described). There was an explicit acknowledgment of the need, especially for up-and-coming scholars, to meet the tenure demands through

academic publishing. As a group, we decided to pursue an academic open-access journal and create a special issue for the colloquium. The senior scholars in the group also offered recommendations on how to elevate the nature of this kind of publishing outlet, such as writing letters that described the rigor that went into the research; ensuring the articles are anonymously peer reviewed; and ensuring the journal is indexed. Others also espoused the value of open access as a space for media engagement. Several noted that heir open-access pieces were more often read by and picked up in the media than those behind journal paywalls.

Finally, parts of the colloquium will be ongoing far into the future. The attendees were so pleased with the colloquium, they requested we host iterations every year—or at least some version in the years to come. They also requested we hold reunions and networking events at our academic conferences. In doing so, they suggested we could start to bring our ideas and approach into the existing and more formal academic spaces. They also suggested creating more tailored and structured networks across the career spectrums in our field. More advanced scholars volunteered to support graduate students by inviting them to guest lecture in their classes, review their forthcoming research projects, and/or help identify publishing opportunities. Thus, there is some irony in our aspirational vision for higher education. Paradoxically, our argument is that in making space for critical scholars to develop their/our work—that is, space in which to remain deeply critical of existing systems, rather than creating the expectation that all effort should be applicable to practice or directed (fruitlessly) toward reform—that work moves beyond criticism to placemaking (Swist & Kuswara, 2016), beginning to build exactly the kind of academic community that *should be*.

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Index[1]

[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

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