Resilience, Resistance, and Reclamation: Changing the Narrative of Higher Education

Cobretti D. Williams
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Resilience, Resistance, & Reclamation: Changing the Narrative of Higher Education

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A student-run, open-access journal, the Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs provides a venue for international, interdisciplinary scholarship that examines higher education and student affairs through the explicit use of critical frameworks. The journal strives to provide meaningful, intentional, and actionable scholarship that can effect change on and with campus and community, understanding their interdependence and interrelated nature. As such, this journal seeks to serve the promotion of justice in “openhanded and generous ways to ensure freedom of inquiry, the pursuit of truth and care for others” (Loyola University Chicago, n.d.).

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Cobretti D. Williams
Editor In Chief, JCSHESA
Loyola University Chicago

To Readers, Scholars, and Members of the JCSHESA Community,

Since the inception of our Journal in early 2015, the central goal was and continues to be a firm commitment to the publication of critical, progressive scholarship in higher education and student affairs. Fortunately over the years, authors, scholars, and community members have chosen time and time again to collaborate with JCSHESA to produce actionable research for practice. Even in the midst of our current socio-political climate, instead of limiting the voice of our Journal, we seek to amplify these voices at the height of what has been a tumultuous time for colleges and universities during the Trump-era Administration. As such, we bring you our timely second special issue: Resilience, Resistance, and Reclamation in the Trump-Era of Higher Education.

In service of our mission and this particular special issue, we choose to highlight stories, narratives, and experiences from the margins of higher education. Specifically, this issue centers on the prevalent areas of policy and practice in higher education impacted by the political actions of the federal, state, and local governments of the United States. Over the last few months, the Editorial Board, reviewers, and myself have worked hard to curate a collection of empirical articles, scholarly essays, and artistic pieces that convey the myriad ways students, faculty, and administrators find ways to resist, persist, and reclaim their right to equity in U.S. colleges and universities. Furthermore, by including non-traditional modes of “academic knowledge” such as poems, paintings, and drawings, we actively critique hegemonic systems of knowledge production in the academy and hopefully leave room for readers of this special issue to interpret, view, and gain consciousness of these narratives from different angles. Though not all pieces included in this issue are indicative of all the problems faced by higher education, we instead aim to offer a small glimpse into the reality of the many that are rarely seen, heard, or validated.

As the Editor in Chief of this Journal, I cannot be more excited to share the hard work of the authors, reviewers, and board members that went into this issue. I am thankful for their knowledge, efforts, and unshakable commitment to equity and justice for others. If there is one wish I have for readers of this special issue, and JCSHESA as a whole, it is to embrace the beauty and struggle you find between the methods, critical frameworks, and positionalities in this issue. Furthermore, I hope readers find the inspiration to resist, persevere, and reclaim the educational experience you deserve. I thank you again for reading our special issue.

In Solidarity,
Cobretti D. Williams

If there is one wish I have for readers of this special issue, and JCSHESA as a whole, it is to embrace the beauty and struggle you find between the methods, critical frameworks, and positionalities in this issue.
I

stitutions of higher education are sites of political and social contestation (Giroux & Giroux, 2004). With a history steeped in exclusion, segregation, political unrest, and glacial-paced progress, it is no surprise that educators within higher education continue to experience and illuminate issues, such as racism, colonization, and identity-based harm. The imperialistic “establishment of U.S. higher education is deeply rooted in racism/White supremacy, the vestiges of which remain palpable” (Patton-Davis, 2016, p. 317), particularly under the divinities of today’s presidential administration. The increasing familiarity of hate crimes, microaggressions, land acquisition, and identity-based violence on today’s college campuses reinforces the pervasive and persistent nature of racism and colonization in educational environments (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). These actions and their systemic counterparts result in an abundance of deleterious effects for students, faculty/staff, and institutions alike (Carnevale & Stroh, 2013; Goldrick-Rab, S., Kelchen, R. & Houle, J., 2014; Hamer & Yang, 2015; Pollock, 2008; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000). Knowing this, leaders within higher education must prepare to meet these realities directly should they wish to succeed and serve the communities they lead.

By invoking an applied critical leadership framework among association leaders (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012), educators stand to oppose status-quo leadership within the field’s professional associations.

Association Leadership and Priorities

To prepare students and staff for navigating diverse challenges, educators often rely on the direction, guidance, and thought leadership produced via professional associations. These associations serve as spaces for professional development, growth, and learning. They also shape the norms and practices within higher education by sponsoring seminal research, informing graduate preparation curricula (e.g., the use of the ACRA & NASPA professional competencies), and defining standards for successful practice (American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2015; Evans & Reason, 2001; Nuss, 1993). As such, those involved in professional associations play a crucial role in determining the priorities of higher education.

In the field of student affairs, these priorities have historically reflected a commitment to student learning, holistic student development, and student success. Fundamental, association-sponsored publications, including the The Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1937; American Council on Education, 1949), The Student Learning Imperative (American College Personnel Association, 1996), and Learning Reconsidered and Learning Reconsidered and Learning Reconsidered and Learning Reconsidered (Keeling, 2004; Keeling, 2006), enthusiastically support these pragmatic priorities and reinforce the consistent preparation and professionalization of student affairs professionals. While both important and necessary for informed and grounded practice, the priorities of higher education associations must broaden to address the present-day realities of racism and colonization.

Without a commitment to racial justice and decolonization, commitments to student learning, development, and success will only serve to perpetuate opportunity gaps and status quo learning environments within the academy. This work has not been realized within educational practice and scholarship. Veritably, recent scholarship has affirmed the ways in which educational research has actively ignored, subverted, or reinforced the effects of dominant and oppressive ideologies (Harper, 2012; Patel, 2016). It is time to reimagine our commitments within higher education. As educators and scholars seek to meet the needs of an ever-diversifying student body, facing an ever-increasing barrage of settler-logic and racialized harm, it is time for professional associations and those involved in these organizations to adopt a new and critical lens through which to view, sponsor, and advance research, practice, and priorities.

Although few research exists on the role of educators and their involvement in professional associations extending beyond historical accounts or the value involvement plays in socialization and career advancement (Chernow, Cooper, & Winston, 2003; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Young, 1993), we believe such settings are prime locations from which to explore the experiences and potential for critical association leadership. By invoking an applied critical leadership framework among association leaders (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012), educators stand to oppose status-quo leadership within the field’s professional associations. Rather than maintain business-as-usual approaches, association leaders can pivot away from passe practices, and instead, boldly advance strategic priorities addressing the exiguous and harmful realities racism and colonization impart within campuses.

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to explore what critical association leadership looks like using the authors’ own experience within ACPA-College Student Educators International, as we embarked on employing a Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization within the association beginning in 2016. As members of the association’s governing board and assembly leadership, both authors hold power and opportunity to employ critical leadership initiatives, each through their unique and varying social identities. As both a black, cisgender, straight, able-bodied man, and a white, cisgender, gay, able-bodied woman, our collective positions inform our employment as both a faculty member and practitioner, our understanding of critical association leadership.

By invoking an applied critical leadership framework among association leaders (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012), educators stand to oppose status-quo leadership within the field’s professional associations.

Rachel E. Aho
University of Utah

Stephen J. Quaye
Miami University
Aho & Quaye: Applied Critical Leadership

Overview of ACPA’s Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization

ACPA: College Student Educators International is a professional organization that centers the needs of student affairs educators (i.e., those who work on college and university campuses in various curricular offices). The mission of ACPA is to center student learning through its programs, practices, and scholarship (ACPA Mission, Vision, and Values, n.d.). Its leadership structure is comprised of 12 Governing Board members and five Assembly members. The Board is comprised of a president (i.e., vice president, president, and past president), five Directors (i.e., equity and inclusion, external relations, membership, professional development, and board membership), four member-at-large positions (i.e., faculty, entry-level, mid-level, senior-level), and the Executive Director (ACPA Governing Board, n.d.). The Governing Board provides direction for the association, correspondence to members on key policy and societal happenings, and assumes fiduciary responsibility for the association.

In November 2016, ACPA’s Governing Board held a retreat in Washington, DC, to discuss key issues affecting the association and to build relationships among newly elected board members. With the help of an external facilitator, the Board identified and narrowed several core issues with which ACPA and its membership were grappling. Repeatedly, race and racism emerged. Many attendees expressed their beliefs that all people of color were hurt and fearful of their lives amid more visible police brutality directed toward black and brown bodies (e.g., Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Alton Sterling, Tamir Rice). These actions, combined with the rise of racist rhetoric and violence during the 2016 Presidential campaign, created an urgent need on our campuses and for our members. Student affairs educators and students needed immediate guidance and leadership to address these issues. Consequently, ACPA’s Governing Board decided to center the experiences of people of color in the association and embarked on pursuing what we called the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice.

To ground this imperative and summarize its intent to members, ACPA and statement author, Dan Squire, released the below statement shortly after our retreat:

As educators and scholars seek to meet the needs of an ever-diversifying student body, facing ever-increasing harm, we can no longer view our professional participation through passive, ahistorical, career-serving, or environmentally neutral lenses.

ACPA will direct resources, energy, and time toward addressing racial justice in student affairs and higher education around the world. Our lens is intersectional, intentional, and directed. The focus is on reducing the oppression of communities of color at the intersections of their identities, knowing that all oppressions are linked and that the work is ongoing. Our goal is to provide leading research and scholarship; tools for personal, professional, and career development; and innovative practices and experiences for members. We strive to inform and reshape higher education. We move toward this goal knowing that the roles and daily tasks of our jobs are important to the functioning of colleges and universities. We also know that racial justice and the tasks of our jobs do not sit as dichotomous poles. Racial justice is at our core; it underlies the work we each must do every day, in every way we can (ACPA Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization, 2016, para. 1).

Broadening the Imperative

The release of this statement propelled our commitment forward. With excitement and trepidation, we boldly named this commitment to our members, stakeholders, and the greater public. Little did we know that by doing so, our priorities would give way to an important and critical shift in the very nature of the Imperative. As Governing Board members, we naively believed each of our members had a race, and thus, everyone should see their fit within this Imperative even if race was not a salient identity for some of our members (e.g., white people). Yet, shortly after unveiling this new direction, we received feedback from several Native American members indicating that racial justice did not fully capture or reflect their identities and experiences as Native Peoples.

Given the ways in which Native and First- Peoples have been colonized, these identities more often reflect a more complex, politized, and liminal space, one that is not necessarily racialized (Brayboy, 2005). As a result of this feedback, we expanded the Imperative to be more inclusive of Native, Aboriginal, and First-People’s experiences, thus resulting in our more aptly named Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization. The goal of ACPA’s Imperative is to dismantle systems of oppression that impact people of color and Native Peoples and move toward racial justice and decolonizing practices that reflect more collaboration, non-hierarchy, and respect of different voices, knowledge, and positionalities. This work requires reflexivity, compassion, and an understanding of our own capacity to learn and grow. These themes, indicative of our own voices and stories as association leaders, are shared below through the form of story as a means to illustrate the type of self-work and shifts that took place during the formation and implementation of ACPA’s Imperative.

The below vignettes capture snapshots of the authors’ personal reflections and experiences from January 2017 to January 2018. These written accounts, while composed for the purposes of this article, represent the most salient individual, summative stories resulting from numerous in-person conversations, emails, conference calls, and text messages regarding ACPA’s Imperative and its implementation. To give voice to our reflections within this piece, each author took turns writing the stories below by journaling, forward-
change within professional associations.

At present, it is unlikely most leaders view their professional involvement through a critical perspective. And yet, the majority of educators pursuasion involvement in some capacity throughout the course of their careers. As educators and scholars seek to meet the needs of an ever-diversifying student body, facing ever-increasing harm, we can no longer view our professional association as a site for passive, ahistori-

cally, career-serving, or environmentally neutral alliances. Consequently, the below discussion offers a different perspective, pushing educators to view their involvement, leadership, and contributions to professional associations critically, and with an eye toward liberato-

ry change.

An increasing number of frameworks exist from which to view leadership from a critical perspective (Dugan, 2017). A review of these frameworks is beyond the scope of this article, however, many characteristics within these frameworks overlap and are discussed in the forthcoming discuss-


In an effort to understand, I asked this person to share more about his experiences and immediately felt guilt over asking someone to provide this labor for me. This person painstakingly took time to explain the history of colonization and politicization among Native Peoples and suggested a reading for me to learn more. I left this conversation so downtrodden. I felt angry. I felt loss. I felt ashamed. “These four sentences reflect my internal dialogue offered both authors a deeper understanding of critical association leadership and pushed us forward our own commitments to continuing this work.

Stephen composed the first story when reflecting on ACPA’s initial release of the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice.

“Could how I have not? I mean, could how I have not?” I asked my counselor about this, and he helped me develop strategies for reducing my negative self-talk by noting when it is happening and not immersing my reflections and judging it. Finally, I moved forward. I developed a tangible action in which I could engage to move forward. That action was revisiting the imperative to be more inclusive and seeking feedback from those I trusted. I also con-

The above overview of ACPA’s Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization serves to contextual-

ize and situate one example of what we will heretofore refer to as applied critical leadership. This work and the the-oretical discussion that follows, is an imperfect, yet illustra-

tive, example of the ways in which association leaders can make use of critical perspectives to realize their agency, question taken-for-granted practic-

es, and lead in new ways in order to advance social

Critical Pedagogy

- critically considered education
- equity, diversity, and justice
- inclusivity as a means to support all learners

Critical Praxis

- developing the critical praxis

Critical Practice

- developing the critical praxis

Critical Theory

- developing the critical praxis

Critical Leadership

- developing the critical praxis

Santamaria (2012): A strengths-based model of leadership practice where educational leaders are encouraged to use

Transformed leadership (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012, p. 6) is often seen as a step forward as a means to provide them with an understanding of how to view leadership in new ways and to understand the implications of this shift for leadership practice. Applied critical leadership is the unifying commitment to advancing our Imperative and shifting our focus toward the enactment of these priorities. The work had only just begun.

Overview of Critical Leadership Perspectives

The above overview of ACPA’s Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization serves to contextual-

ize and situate one example of what we will heretofore refer to as applied critical leadership. This work and the theoretical discussion that follows, is an imperfect, yet illustrative, example of the ways in which association leaders can make use of critical perspectives to realize their agency, question taken-for-granted practices, and lead in new ways in order to advance social.
context of ACPA’s Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization, we start by reflecting on our experiences by means of exploring key principles of transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, and CRT/Tribal Crit.

Exploring Principles of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is driven by key principles relating to a leader’s ability to engage and empower people to go above and beyond within their organizations or institutions. This kind of leadership requires leaders to role model the behaviors they seek among their membership, maintain a focus on the redistribution of power, prioritize transparency in their leadership, and focus on educational change (Bass, 1985; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). This approach to leadership is inspiring, collaborative, and supportive. "To this end, transformational leadership has a more dynamic and imper-ative wherein leaders aim to destroy old ways of life to make ways for new ways of life, while articu-lating vision and values to keep empowered followers on a unified path" (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012, p. 3).

The below dialogue explores principles of transformational leadership within the context of ACPA's early adoption of the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization:

ACPA connections (Rachel). After the Governing Board decided to adopt the Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization, I was left with many questions about what came next. What did racial justice and decolonization look like in ACPA? Did we have resources to support this work? What types of work should be prioritized? How should we share this with our members? And most importantly, where did we start? I felt energized and inspired by what I believed to be a necessary change within our association and at the same time unsure of the steps to come. I knew that as an association, we had a monumental task ahead of us. We were centering within our association and at the same time unsure of what came next. What did racial justice and decolonization: I felt almost at a loss about how to begin. I just knew I had to do something. “Doing something” became my mantra of sorts as we moved into the first few months of imple-menting this imperative. I volunteered to craft timelines, joined reading groups, and facilitated focus-groups at our annual convention. I tried to say yes to as much as I could. I knew I couldn’t sit back. I had to do something.

To push past ambiguity, fear, and anxiety requires vulnerably stepping forward not always knowing what lies ahead. In doing so, our boldness and actions resist the status quo. For me, doing something meant sharing vulnerably and embracing the messiness and messing up. It meant own-ing my mistakes, modeling the way, and still engaging even in the face of uncertainty. It also meant being trans-parent with members that we are working to figure out the Imperative, don’t have all the answers, and yet, invite them to engage within their own circles and spheres. It also meant being vulnerable about missteps and work-ing to engage and do differently the next time.

ACPA connections (Rachel). This process is messy, and there is no infallible path forward. I agree. To push past ambiguity, fear, and anxiety requires vulnerably stepping forward not always knowing what lies ahead. In doing so, our boldness and actions resist the status quo. While demanding and taxing, particularly for our members of color and Native members, I appreciate how often I see myself and others come back to the table to re-engage, reimagine, and reinforce our original commitments.

As a board, we began to name this tension, remain-ing transparent in our thinking, communications, and conversations. We needed to be unified and remain clear about our intentions. While a step-by-step guide to racial justice and decolonization didn’t exist, we believed action and progress were possible. The Imperative, as written, called us out, urged us to act, and will us to act. We simply needed to start by doing something. Naming race. Talking about it. Reading about decolonization. Showing up for a webinar. Something.

ACPA connections (Stephen). As vice president and then president of ACPA as we moved this Imperative forward, I felt an immense pressure to get it right. I knew that given my blackness, folks would be looking at me for the answers. And I felt this immense pressure to not mess up, knowing that the stakes were high. If I messed up, it would give the resisters evidence to prove that this Imperative was flawed from the beginning. As a commun-icative person, I poured over every word, making sure the message was clear, error-free, and perfect. I felt scared, sometimes immobile, and unsure of what moving forward meant. And yet, I knew we had to do something, like Rachel suggested. For me, doing something meant sharing vulnerably and embracing the messiness and messing up. It meant own-ing my mistakes, modeling the way, and still engaging even in the face of uncertainty. It also meant being trans-parent with members that we are working to figure out the Imperative, don’t have all the answers, and yet, invite them to engage within their own circles and spheres. It also meant being vulnerable about missteps and work-ing to engage and do differently the next time.
how we related to each other and model that. We were concerned with fundamentally reshaping society to be more inclusive of people of color and Native Peoples. As such, we needed to engage with each other first and build that trust.

ACPA connections (Rachel). After our November re- treat, I knew that our conversations had only just begun. I felt a bond with those who were present at this retreat, but knew that this group represented only a handful of our total membership. There was a lot of work and trust to be built across our association. Within ACPA, these efforts started at our annual summer leadership meeting. Here, not only our Board, but all ACPA entity leaders would gather to learn about and begin the work associated with our Imperative. To say this was a “make or break” moment would be an understatement. If we had any chance of moving this imperative forward, we needed the full support of all our association leaders.

To begin, we started with dialogue. Rather than create bullet-point action plans, talk about assessing our success, or ruminate about whether or not this was the direction we should head, we paused, and turned to face one another. Before all other things, we engaged in dialogue. To begin, we started with dialogue. Rather than create bullet-point action plans, talk about assessing our success, or ruminate about whether or not this was the direction we should head, we paused, and turned to face one another. Before all other things, we engaged in dialogue.

We created a curriculum resources committee where members could bring and engage in dialogue about their collective experiences in order to develop these resources. We invited members across various social identities to join and to engage with each other in dialogue. As Rachel pointed out, there seemed to be a sense of urgency to move quickly. And the very colonialist and racist structures we were seeking to dismantle often required us to build relationships, invest time, and figure out what was happening before developing solutions that were not grounded in fully understanding the problem.

Exploring Tenets of Critical Race Theory

Theory/Tribal Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged out of a set of legal theories in the 1970s as a means to address and counter traditionally discriminatory, dominant, and inequitable social contexts (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Principles and values of CRT include an understanding of the pervasive and enduring nature of racism in society, the importance of storytelling and experiential knowledge, a rejection of ahistorical practice, and a critique of liberalism and colorblind practices (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT’s use in educational settings has been emphasized as one way to advance social justice and equity agendas, evaluate research, and possibilities for practice in a variety of educational settings (Parker & Villapando, 2007; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012).

Emerging from CRT, Tribal Critical Race Theory (Tribal Crit) focuses on the complex and political nature of relationships between both Indigenous and governmental entities. While CRT serves as a framework in and of itself, it does not address the specific needs of Tribal Peoples because it does not address American Indian’s liminality as both legal/political and racialized beings or the concept of “co-constitution” (McKinley & Brayboy, 2005, p. 429). Thus, Tribal Crit principles focus on ideas such as the endemic nature of colonization, the harmful impact of governmental policies on Indigenous people, and the customs, beliefs, and knowledge held by Native people (McKinley & Brayboy, 2005). Such theories and approaches are necessary additions to CRT (see also: Latina/o Critical Race Theo- try; Stefancic, 1997) should educators wish to challenge power structures inherent in racism and colonization and view leadership through these lenses.

The dialogue below explores principles of CRT and Tribal Crit both during and following ACPAs July 2017 Leadership Meeting:

ACPA connections (Rachel). I started to hear stories. On the main stage at ACPA’s Presidential Address, in conference rooms during focus groups, and at the hotel bar during our annual July Leadership training...I heard stories. Powerful stories giving voice to the individual and collective pain, struggle, and inequities faced by my Native colleagues and colleagues of color. These stories were bold, and they were brave. These stories and their storytellers named the realities of race, racism, colonization, and imperialism both in our institutions and in our association. While the stories were new to me, I have no doubt they were all too familiar to them.

These stories were truths and these truths gave rise to a list of six truths written by our Governing Board, thereby grounding our focus and situating our understanding of the work to come. We believed in the endemic nature of racism and colonization, its harmful impact on higher education, and our capacity to enact change.

It was not until later that I realized these truths so closely reflected principles within CRT and Tribal Crit. Despite my naivety at the time, I’m glad they did. This further grounded my understanding, gave credence to the collective understanding of our organization, and alerted me to the tools available to me as I shifted from “doing something,” to determining what “something” could matter the most.

As a white educator, I have a choice about whether or not to adopt a CRT and Tribal Crit lens. And yet, my involvement in ACPA has reminded me of the necessity of making this choice. As such, I know it is critical for me to revisit, reflect, and uplift the stories, voices, and truths reflect- ive of these theories. To do otherwise, is to relinquish my agency and accept the status quo. I would rather align myself with change.

ACPA connections (Stephen). Stories, stories, so many stories. Stories of pain, of hurt, of violence, of vulnera- bility. Stories of living in bodies viewed as dangerous, as hypervisible, and even as invisible. Rachel mentioned hearing stories — so many stories. How could I not hear stories and cry? How could I not reflect on my own sto- ries? I needed to hear stories of those with whom I am less familiar — in this case, stories from our Native members. Tribal Crit and CRT are not just theories. Stories are theo- retical and vice versa. These theories developed out of a need to hear stories that are often not heard in our white, supremacist, patriarchal, colonialist culture.

As a black person, I, too, have a choice about whether or
not to adopt a Tribal Crit lens. I can choose to center only my blackness and not see my other dominant identities as a cisgender, straight, educated, able-bodied person. The times I have done that, though, I have fallen short of what a decolonizing, intersectional lens means. And so, I push myself to move beyond my lack of knowledge and learn. I move from my awareness to action. In the hearing of stories and doing something with those stories, I honor the labor of the storytellers.

ACPA connections (Rachel). What do I do with the stories that others so graciously and bravely shared? Much like Stephen, I also asked myself what I needed to do in order to honor these stories and the unpaid labor that so often accompanied them? Surely, it would be easier to simply listen, nod my head, and then move on, but moving on in this current moving back to the way things always had been done and reinforcing the oppressive forces I sought to resist. As an aspiring critical leader within our association I committed myself to “change differently, speaking differently, behaving differently,” and engaging differently in my role.

I wanted to employ an applied critical leadership lens to my work and choose change. So instead of simply nodding and smiling, I chose instead to raise questions, read outside my white-washed bookshelf, investigate new topics within my doctoral research, put forward new policies within my professional practice, and make way for Santamaria’s (2012) deconstructed demonstration of pathways for the utilization of Santamaria and Santamaria’s (2012) applied critical leadership framework necessitates that people maximize opportunities for change and take risks to advance principles of social justice. In addition to the characteristics highlight ed above, Santamaria and Santamaria (2012) also encourage leaders to build trust with resistant constituents, engage in interest convergence through consensus-building, and remain conscious of fulfilling identity-based stereotypes. Such recommendations, while not without their merit in particular situations, may lean too heavily on satisfying white constituents and unfairly imply that the impetus for change rests more squarely on the labor and efforts of people of color and Native Peoples. Although Santamaria and Santamaria address this concern by stating that leadership efforts should be shared, perhaps the call for white professionals to enact critical leadership within their work is not strong enough. Thus, our assumption is that such efforts for critical applied leadership be enacted, in full, by all professional association leaders. We provide implications and recommendations for practice for doing so below.

**Implications for Practice and Conclusion**

As noted within this article, it is impossible to compile a step-by-step guide that wholly captures the work of racial justice and decolonization in professional associations, and yet, this work is needed now more than ever. The effects of racism and colonization continue to persist and their meaningful impacts are impressed upon students, faculty, and staff members. “ACPA’s Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization represents a powerful call to reframe and recognize the centrality of racism and settler colonialism in higher education, and to work toward restorative and transformative justice in and for our profession” (Poon, 2018, p. 18). As leaders in higher education, and involved members of higher education associations, we must prepare to address these realities and demonstrate applied critical leadership.

The work of racial justice and decolonization is broad, ongoing, multifaceted, and situated amid the overlapping spheres of our sociopolitical contexts and identities. While numerous opportunities exist for futurists to explore this type of critical association work, its utilization in practice is needed now. Thus, our hope is that the initial work of ACPA and our individual reflections within this article make visible new pathways for the utilization of Santamaria and Santamaria’s (2012) applied critical leadership framework. With hope, these pathways prompt educational leaders to enact their association involvement differently.

Our professional associations are “sites of opportunity” whereby possibility exists to “alter human probabilities” (Katzenelson, 2017, p. 184). Whether involvement takes place as a conference attendee, committee member, fundraiser, volunteer, presenter, discussant, or board member, each role affords professionals with some agency for change. The unique and diverse ways in which association involvement takes place allow for leaders to advance racial justice and decolonization through a variety of pathways, to alter probabilities, and advance justice.

While power and dominance undoubtedly show up in professional association work, we assert the belief that each person has power to recognize their agency via applied critical leadership in some way. Whether done by choosing to engage in critical dialogue, name racism and colonization when it appears in association practices, revisit conference keynote plans to lift up new voices, submit a program that views practice through a CRT/Tribal Crit lens, secure funding to sponsor scholarship around racial justice and decolonization, or advance board-level conversations to center racial justice and decolonization at the association-wide level, we urge professionals to choose something. Do something that matters, do something that disrupts the status quo, do something that realigns the priorities of our field with the realities of our world, and that gives way to new and more just practices. Do that kind of something.

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**References:**

Can be found at the end of this special issue.

**Suggested Citation:**

Late January 2017, never once having talked about anything other than mundane daily activities and the weather, my mother sheepishly asked about American xenophobia and racism. My mother heard a news segment about Donald Trump’s ascendance to the presidency: she wants to know how much he actually does not like immigrants and whether he actually “makes racism happen.” I sent her for asking, eight years too late, after investing most of my family’s income to make sure that I have a spot in the United States to follow the American dream. Who faults a mother for investing in her child’s future? She created my deservingness of the visa lottery. Donald Trump attacked in his speech is “The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program. “ Diversity is a threat to the President. For me and many other international students and workers on this land, the process that landed me here is a merit-based process, proving everything step of the way that we can speak English well, are financially self-sustainable, and are either academically well-prepared for school or especially skilled for “specialty” jobs. The most accurate frame to describe my American positionality is that I am a temporary worker, formally known as a “guest worker,” who “come to America for a short time, work for low wages, do not vote, have few rights and services, and then go home so that a new wave of workers without rights, or the possibility of citizenship and voting, can come in” (Lakoff & Ferguson, 2006, pp. 8–9). Paying tax and without suffrage, international students and workers by definition do not have representation, yet debates about our lives happen daily, always in reference to something or somebody else. Will temporary workers take American jobs? Are the foreign students studying bioengineering secretly creating biological weapons? Even when I proved my deservingness of the visa, the rule of the game changed arbitrarily; nobody is safe.

The Struggle for Worthiness of International Students and Workers

Hoa Bui
Miami University

January 2018, President Donald Trump announced his “immigration reform package.” The goal was to end “the visa lottery” and to “begin moving toward a merit-based immigration system—one that admits people who are skilled, who want to work, who will contribute to our society, and who will love and respect our country” (State of the Union, 2018, para. 87). Implied is the assumption that the visa lottery has brought in undeserving—unskilled, lazy, noncontributing, and unpatriotic—immigrants.

As in the case with the Alt-Right, and the embrace of American-first rhetoric in the United States, who holds a mother responsible for the reality of a society across the ocean where she has never been? In this reflection, I wrestle with the concepts of worthiness and deservingness in my life as a “nonresident alien” student and professional and interrogate the responsibilities that those like me might owe to others.

My journey to come to and stay in the United States is a perpetual personal struggle. While I continually manipulate my assets and resources in a supposed meritocracy to get to the American dream, I painfully live and learn the reality that such meritocracy is a myth. In his State of the Union Address on January 2018, President Donald Trump announced his “immigration reform package.” The goal was to end “the visa lottery” and to “begin moving toward a merit-based immigration system—one that admits people who are skilled, who want to work, who will contribute to our society, and who will love and respect our country” (State of the Union, 2018, para. 87). Implied is the assumption that the visa lottery has brought in undeserving—unskilled, lazy, noncontributing, and unpatriotic—immigrants.

To the President, because America should be a meritocracy, having such a system is un-American: the merit-based system is clearly a solution to the American immigration problem. A frame “imposes a structure on the current situation, defines a set of ‘problems’ with that situation, and circumscribes the possibility for ‘solutions’” (Lakoff & Ferguson, 2006, p. 1). “Lottery,” a loaded word, as a frame, conveys a random, skill-less, and risk-taking process. A luck-based fortune, such as the visa lottery, is neither deserving nor worthy. Tellingly, the visa lottery Trump attacked in his speech is “The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program.” Diversity is a threat to the President. For me and many other international students and workers on this land, the process that landed me here is a merit-based process, proving every step of the way that we can speak English well, are financially self-sustainable, and are either academically well-prepared for school or especially skilled for “specialty” jobs. The most accurate frame to describe my American positionality is that I am a temporary worker, formally known as a “guest worker,” who “come to America for a short time, work for low wages, do not vote, have few rights and services, and then go home so that a new wave of workers without rights, or the possibility of citizenship and voting, can come in” (Lakoff & Ferguson, 2006, pp. 8–9). Paying tax and without suffrage, international students and workers by definition do not have representation, yet debates about our lives happen daily, always in reference to something or somebody else. Will temporary workers take American jobs? Are the foreign students studying bioengineering secretly creating biological weapons? Even when I proved my deservingness of the visa, the rule of the game changed arbitrarily; nobody is safe.

Systemic disempowerment could continue to hit until people have nothing left to fight with. In March 2017, one month before the opening date of the H-1B visa petition and four months before the end of my legal status, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that starting April 3, it would suspend premium processing for all H-1B petitions, creating a backlog in processing time and potentially pushing me into illegal status. Without my department’s financial and legal support, I could not have been here. In April 2017, Donald

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Trump signed an executive order titled “Buy American and Hire American” that instructed federal agencies to closely regulate policies that granted work authorization such as the H-1B visa, which is the visa I am on. Multiple different American institutions—the university international offices, the U.S. consulate providing the visa, the Department of Homeland Security at the airport, and USCIS approving my legal status—exist to check for my deservingness to come and be here. The underlying assumption is that my legality is intimately dependent on my deservingness of and productivity within the American economy. As a student affairs professional, I still feel like a liar when affirming many international students’ beauty of diversity and their inherent worthiness of belonging and success.

One reason that many college officials use to convince international students and domestic students of the value of international students on campus is cultural diversity. That is, these international students will bring their cultures and contribute to the larger campus. I cringe at questions about “my culture” because the story is complicated. My Vietnamese story is not of an ideologically distant exotic land with a strange culture stuck in the past. My mother wholeheartedly believed in the “land of the superior” (in her words) so strongly that she started my ideological preparation as far back as I could remember. For most of the 1980s, my mother lived in a German rural town as an immigrant, so I was born, saw my family, and was raised there. The only connection to my Vietnamese culture was through a strict surveillance of the material things that were considered “Western” or “authentic.” I was taught to value the beauty of diversity and the Germans’ generosity. She raised me with tales of cultural and materialistic shock after she moved back to Vietnam—when she did not have sanitary pads, flushable toilet paper, or sunscreen.

Displaced from her childhood home due to bombing and having multiple family members die in the Vietnam War, she blames the Vietnamese government for not normalizing its relationship with the United States sooner so she could access Western goods and live its “advanced” values. “The bitterness and humiliations of the [imperialized] experience […] nevertheless delivered benefits—liberal ideas, national self-consciousness, and technological goods—that over time seem to have made imperialism much less unpleasant” (Said, 1994, p. 18). Along with bribing my teachers to excuse me from “unnecessary classes” so I could focus on the SAT and driving for hours a day to get me from school to my volunteer site to my test-prep class all at different corners of the city, we paid US$2,000 (40% of my family’s annual income) upfront to a Vietnamese study abroad agency to get professional help with my college application. I would not have been here, and my deservingness will not be recognized without my mother’s unyielding faith and investment in White imperial supremacy.

Ruminating over worthiness and deservingness does not change my reality, and I have the ability to act on it. Part of my reality includes facing questions of responsibility. Specifically, responsibility to whom? Upon which social and political conditions am I responsible to act? Spivak’s (1993) warning is not destiny because of my ambivalent position in relation to Western imperialism. Speaking English without a strong accent, fluent in popular cultural references, praised as the embodiment of exemplary working ethics, confident in my capabilities, and committed to democracy, my existence is a mimicry of the colonizer’s production: “translated” copies of the colonizer’s cultural habits, assumptions, institutions, and values (Andreotti, 2011, p. 26). Bhabha’s (1984) conceptualization of the “mimic men” and Frantz Fanon’s (1968) “native intellectual” both have a potential path to transformative colonial resistance (McLeod, 2000). Fanon’s (1968) three-phase process—unqualified assimilation, just-before-the-battle, and fighting—for the native intellectuals is helpful; yet, just as any theory is an imperfect reflection of reality, I am not sure it is applicable to me. My responsibility is to define this path for myself. I am not yet at the fighting phase where I am with my people reimagining, reinterpreting, and transforming the Vietnamese culture. That is where I would like to go.
Since taking office President Trump has been leading America into a downward spiral. Instead of uniting everyone, he has divided us as a country. It feels as if we're back in the 50s with racial segregation and discrimination. An example of this is the Charlottesville Rally where white supremacists went to protest the city's plan to take down Confederate monuments. The event turned violent after protesters clashed with counter-protesters. After seeing this play out on CNN, I was inspired to make an abstract representation of the event that took place during the rally as the counter-protester was attacked.

Context from the Artist:

Since taking office President Trump has been leading America into a downward spiral. Instead of uniting everyone, he has divided us as a country. It feels as if we're back in the 50s with racial segregation and discrimination. An example of this is the Charlottesville Rally where white supremacists went to protest the city's plan to take down Confederate monuments. The event turned violent after protesters clashed with counter-protesters. After seeing this play out on CNN, I was inspired to make an abstract representation of the event that took place during the rally as the counter-protester was attacked.

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Cultivating Resilience and Resistance in Trump’s America:

Employing Critical Hope as a Framework in LGBTQ+ Centers

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President Donald Trump’s infamous tweets have become almost commonplace in our current era. Every day, we wonder who he will offend, what human rights he will attempt to compromise, or who he might further marginalize. Nowhere is this as prevalent as for LGBTQ+ populations, who have been oppressed historically and whose status remains precarious. For example, in July 2017, Trump (2017) tweeted, “victory cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disrup- tion that transgender in the military would entail.” As the leader of the most powerful nation in the world, Trump has the upper hand. Under his administration, the Department of Justice is protecting taxpayer-fund- ed federal agencies, government employees, and govern- ment contractors who legally discriminate against LGBTQ+ employees for religious reasons, and the Department of Health and Human Services is eliminat- ing LGBTQ+ communities’ health needs from strategic plan for 2018-2022. These actions are harsh and unsettling, especially since Trump’s rhetoric and such policies give license to others to oppress and to continue to uphold a lega- cy of homophobia and transphobia in the United States. Since his election, we have seen a rise in hate crimes; the Southern Poverty Law Center, for example, “found 867 cas- es of hateful harassment or intimidation in the 10 days after the Nov. 8 elec- tion” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). To be clear, it is not solely Trump himself that is the prob- lem we identify. Rather, his taking office has lever- aged an ideology that oppresses LGBTQ+ peoples and other minoritized bodies. His presence has awakened, catalyzed, and most importantly legitimized a host of negativity in social spaces. The visibility of White Nationalists, for instance, has domi- nated the media in the last year, reflected in instances such as Charlottesville, Virginia or the appearance of swastikas across college campuses. This is surely not a coincidence.

It might seem then, that in such a political context, resistance and resilience would be futile. We believe, however, that just the opposite is true. This milieu necessitates response, on all fronts, now more than ever. In the space where we work, higher education, there are numerous opportunities for such efforts. One such arena is through LGBTQ+ centers on college campuses. As places that, by their very existence, dis- rupt the status quo, campus LGBTQ+ centers validate marginalized students and provide opportunities for their growth and support (Marine, 2011). Our current political climate, which resists diverse bodies, makes the need for such centers and their work of cultivat- ing hope, and thereby a commitment to struggle and change, even more urgent. Such centers and those who work within them offer tools for students to re- spond to and navigate these uncertain times.

Resilience is a term operationalized in multiple fields; however, we employ Nicolazzo’s (2017) reconcep- tualization of resilience as an action. For Nicolazzo, resilience is something that one has or does (e.g., an ability) but a practice (p. 88). Formulating resilience as an action helps us to construct how LGBTQ+ centers can them- selves (and can assist students) employ strategies “to overcome individual enactments of trans* oppression,” (Nicolazzo, 2017, p. 88) and determine “where and with whom one can best be successful and, thus, best navigate the collegiate environment” (Nicolazzo, 2017, p. 89).

And, just as we expand resilience, we also note that the manner in which one resists can vary. We recognize resistance broadly because we wish to validate each person’s agency in resisting in this tumultuous political cli- mate on their own terms. Resistance, then, could be voting or protesting, or it could be writing to a con- gressperson, or it could be sharing factual news on social media. It could also encompass a com- bination of these or even something different. Resistance cannot have a one size fits all definition because people must be able to resist within their given social contexts. Furthermore, individuals must be able to step back when they need a break, when they feel overwhelmed by emotion, exhaustion, or frustration. Resistance means they still return to the cause, but it understands that battle fatigue exist as a result of a host of oppressions, such as racism, cisgenderism, or sexism. Additionally, resis- tance cannot be left to those who find it convenient or, conversely, to who are most affected. It should be assumed by anyone who wants to fight against the dangerous rhetoric of Trump and his supporters and who wants to hope for a better world.

In this article, we posit that a critical hope framework (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) employed by campus centers can help foster resistance and resilience with LGBTQ+ students. While we focus on LGBTQ+ centers, this framework could be adapted to other centers that serve marginalized students. Additionally, LGBTQ+...
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(continued) Boyd & Jeffries: Employing Critical Hope as a Framework in LGBTQ+ Centers

centers cannot be the only campus entity to foster resilience and resistance in LGBTQ+ students. However, we recognize that the type of work that LGBTQ+ centers engage in on a daily basis, the space created, allows centers to cultivate resilience and resistance in LGBTQ+ students. In what follows, we explore the history of university centers for LGBTQ+ populations, describe the meaning and manifestations of critical hope, and offer five areas for critical praxis that allow for the disruption of the systemic oppression which we are witnessing today. It is our goal to demonstrate tangible ways that concerned citizens, staff, and faculty can better support university students and be agents of change in what may seem like dismal times.

LGBTQ+ centers

LGBTQ+ centers emerged after the Stonewall riots to support gay and lesbian students, and later shifted to include all diverse gender identities, expressions, and sexual orientations. The first center opened in 1971 at the University of Michigan, and today there are nearly 200 centers located at all types of institutions nationwide (Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Professionals, n.d.; Marine, 2011). The opening of many of these centers occurred as the LGBTQ+ rights movement had begun, but the LGBTQ+ community splintered into individual identities, which continued through the 1990s (Styker, 2008). In the 1980s and 1990s, more centers opened nationwide, mainly due to student activists (Marine, 2011). Now, most centers focus on all diverse gender identities/expressions and sexual orientations. These changes signify that centers and their staff recognize that as times and political climates change, the centers must change to adapt and meet the needs of the campus community.

LGBTQ+ centers assess campus climate for LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff (Damschroder, 2013; Marine, 2011). These assessments can then be used to argue for more resources, such as staff, funds, or space. Additionally, these assessments can offer evidence about harassment or microaggressions that students, staff, and faculty experience with the goal of targeting the cause and location of these issues in order to eliminate them. Centers also conduct assessments to assist with telling their story (Damschroder, 2013). This storytelling is imperative when most institutions do not track LGBTQ+ student retention through quantitative methods like other student services units. Therefore, LGBTQ+ centers cannot show impact easily from already collected information, which impacts the ability to demonstrate their benefit to students.

LGBTQ+ centers offer support to students who are experiencing turmoil or who need community (Damschroder, 2013; Marine, 2011). LGBTQ+ center staff are experienced in helping students in their coming out processes and navigating the institutional bureaucracy. Students who frequent the centers also offer support to their peers, sharing strategies that have worked for them and empathizing with students’ lives. These interactions create and cultivate community amongst LGBTQ+ students and their allies. This community is important as many students, especially those from more rural areas, may not have had this type of community in their hometown.

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LGBTQ+ center staff also often have the opportunity to educate others on needs and concerns for the LGBTQ+ community (Marine, 2011). These opportunities manifest as ally trainings or safe zone programs, which allow for members of the campus community to learn more about terminology, privilege, and coming out and to develop inclusive teaching strategies. These types of educational initiatives create the possibility to change people’s attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals. In a recent study, canvassers went door-to-door to talk to individuals in Florida for 10 minutes and talked about what “transgender” meant and offered information on both sides of a proposed repeal of a trans* protection law (Broockman & Kalla, 2016). These conversations greatly reduced prejudice against trans* individuals in those who participated (Broockman & Kalla, 2016). Thus, by exposing heterosexist and/or cisgender individuals to more information, institutions can potentially reduce prejudice against those who are marginalized.

LGBTQ+ center staff advocate for LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty as the de facto LGBTQ+ experts on campus. Advocacy efforts focus on changes in policies, practices, and behaviors of all members in a campus ecosystem. These vary by campus, but could include: name change policies, gender inclusive housing, and gender inclusive bathrooms. Students, and to a lesser extent, faculty and staff, expect center staff to advocate on their behalf and to amplify their voices to administration to change policies. Institutions have a myriad of policies and procedures that govern daily business. Many of these policies and procedures were created years ago without considering the diversity of the campus community. Now, Center staff, with help from the campus community, work to fix and reconstruct these policies. We return to a fuller discussion of these types of practices below, as each stems from a particular theoretical stance—that of critical hope.

Critical Hope

Attributed to the work of Duncan-Andrade (2009), the concept of “critical hope” denotes cautious optimism and progressive action in the face of structural oppression. Duncan-Andrade outlined several forms of hope that he does not wish to forward, offering instead more realistic and achievable styles. Those that he admonished begin with holy hope, “an individualistic up-by-your-bootstraps hyperbole that suggests if... youth just work hard, pay attention, and play by the rules, then they will... live out the ‘American dream’” (p. 182). The burden this places on a singular person is unfair, given that forces at work in institutional structures, much larger than any individual, often exist as obstacles precluding a person from reaching their potential at no fault of their own.

Mythical hope is the second form against which Duncan-Andrade (2009) warned, explaining this as the type that results when an opportunity for a certain population is won or a person from a marginalized group achieves success. This, he states, is a “false narrative of equal opportunity emptied of its historical and political exigencies” (p. 183) and "depends on luck and the law of averages to produce individual exceptions to the tyranny of injustice” (p. 184). Grand easures of history cannot occur simply because one person ‘makes it’. Finally, the third type of impractical hope, hope deferred, is an extreme opposite of holy hope. Rather than solely seeing the individual, hope deferred instead is paralyzed by systemic oppression,
Audacious hope, therefore, keenly discerns a challenging and potentially discouraging situation, such as living in the era of Trump and being a member of LGBTQ+ communities and strives for change.

Audacious hope means being “an indispensable person” (p. 187). The next form, Socratic hope, requires the practitioner to “painfully examine [their] lives and actions within an unjust society and to share the sensibility that pain may pave the path to justice” (p. 188). Socratic hope involves validating the feelings, including anger, of those who are exploit- ed or otherwise ignored in society. It requires a voiced recognition of the ways that oppression works and a commitment to constant support in any form, be that tangible items, constant support in any form, be that tangible items, emotional support, or self-sacrifice of time and energy. Even in the face of failure, Socratic hope assembles and commits to carry on.

Lastly, audacious hope, “boldly stands in solidarity” with marginalized communities, and “defies dominant ideology of defense, entitlement and preservation of privileged bodies” (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p. 190). Rather than focus on individual merits or shortcomings, audacious hope recognizes the collective and struggles with those who are most affected by oppression. Practitioners of audacious hope “help students channel” their pain or outrage in productive ways (p. 190) and recognize the value in each individual.

Audacious hope, therefore, keenly discerns a challenging and potentially discouraging situation, such as living in the era of Trump and being a member of LGBTQ+ communities and strives for change. We now turn to specific examples of current policies and marginalizing structures and explain how LGBTQ+ centers can employ the forms of critical hope that Duncan-Andrade theorized.

Critical Praxis

In this section, we posit a host of issues and actions reflective of Duncan-Andrade’s (2009) critical hope in order to facilitate students better capable of responding to their immediate local, national, and global contexts. We begin by focusing on one instance of an LGBTQ+ center that is under attack. We then explore Title IX, immigration, bathroom bills, women’s rights, and healthcare while recognizing that this list is neither exhaustive of the issues and rights targeted within this current administration nor are they completely separate. For each issue, we highlight its history and how it impacts students in LGBTQ+ centers. We then discuss how critical hope can be embodied to cultivate resilience and resistance to Trump’s oppressive rhetoric in each area.

One quick note before we discuss critical praxis: it can be easy to get trapped in what Duncan-Andrade (2009) labeled as hope deferred, described above. For some, especially those with privilege, telling others to wait it out or that it will get better is a sound solution. Practitioners might imagine that things will change in the next president’s administration. However, those who are not immediately affected cannot tell students, who are experiencing tremendous pain or concern for their safety or immigration status, that it will get better. This deferred hope is neither helpful, useful, or socially just, nor does this approach instill critical hope or resilience in students. Without resilience and resistance, things will not get better. Practitioners must therefore offer students prompt support and ways to protect themselves and their rights.

Center Existence

As centers continue to perform their daily functions in our current political era, at least one has already come under attack. In 2016, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UT) had the funding for its Office for Diversity and Inclusion, which included its LGBTQ+ center, rerouted to minority engineering scholarships by the state legislature for one year (Ohm, 2017b). Then in 2017, the UT Chancellor, Beverly Davenport, decided to hire a coordinator to lead the UT Pride Center (Ohm, 2017b). Several state lawmakers criticized this decision. Mae Beavers, a Republican gubernatorial candidate and former state senator, released a statement in which she said: It is disappointing that the new Chancellor has decided to ignore the clear intent and legitimate concerns of the Tennessee Legislature which defunded the [Office for Diversity and Inclusion] after it became obvious that bigness funds were being used to promote a radical agenda that did not reflect the values of the State and our citizens. (Ohm, 2017a, para. 2)

Beavers disagreed with the diversity office’s shift to inclusive holiday parties that did not mention Santa Claus or Christmas (Ohm, 2017a). While this is one example of an LGBTQ+ center under attack, the brazen condemnation on support services in one conservative state could create a ripple effect and impact other states.

The functions of an LGBTQ+ center have long been considered vital in cultivating resilience in LGBTQ+ students. The mere existence of centers, as in the case of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is considered radical by some. The existence of centers is therefore a form of audacious hope. Space on campus is important for those students who need to feel heard and to share their pain with others. This LGBTQ+ community is just as important to those who need to process the hurt and struggles they may experience in the world as it is for those who are in the midst of their coming out process. One way that space should include those in who are angry or “disobedient” because they often need the space the most (Duncan-Andrade, 2009).
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Immigration

Immigration, often viewed as a racialized issue, must be viewed as a social justice issue facing everyone. Social justice activists frequently, LGBTQ+ people are not thought of as undocumented immigrants and end versa. However, there are an estimated 267,000 LGBTQ+, undocumented immigrants in the United States (Gates, 2013). Immigration has become central to the Trump administration’s agenda. The focal point of the immigration agenda states between reform for undocumented immigrants who were brought here as children and construction of a wall along the Mexican border. We foreground the reform for undocumented immigrants because it impacts college students the most.

In September 2017, Trump and his administration announced that they would be ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). In March 2018, DACA, enacted by President Obama, deferred deportation for those who qualified and allowed them to work legally in the United States. To qualify for DACA, one had to: have come to the United States before they turned 16; be under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012; and not have any felonies or more than two misdemeanors (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d.). At the time of its revocation, nearly 820,000 individuals were enrolled in the DACA program (Conron & Brown, 2017). Of those 820,000 DACA recipients, it is estimated that 36,000 identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community (Conron & Brown, 2017). Upon the announcement as DACA was being rescinded, those whose status was set to expire before March 5, 2018 could renew their two-year exemption, but they only had one month to file and had to pay nearly $580.00 to maintain their immigration status.

This is just one instance where an LGBTQ+ center, depending on its financial resources, can provide material hope for a student. LGBTQ+ center staff can, and should if able, offer discretionary funds to students in need. These funds could be from the administration’s guidelines that Title IX’s ban on sex discrimination was complicated by the fact that in 2016 “the Trump administration rescinded the Obama administration’s guidelines that Title IX’s ban on sex discrimination should be interpreted to include gender identity discrimination” (Davis, 2017, p. 2). This decision led the Supreme Court to turn its attention to the HB2 debate soared, and in the “2017 legislative session, legislators in 15 states introduced HB2-type bills” (Journell, 2017, p. 340).

Given the political precedent of Title IX, it would seem that these bills are in violation of the federal government’s stance. However, as noted above, the landscape was complicated by the fact that in 2016 “the Trump administration rescinded the Obama administration’s guidelines that Title IX’s ban on sex discrimination should be interpreted to include gender identity discrimination” (Davis, 2017, p. 2). This decision led the Supreme Court to turn its attention to the HB2 debate soared, and in the “2017 legislative session, legislators in 15 states introduced HB2-type bills” (Journell, 2017, p. 340).

Nonetheless, it is imperative that the raw, sometimes unfathomable, often times uncomfortable truth be told. But one of the most taxing aspects of revealing these truths is that people believe we exist in a “post-racial” society.

Bathroom Bills

In recent years, so-called “bathroom bills,” or legislation attempting to regulate the facilities to which trans* individuals have access, have increased and have incited much public debate. As mentioned previously, the Obama administration issued protections for trans* individuals under Title IX. As these students were “secured the right to use bathroom facilities consistent with their gender identities” (Rushin & Carroll, 2017, p. 8-9), a backlash occurred, evidenced by thirteen states filing suits against the federal government for its ruling, feeling that their rights were compromised and, eventually, proposals for bathroom bills emerged.

Perhaps the most well-publicized of such legislation is North Carolina’s House Bill 2 (HB2) passed in 2016, which “required individuals to use the bathroom that corresponded to the sex on their birth certificate as opposed to the gender with which they identified” (Journell, 2017, p. 339). Proponents advocated that the bill would serve to protect women and children from sexual predators while opponents argued that such a policy was a violation of human rights, that “equal access to public restrooms is a fundamental human right that predicates democratic participation of any kind” (Davis, 2017, p. 3). Others have noted that such laws “criminalize the trans* community” by “explicitly establishing a new criminal offense category for trans individuals who use bathrooms consistent with their gender identities” (Rushin & Carroll, 2017, p. 16).

Opening the door for public and private policing and creating difficulty in implementing such policies, pun- dits have noted how dangerous the bill could be. And, as Samar (2016) wrote, “use of a bathroom or locker room isn’t only about excretion or changing clothes. Both involve the individuals’ intersection with the dominant culture and the ways that culture reflects on either supports or rejects the deeply felt identity of the user” (p. 38). Thus, there are broad scale issues at play in this controversy about who society values and how they communicate those beliefs. Media and national attention to the HB2 debate soared, and in the “2017 legislative session, legislators in 15 states introduced HB2-type bills” (Journell, 2017, p. 340).

Given the political precedent of Title IX, it would seem that these bills are in violation of the federal government’s stance. However, as noted above, the landscape was complicated by the fact that in 2016 “the Trump administration rescinded the Obama administration’s guidelines that Title IX’s ban on sex discrimination should be interpreted to include gender identity discrimination” (Davis, 2017, p. 2). This decision led the Supreme Court to turn its attention to the HB2 debate soared, and in the “2017 legislative session, legislators in 15 states introduced HB2-type bills” (Journell, 2017, p. 340).

While HB2 is only one example of a bathroom bill and other states have not officially passed similar legislation, the introduction of such policies, the public support they have garnered, and the federal government’s reaction is three reasons why lawmakers reached prohibits state agencies, including public universities, from creating nondiscrimination policies. Thus, establishing protections for LGBTQ+ populations is not feasible under this guidance.

Religiously-affiliated schools then filed for exemptions from Title IX to continue to discriminate against members of the LGBTQ+ community. In response to these school exemptions, the OCR openly posted the institutions that received an exemption.

In early 2017, Trump’s Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, revoked the April 2014 clarification that explicitly stated that Title IX offered protections for trans* students (Holden, 2018). In mid-February 2018, the Department of Education announced it is going to change who universities must report sexual misconduct to, and that it will not investigate or take action if a trans* student is not allowed to use a bathroom that aligns with their gender identity (Holden, 2018). Undoubtedly, this is a phenomenon that is in need of change, and practitioners can learn more about how to better am- plify student voices when meeting with administration in hopes of changing institutional policy to be more intentional and thoughtful toward trans* student needs. In addition, practitioners can, through validat- ing students, encourage them to advocate for material change, such as institutional protections, should the state law allow. This cultivates resistance to Trump’s policies by finding local solutions when federal protec- tions are no longer in place.
has shown that trans* people may avoid using the bathroom while in public, causing serious health problems (Herman, 2013). Neither of these consequences is what we should want for our university students.

How then, can LGBTQ+ centers and practitioners who work within the face of this widespread debate and against the backdrop of Trump's legislative move? First, LGBTQ+ centers can offer all-gender bathrooms if possible, and they can help students locate across campus, mapping out where they are in relation to students' classes. In 2016, Time magazine reported that more than 150 U.S. colleges and universities have gender inclusive restrooms on their campuses (Steinmetz, 2016). This is a positive move, and staff in centers can advocate for more all gender bathrooms on their campuses, since "schools are obligated to protect the safety, both physical and emotional, of all their students" (Watkins & Moreno, 2017, p. 170). This is, in essence, the cultivation of material hope—students are being provided with tangible resources they need to live productively and healthily.

As Watkins and Moreno (2017), noted, however,Sadly, many schools have no specific policy in place, relying on state legislative language, which in many cases does not protect the rights of transgender students. Schools will be better served by crafting policy using a comprehensive policy model that safeguards all students. (p. 169)

Therefore, staff in centers must also amplify students’ voices and challenge institutional policies, or lack thereof, that marginalize LGBTQ+ students, working to ensure that safety and security are guaranteed. When it comes to bathrooms, centers can be the force that push for those facilities, rather than placing the burden entirely on students to secure their needs. As a form of audacious hope, then, centers can be assisted in navigating the complex bureaucracy often encountered when initiating new programs. When students feel supported and safe, they are more likely to use restrooms as designated by their gender identity. When LGBTQ+ centers advocate for more all-gender bathrooms, they are not only fulfilling their own mission and vision, but also creating a safer environment for all students.

Healthcare
Healthcare, deemed by many to be a human right, is constantly under siege by the Trump administration and Republican congresspersons. While there are myriad issues in healthcare that impact LGBTQ+ communities, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment is one of the most salient. HIV/AIDS has long been coupled with the LGBTQ+ community. In the early 1980s, President Reagan did not acknowledge the burgeoning epidemic, and his press secretary infamously disregarded the disease in the audio documentary. When AIDS was funny (Calonico, 2015), the earliest cases were linked to gay men, and thus were deemed not worthy of public concern (Calonico, 2015). HIV/AIDS did not only affect gay men, which was recognized later, but it nonetheless still greatly impacts the LGBTQ+ community.

At the end of 2017, the Trump administration dismissed the remaining members of the HIV and AIDS Council (Guarino, 2017). This Council has advised the White House on HIV/AIDS policy since its inception under President Clinton in 1995 (Guarino, 2017). Additionally, Trump's administration has threatened the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which is imperative for those who receive coverage and are living with HIV/AIDS. Under ACA, individuals cannot be dropped or denied coverage because of a pre-existing health condition, such as HIV/AIDS (n.d.). Additionally, the ACA required most plans to cover certain preventive services, such as HIV testing for those between the ages of 15 and 65 (HIV.gov, n.d.). According to UNAIDS (2014), worldwide trans women are more likely to contract HIV. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017) estimate that 70% of new HIV infections were among gay and bisexual men.

These statistics clearly demonstrate that HIV/AIDS is very much a LGBTQ+ issue. The Trump administration's desire to change the ACA and dismantle the HIV and AIDS Council is direct attacks on the LGBTQ+ community. Currently, only 34 states and the District of Columbia mandate HIV education, but there is not a requirement for all of these states to be medically accurate (Guttmacher Institute, n.d.). In addition, few states require conversations around sexual orientation, and of these states, three states allow for only negative information on sexual orientation (Guttmacher Institute, n.d.). Thus, with, limited, and, sometimes false, information being taught in K-12 schools, college students may be misinformed about the necessity for HIV/AIDS testing or how HIV is contracted.

Due to this misinformation or lack of information, LGBTQ+ centers can provide education, and if necessary, work with other groups to offer preventative services. These entities should be based in audacious hope because the history of the United States is rife with oppression and injustice. HIV/AIDS is a painful reminder of the past and how little elected officials cared about LGBTQ+ communities as they were dying. Practitioners can demonstrate audacious hope by talking about this painful memory by using the numerous documentaries that either foreground HIV/AIDS or have HIV/AIDS as an important plot component. Additionally, Duncan-Andre (2009) wrote, "Audacious hope stares down the painful path; and despite the overwhelming odds against us making it down that path to change, we make the journey again and again." (p. 191). While the perilous path is eerily similar to that of years ago, there is significantly more information and medical interventions to help prevent and treat HIV/AIDS. Therefore, LGBTQ+ centers, as a reflection of collective hope, can also employ material hope when initiating new programs around safer sex, advocating for HIV/AIDS prevention, and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and promoting condom use.

Gender-Based Violence
As illustrated with our focus on immigration, LGBTQ+ students' identities overlap with multiple others that warrant support and advocacy. These intersectionalities also include women's identities. President Trump's notorious and sexually explicit comments about his treatment of women are now well known, having been publicized just before the election in 2016. In the wake of Trump taking office, millions of people all over the country united through the Women's March to demand, amongst others, reproductive and women's rights. The Washington Post reported the marches were "the largest single-day demonstration in recorded U.S. history" (Chenoweth & Pressman, 2017, para. 1).

As the year unfolded, a number of related movements took flight, including the #MeToo campaign, which surfaced after multiple Hollywood actresses shared their harrowing accounts of sexual harassment by film producer Harvey Weinstein. Although begun in 2007 by Tarana Burke, a Black female, the movement gained attention particularly through White feminists. Thus rightly critiqued by women of color, #MeToo nonetheless became an overwhelming call to come forward with their own stories of sexual assault. Acknowledging "it has actually been simmering for years, decades, centuries", many women in leadership roles took on the charge, avowing they "have had it with..."
In these turbulent times, LGBTQ+ centers are more vital to cultivating students’ resilience from hate and resistance to oppressive systems. As practitioners, we can employ critical hope as a framework to help cultivate students’ resilience and resistance to Trump’s omnipresent oppressive regime.

Case after case of sexual assault and harassment continues to emerge. Matt Lauer was fired from his twenty-year run on the Today show upon evidence of sexual misconduct and Dr. Larry Nassar, Michigan State University and USA gymnastics physician was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison for his crimes against women. Students on university campuses, as part of the general public, are witness to these atrocious stories and the movements that are ensuing as a result. Many college women are also part of the response, taking part in protests and marches. And, many have stories of their own to tell. The Bureau of Justice Statistics found in a 2016 study of nine campuses that 21% of men reported experiencing sexual assault since the beginning of their college careers, with higher rates reported by non-heterosexual college women (Krebs, et al. 2010). Every school, under Title IX, must ensure the safety of the environment that is ripe for abuse and harassment against women. Therefore, we call for a significant increase of women in positions of leadership and power across industries. In addition, we seek equal representation, opportunities, benefits, and pay for all women workers, not to mention greater representation of women of color, immigrant women, disabled women, and lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, whose experiences in the workforce are often significantly worse than their white, cisgender, straight peers. The struggle for women to break in, to rise up the ranks and to simply be heard and acknowledged in male-dominant workplaces must end, and time’s up on this impenetrable monopoly.

(‘Dear sisters,’ 2018).

Recognizing the ways that women’s identities intersect with other facets of positionality and how those create inequitable access to power, the movement seeks to address such injustices.

bosses and co-workers who not only cross boundaries but don’t even seem to know that boundaries exist. They’ve had it with men who use their power to take what they want from women” (Zacharek, Docter, & Edwards, 2017, para. 8).

Now, the “Time’s Up” campaign, led by over 300 women in film, television, and theater, is a commitment to supporting women’s rights and has an established legal defense fund housed by the National Women’s Law Center to subsidize legal costs associated with sexual harassment suits. The initial open letter published from participants read:

They’ve had it with the code of going along to get along. They’ve had it with men who use their power to take what they want from women” (Zacharek, Docter, & Edwards, 2017, para. 8).

Too many centers of power—from legislatures to boardrooms to executive suites and management to academia—lack gender parity and women do not have equal decision-making authority. This systemic gender-inequality and imbalance of power fosters an environment that is ripe for abuse and harassment against women. Therefore, we call for a significant increase of women in positions of leadership and power across industries. In addition, we seek equal representation, opportunities, benefits, and pay for all women workers, not to mention greater representation of women of color, immigrant women, disabled women, and lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, whose experiences in the workforce are often significantly worse than their white, cisgender, straight peers. The struggle for women to break in, to rise up the ranks and to simply be heard and acknowledged in male-dominant workplaces must end, and time’s up on this impenetrable monopoly.

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*References: Can be found at the end of this special issue.*

In November 2016, Republican candidate Donald Trump won the presidential election with 304 electoral votes over Democrat Hillary Clinton's 227, despite the difference of 2.9 million in the popular vote in favor of Clinton. The discriminatory and hate-filled rhetoric of the Trump campaign raised concerns that the advancement of rights for “sexual and gender minorities” made under President Barack Obama’s administration would be limited or rescinded (Veldhuis et al., 2018). The discourse of campus sexual violence from the current administration reflects dominant narratives of rape that “blame the victim, question the victim’s credibility, imply that the victim deserved being raped, denigrate the victim, and trivialize the rape experience” (Ward, 1988 as cited in Nagal, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005, p. 726). Negative attitudes toward rape victims are exacerbated by perceptions of race, culture, and gender (Collins, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989; Nagal et al., 2005). Feminist analysis using a critical lens recognizes intersections of identities and the impact these have on marginalized groups (Biklen, Marshall & Pollard, 2008; Shaw, 2004). Utilizing feminist critical analysis, I aim to expose the prevailing power relations in Title IX policy for a more complete understanding of its implementation from the perspectives of both policymakers and those affected by the policy (Shaw, 2004, p. 57).

Feminist critical analysis can be applied to the spectrum of sex-based discrimination defined by Title IX. However, for this analysis, I will focus specifically on regulations regarding sexual violence and rape. According to the Office of Civil Rights, sexual violence refers to “physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or where a person is incapable of giving consent; including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion (United States Department of Education, 2011, p. 1). In this article, I begin with an overview feminist critical policy analysis and explain its use to analyze Title IX guidance. Next, with the intent to expose the intersections of sexism with other forms of oppression and further marginalization, I use feminist critical thought to (a) examine rape; (b) review the implementation and responses to the 2011 DCL; and (c) examine the five significant changes in the recent Title IX guidance. Finally, I will provide discussion points to facilitate future considerations for Title IX implementation.

Feminist Critical Policy Analysis

Feminist critical analysis problematizes policies to reveal sexism and discrimination, including racial, sexual, and social class biases, inherent in commonly accepted theories, constructs, and concepts (Bensimon & Marshall, 2003, Marshall, 1999). According to Marshall (1997 as cited in Shaw, 2004), White, well-educated males dominate approaches to policy analysis; therefore, the worldview of this group is valued and widely accepted. Feminist critical analysis reveals androcentrism (centered on male or masculine interests) in the ways policies exclude women or proclaim neutrality, essentially disenfranchising or denying women opportunity, agency, or power (Biklen, Marshall & Pollard, 2008). Simply adding sex, or women, as a protected class is not in itself transformative (Bensimon & Marshall, 2003; Shaw, 2004). The key tenets of feminist critical theory provide a critical lens toward the goal of challenging dominant structures that deny access to power and further oppress marginalized groups. First, gender must be the center of analysis, whereby assessment of structures and policies is gender conscious, not gender blind or neutral (Bensimon & Marshall, 2003; Shaw, 2004). As in critical theory, lived experiences are essential in data collection. Feminist critical policy analysts rely on the “lived experiences of women, as told by women, and they also utilize discourse analysis to uncover the ideologies and assumptions embedded in policy documents” (Shaw, 2004, p. 59).

Analysis must be viewed from the counter narratives and voices of those disenfranchised or discriminated (Bensimon & Marshall, 2003). Critical feminism recognizes the intersections (Crenshaw, 1989) of gender, race, sexuality and social class; thus, the purpose of this approach is not to develop a generic universal understanding of the human experience, rather it is to underscore the ways in which these identities vary the effects of policies (Shaw, 2004). Finally, feminist critical policy analysis must be transformative, a form of action research (Bensimon & Marshall, 1997 as cited in Shaw, 2004). Using Feminist Critical Analysis with Title IX

One could assume that a feminist critical policy analysis framework was applied at all levels of amending Title IX because sex is a variable in the policy. Or...
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Halley (2015) called out feminists within the governance of Title IX for their support of the “Megaphone for the Gavel” approach to Title IX enforcement, “not to undermine but to bolster” (p. 344). These changes have had much of their attention on students accused of sexual violence. Many of the examples used to support this claim follow the dominant narrative of sexual violence. In doing so, Title IX provides a venue for false reporting against innocent White male students (Joyce, 2017; Taylor & Johnson, 2015; Yoffe, 2017). Employing feminist critical analysis has the potential to fully realize the spirit of Title IX by revealing the group that are being excluded by the policy (Collins, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991; Marshall, 1999; Shaw, 2004). Feminist critical scholarship is limited in regards to Title IX because it only explores its prevailing ambiguous status. However, the basis of gender in Title IX and the complexities of sexual violence fortify how the per- ceptions of sexual violence and the policy remain political, hence, a feminist critical approach is exceptionally appropriate.

An area of contention in using feminist critical analysis on Title IX is that the policy is inherently gender-charged, whereas the literature on this method is typically applied to seemingly neutral structures. Instead of focusing on gender in this policy, feminist critical analysis problematizes the policymakers and the political processes that govern gender. Activism to implement Title IX guidelines was led by policymakers who may identify as feminist and advocate for Title IX enforcement. In her article “Trading the Megaphone for the Gavel in Title IX Enforcement,” Halley (2015) called out feminists within the government that pushed for the Obama-era Title IX regulations (p. 103). These “strategic feminists” (Bensimon & Marshall, 2003, p. 347) or “femocrats” (Frazon, Court, & Connell, 1989 and Watson, 1990 as cited in Marshall, 1999, p. 66) perhaps neutralized the discourse of campus sexual violence as all-inclusive to remain at the table for governmental power over Title IX regulations (Collins, 2016; Halley, 2015). Although this tactic conflicts with critical feminism, the use of heterocentrism (assumption that all people are heterosexual), traditional policy analysis believes in a single truth and assumes objectivity is achievable and desirable (Shaw, 2004), contrary to critical analysis. Critical feminism threatens power structures by revealing the potentially flawed in practices and decisions that would otherwise be normalized and accepted. Bensimon and Marshall (2003) explain that traditional analysis positions gender as an environmental variable referring “only to those areas both structural and ideological involving relations between the sexes and therefore gender is not seen as relevant to issues where gender is not explicit” (p. 344). “As an environmental variable the implication is that gender is a concept associated with the study of things related to women” (Bensimon and Marshall, 2003, p. 344), thus, only problematizing women. A feminist critical approach would position gender as a category of analysis instead of an environmental variable shifts interpretation away from problematizing women “blame-the-victim or change-the-victim approach” (Bensimon and Marshall, 2003, p. 344). Consequently, reframing questions using this approach changes the focus of the solution. I hope to disrupt the discourse of campus sexual violence by reframing the analysis of Title IX reform, and provide critical discourse for professionals in higher education.

Title IX Analysis

Rape

Interestingly, much of the literature used to examine Title IX in this article does not include a definition of rape, beginning instead by providing a base for understanding gendered violence. rape is complex is as an essential component in analyzing Title IX policy. The common denominators in the various definitions of rape are sexual and involve coercion, power and the absence of consent (Estrich, 1986; Hickman & Muenhjard, 1999 as cited in Jodkowski, 2015; Rape Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), 2018). Rape laws have been adjusted over the years to include forms of sexual violence other than penile penetration of the vagina (Corsig, 2013). For example, some statutes vary in recognizing anal penetration, stipulations around statutory rape, oral penetration by a sex organ, digital penetration, penetration with foreign objects, rape between married individuals, and so forth.

Conceptualization of rape follows the dominant narrative in which White cisgender women are victims of rape by straight, cisgender men of color (Crenshaw, 1991; Harris & Linder, 2017). This patriarchal and racist perception constructs stereotypical attitudes toward victims (Crenshaw, 1991; Davies & Hudson, 2011; Nagal et al., 2005) and disregards the experiences of survivors of color; transgender and male survivors; lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer survivors; and survivors with disabilities (Crenshaw, 1991; Harris & Linder, 2017). In rape law, “the male standard defines a crime committed against women, and male standards are used not only to judge the conduct of women victims” (Estrich, 1986, p. 1091). The widely accepted patriarchal view of women’s sexuality places it property-like aspect, while men’s sexuality and even sexual aggression is celebrat ed (Crenshaw, 1991). Additionally, traditional gender roles shape attributions of rape victimization. Consequently, victims that deviate from socially accepted gender roles (i.e. transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer) experience higher rates of sexual violence, but the stigmatization of their identities pushes them further to the margins, limiting access to services and justice (Davies & Hudson; 2011; Grubb & Turner; 2012; Veldhuis, et al., 2018). Racism ascerts who is capable of committing rape and who can be raped. The stereotype that perpetrators of rape are usually men of color is upheld by the sensationalized focus on savage or animalistic representations of Black men (Crenshaw, 1991). The hypersexualization of Black women, and commodification of Asian women, narrows the perception of “true victims” to White females, eliminating the experiences of sexual violence in communities of color (Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Harris, 2017; Harris & Linder, 2017). These patriarchal and racist views reinforce misconceptions of what constitutes “real” (Estrich, 1986, p. 1088) rape versus, for lack of a better term, non-traditional rape.

At the forefront, the combination of sexual penetration and the absence of consent criminalize rape, yet 95% of the majority of rape cases are not referred for prosecution, and seven lead to felony conviction (RAINN, 2018). Due to this biased system, sexual violence remains a highly underreported crime. Federal statistics show that referrals and court cases for cases of sexual violence in 2018. 310 are reported to law enforcement, 11 of those are referred for prosecution, and seven lead to felony convictions (RAINN, 2018). RAINN (2018) indicates women and girls experience sexual violence at high rates; one in six American women being victims of attempted or completed rape.

Through a feminist critical lens, the disproportiona- te number of offenders convicted of rape versus the number of women actually impacted by sexual violence reveals a prejudiced system governed and privileged by men. Despite updates in rape laws to expand the discourse of sexual violence to look beyond the act of intercourse and include dynamics of power and control, the burden to prove victimization continues to fall on the survivors from the dominant narrative of rape questions everything about the survivor’s behavior (prior and current) and...
identities that contributed to the act of sexual viola- tion. Ultimately, the policies and statutes associated with determining whether a crime of rape occurred, not to mention guilt or innocence, perpetuate a systematic oppression of females: Part of the intellectual and political effort to mobilize around this issue (rape) has involved the development of a historical critique of the role that law has played in establishing bounds of normative sexuality and in regulating female sexual behavior. Early carnal knowledge statutes and rape laws understood within this discourse to illustrate that the objective of rape statutes traditionally has not been to protect women from coercive intimacy but to prevent and maintain a property-like interest in female chastity (Cren-shaw, 1989, p. 157).

Campus Sexual Violence and the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter

Despite heightened attention to campus sexual violence recently, rape on college campuses is not a new concept. Sexual violence in postsecondary institutions has remained consistent, with 20-25% of college women experiencing rape or attempted rape (Jessup-Anger & Edwards, 2015). In addition, male college students are approximately five times more likely than their non-student counterparts to be victims of rape or sexual assault (RAINN, 2018). In the light of what is now known as Title IX reform, I ask you to think beyond the legal requirements, a handful of institutions examined their sexual violence procedures that standardized how to address campus sexual violence. Institutions examined their sexual misconduct policies to find outdated, ineffective and irrelevant procedures. IHE designated individual Title IX coordinators to receive all reports of sexual violence and coordinate services and investigations accordingly. State agencies dedicated more resources to implement new policies and, with increasing national attention on campus rape, institutions could no longer sweep the issues under the rug. Female students were provided options to report rape and figure out what they could do to take back control in their lives. Going beyond the legal requirements, a handful of institutions allocated resources establishing support services for accused students. The discourse on campus rape began to shift the focus from females making false reports of rape, to Title IX policy and institutional responses to sexual violence. As anticipated, the potential to hold men and colleges accountable for false accusation and harassment by men, justified by an imaginary emergency, and a betrayal of the Title IX equity law (Sommers, 2011, para. 17). A myth resurrected the procedures meant to protect students as a declaration of martial law against men, justified by an imaginary emergency, and a betrayal of the Title IX equity law in new Title IX guidance (2014). Under VAWA, institutions are required to: 1) Report domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, immediately charging the then administration with encouraging institutions to violate an individual’s right to due process. In their National Review publi- cation "The New Standard for Campus Sexual Assault: Guilty until proven innocent," Taylor and Johnson (2015) disputed the federal findings identifying three myths about campus rape: that it is epidemic exists, that it is becoming more problematic, and that nearly all males accused of rape are guilty. The authors claimed that one in thirty women as opposed to the one in five Obama claim are assaulted while in college, and note an increase in accusations against innocent students. A contributor to the Chronicle of Higher Education boldly described the procedures meant to protect students as a "declaration of martial law against men, justified by an imaginary emergency, and a betrayal of the Title IX equity law." In anticipation of Title IX reform under the Trump administration, states and institutions initiated procedures to codify campus sex assault policies established under the previous administration. Since her confirmation hearings in early 2017, Secretary DeVos hinted at changes to the previous Title IX guidance. In July 2017, concerns arose when she held meetings with questionable stakeholders regarding policy change (Kreighbaum, 2017). Citing atypical Title IX cases mishandling reports of rape, DeVos announced her intent to review the Obama-era guidance and criticized IHE with running "kangaroo courts" (Rothman, 2017).

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4. Grievance procedures for students to file com- plaints of sexual violence must be provided. Pro- cedures must include equal opportunity for both parties to a) present witnesses and evidence, and b) the same appeal rights; 5. The preponderance of evidence standard must be used to resolve complaints of sexual discrimination; and 6. Both parties must be notified of the final outcome of the complaint (United States Department of Education, 2011). The Department of Justice (DOJ) reinforced the importance of universities to address sexual violence and intimate partner violence in the 2013 Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) under its Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act) provision, Section 304 (American Council on Educa- tion, 2014). Under VAWA, institutions are required to: 1) Report domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, beyond crime categories the Clery Act already mandates; 2) Adopt certain student discipline procedures such as for notifying pro- tected victims of their rights; and 3) Adopt certain institutional policies to address and prevent cam- pus sexual violence, such as to train in particular with respect to institutional personnel (American Council on Education, 2014). The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (Task Force) followed suit and identified four areas of priority in addition to the OCR and DOJ requirements: 1) conduct campus climate surveys to understand the extent of the problem; 2) prevention education and engaging men to change attitudes, behavior and culture; 3) effective response to reports of sexual violence; and 4) increase transparency and improve enforcement of Title IX at the federal and institutional levels (Task Force, 2014). For the first time, universities were provided tangible procedures that standardized how to address campus sexual violence. Institutions examined their sexual misconduct policies to find outdated, ineffective and irrelevant procedures. IHE designated individual Title IX coordinators to receive all reports of sexual violence and coordinate services and investigations accordingly. State agencies dedicated more resources to implement the new policies and, with increasing national attention on campus rape, institutions could no longer sweep the issues under the rug. Female students were provided options to report rape and figure out what they could do to take back control in their lives. Going beyond the legal requirements, a handful of institutions allocated resources establishing support services for accused students. The discourse on campus rape began to shift the focus from females making false reports of rape, to Title IX policy and institutional responses to sexual violence. 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In her announcement of repeal two months later, she said, “One rape is one too many, one assault is one too many, one sexual violation is one too many. One person denied due process is one too many. One person denied due process is one too many.” Emphasizing the last point (Rothman, 2017). Citing atypical Title IX cases mishandling reports of rape, DeVos announced her intent to review the Obama-era guidance and criticized IHE with running “kangaroo courts” (Rothman, 2017).

Though it does not require campuses to alter current policies, the new OCR Ques-
them expelled for “regret sex” (Joyce, 2017). Now that schools have the opportunity to increase the standard of proof, there is worry that students held responsible under the previous policy will return to their institutions to have their cases rebased or file lawsuits (Miltonberg in Joyce, 2017). The Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) president released a statement soon after the repeal to declare the association’s support of the preponderance of evidence, stating, “slinging out sex assault to have higher standard perpetuates rape culture” (Kruger, 2017, para. 5).

Appeal of outcome of campus investigations. Appeals in the current guidance are under two conditions: by the accused, or (b) by both parties if voluntarily agreed upon. The previous guidance allowed for either party to file an appeal, where institutions indicated two conditions in which one could be filed: (a) introduction of new evidence, or (b) a due process violation. The current guidance limits an appeal to the responding party, citing the accused individual is the one who risks penalty and therefore should not be tried twice for the same allegation (United States Department of Education, 2017). Contrary to the guidance’s commitment to equitable procedures for all parties, the option for a compliant to file an appeal was removed. If a complaint is dismissed, mediation is not a legal-pleadings procedures – often they prefer univer-

Set time frame for investigation and resolution. The OCR no longer requires a set time frame for campus investigations and leaves institutions to determine how long an investigation runs. Institutions would be evaluated instead on their good faith effort to provide fair and impartial investigations (United States Department of Education, 2017). Campus administrators acknowledge the 60-day timeframe was too short, however supported this guideline because it placed responsibility on the institution to prevent violence and further harassment. The rationale for removing the timeframe would allow for par-ties, particularly the accused, time torespond to the allegations, gather evidence, and round up witnesses (Joyce, 2017). “Absence of a timeline risks leaving both students in perpetual states of limbo awaiting jurisdic-tion” (Kruger, 2017, para. 2).

Informal resolutions. Inconsistent with the 2011 Guidance, the OCR adds mediation as an option for resolution, previously unmentioned in campus sexu-

Opposing interests motivate the difference between current practices and the OCR’s optional suggestions for revision. Two views of administration acknowledge the lived experiences of students experiencing sexual violence by placing the burden on the insti-
tuitions to determine whether sexual misconduct occurred, and if so, whether a hostile environment has been created that must be redressed” (United States Department of Education, 2017, pg. 4). The Trump ad-
institutions to prevent violence and further harassment. The role-

discus another topic: “She’s placing this back where it belongs, in the purview of the states” (Joyce, 2017, para. 24). Though the future of Title IX is somewhat of a mystery, one thing is clear: in regard to campus rape, the presumed innocent White male falsely accused of sexual vio-

Discussion

The Personal is Still Political

My personal and professional identities are directly impacted by the complexities of Title IX. The fact that policies that mainly impact women (i.e. reproductive rights, Title IX) continue to be governed by lawmakers maintains my personal identities and experiences as political. I am a woman of color with ethnic origins in a country that was colonized for centuries. Documenta-
tion of the use of rape as a tool of power in coloniza-
tion shapes the way women of color perceive our roles in society and how we experience sexual violence, in particular. As a Title IX confidential advocate on a college campus, navigating the evolving institutional policies to address sexual violence is just as much of a learning experience for me as it is for the students I work with. My professional role on my campus allows me to navigate university procedures that are not as accessible to students. I do not mean to point blame at any institution for implementing difficult policies and procedures. Instead I want to shine light on the gap that remains between institutional compliance and the lived experiences of students. Recent Title IX guidance appeared to provide an alternative to the criminal justice system, which was often a barrier for reporting sexual violence. The guidance however continues to mirror the criminal justice system, which has been proven to perpetuate patriarchal and racist structures oppressing minority groups. The burden remains on reporting parties to prove victimization, ensuring due process rights for accused individuals. Consequently, critiques of Title IX procedures reflect the expectations of the dominant patriarchal and racist criminal justice system. This paternalistic ap-proach further silences the interests of all the subjects of the law: our students. Political decisions regarding campus sexual violence are extremely personal for the students they are intended to protect. Therefore, it is imperative that lawmakers and administrators recognize power, privilege and domination in implementing gender-based policies.

Missing Voices

The discourse of Title IX of the Education Amend-
ments of 1972 within the last decade has brought our attention to campus sexual violence in specific ways in which IHE’s handled or mishandled reports of these crimes. Absent from many recent discussions are...
the victims of rape, sexual assault and discrimination. Even the voices of the student survivor activists that brought these issues to Washington, D.C. have fallen to the back of the room and are silenced by cries for due process – in hopes of upholding the master narratives and directives of those who wish to keep power intact. Also missing from the current conversation are the voices of people of color, homosexual, non-binary, and communities marginalized by socioeconomic and education status. The anti-discrimination law meant to protect marginalized groups, will never be fully realized until the society that renders these communities invisible is dismantled. Moreover, until we can counter the narratives of our sexuality and experiences of rape and sexual violence, we will not know equity.

Feminist critical thought has evolved over the years, recognizing the intersections of identities and layers of oppression that are not validated nor protected by society. Crenshaw (1989) points out how simplifying our understanding of rape further targets our marginalized identities: “The singular focus on rape as a manifestation of male power over [female] sexuality tends to eclipse the use of rape as a weapon of [social] terror” (p. 158). Critical feminism challenges us to be uncomfortable and confront the status quo. This examination of Title IX reveals that the personal is still very political and to be accountable to critical feminism (Bensimon & Marshall, 2003) it is our voices that must tell our story.

**Trump and the Trumpeteers**

So far, descriptions of the gatekeepers of power are as elite White men, or something to that effect. This allegorical group of White men refers to those who have clout, privilege and influence resulting from patriarchy, not necessarily always White, and not always male. Due to Trump’s election, we have names and faces of those who hold this power. Feminist critical policy analysis calls upon the disruption of dominant narratives (Biklen et al., 2008) by revealing the assumptions and ideals of said group, specifically President Donald Trump, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and Acting Assistant Secretary of Civil Rights Candice Jackson. I believe the bigotries of the 45th President of the United States are common knowledge internationally. For examples of his prejudices, please refer to the 2005 recording (Fahrenthold, 2016) of our current president braggading about “grabbing them [women] by the pussy” and follow his Twitter account @realDonaldTrump.

The same day the Office of Civil Rights released the interim guidance, Democratic National Jess O’Connell tweeted “banner day when Republicans can find themselves under a Title IX investigation because she both drunk, ‘we broke up, and six months later I found myself under a Title IX investigation because she decided that our last sleeping together was not quite right’” (Kreighbaum, 2017, para. 6). I will be bold and agree with O’Connell to say that DeVos and Jackson are token women to do dirty work against women. The present power structures challenge student affairs practitioners and educators to reignite our activism toward social justice. At the center of our efforts are our students’ rights to safety and protection of their access to education.

**Conclusion**

This feminist critical policy analysis of Title IX only hit the tip of the iceberg, revealing the further sub-ordination of women and other oppressed groups through policies and structures governed by ideals and assumptions that view women as less-than. For true transformation, there is a need to reframe all steps of policy development, implementation, and analysis. Of utmost importance, is a reminder that the personal is still political, especially when addressing sexual violence.
Of Florence and
Honea Path

Sydney Curtis
University of Chicago

I think about the Gullah people
Unlearning a loaded canon
Daughters of the Dust
Ancestors from the depths
of the Lowlands
Resilient as the seashore with clothes of white foam

My pride has been mis-placed into things
That shine me up
Doves
To shake off the sand from a hundred and seventy-five mile stretch of road
And indigo
To heal the scars of being

It is a reason to take lovers
From far away places
Finding freedom on the shores of glitz
It is the reason for the world’s infatuation
With forty-four
Whose redness is unridden
by revolt
And the stench of those ships

While the night sky
for hours
hides beyond the clouds
Holding up the moon
and every story she knows
Abandoned and wrapped in same-colored flags
She persists
To beckon with tidesong
The steadfast light of her truth burns through

I am already home.
I, too, am this land.
I am
descended of miracles.

Suggested Citation:
On November 9, 2016, many White progressive liberal Americans woke up with a sense of dread and disillusionment that Donald Trump was the President-elect of the United States (Mei, 2016). “How could this be? How could this be happening to our country?” they wondered. After all, “Make America Great Again,” a phrase whose ‘great,’ widely heard as ‘White,’ was not some-
Context and Background

Aronson and Ashlee's own university campus equally felt the realities of the “Trump Effect” impacting educational spaces nationwide (Costello, 2016). Located in Ohio, a crucial state whose 18 electoral votes went to Trump by a slim margin of 51.3%, their mid-sized public university voted 61.1% in favor of Donald Trump. Situated in rural community, this university consists of a predominantly White undergraduate, graduate, student, faculty, and staff population. Needless to say, the overwhelming Whiteness of this college campus did not help students of Color, the LGBTQ community, international students, or students who were undocumented feel safe before, during, or after the election.

Prior to the Trump's victory, the surrounding community outside of Aronson and Ashlee's university was filled with signs in support of Trump/Pence as well as signs supporting “Hillary Clinton for Prison.” A few miles away from campus, this bumper sticker (Photo 1) was posted on a vehicle.

Alt-Right leader Milo Yiannopoulos also spoke on campus just prior to the start of the Spring 2016 semester. Shortly after Trump was elected, Aronson and Ashlee began seeing images such as Photos 2, 3, and 4 posted around their campus:

Evidence of burgeoning White supremacy lead up to and following Trump's election left many marginalized students on campus feeling isolated, scared, and unwelcomed. As White educators on this campus, Aronson and Ashlee believed it was their responsibility to respond to the rise of White supremacy in education happening around the nation, and at their institution. Despite a call from university administration to remain politically neutral in the classroom, they felt the need to address students’ escalating dread about the campus political climate and perceptions of safety. Additionally, they felt a responsibility to remain positive, orienting students toward effective strategies for taking action, resisting, and moving forward. Guided by a theoretical lens of Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), the authors use their own critical autoethnographic narratives of teaching to illuminate the need for higher education instructors to maintain critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) as they prepare students to be racially just educators during the Trump Administration.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Whiteness Studies

As White educators working with White students, Aronson and Ashlee occupy a troubling positionality which lends itself to problematic outcomes when left unexamined. While it is crucial to center the experiences of racially-minoritized students, exclusivity doing so enables White educators and White students to leave their privilege on the shelf. Indeed, when educators confront White students with the realities of racism from the perspective of people of Color without addressing the systemic constructions of Whiteness, marginalized voices are dismissed and learning is delayed (Leonardo, 2004; Reason & Evans, 2007). Incorporating elements of CWS (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997) into their curriculum, Aronson and Ashlee sought to examine the socio-historical construction of Whiteness, White privilege, and White supremacy in the United States.

Critical Whiteness Studies is a field of scholarship dedicated to identifying and deconstructing the racial construct of Whiteness.Broadly, CWS is a theoretical framework employed to analyze the historic, social, political, and cultural elements of White supremacy. Emerging from African American intellectual traditions, CWS began with observations about what it means to be White in the United States from Black scholars including W. E. B. DuBois (1920), James Baldwin (2010), and bell hooks (1994). Additionally, CWS draws further origins from Critical Race Theory (CRT), a theoretical framework that aims to prioritize and center the experiences of people of Color through personal accounts which challenge the hegemonic narrative of White supremacy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Within education, CWS emphasizes that “[w]hiteness, acknowledged or not, has been a norm against which other races are judged” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, p. 1) and works to equalize that power. CWS as an educational approach examines the ways in which history, law, culture, and pseudosciences have contributed to the construction of Whiteness, racism, and White supremacy in the United States. The establishment of these systemic mechanisms result in several privileges for White people, including the ability to achieve upward social mobility despite class disparities. Ultimately CWS offers an educational imperative, namely that “[w]hites may – and should – study race, including their own” (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997, p. 605).

Literature Review

In addition to serving as a theoretical framework guiding pedagogy, many scholars have used CWS to interrogate Whiteness in the classroom. For example, researchers such as Christine Sleeter (1992) and Alice McIntyre (1997) examined how White pre-service teachers avoided conversations on race and racism, which contributes to the oppressive influence of Whiteness within education. Although scholars have begun to address the need for educators to critically examine Whiteness, there is a dearth of research related to CWS in higher education (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2017). Much of the CWS analysis in higher education has looked at the ways White college students make meaning of Whiteness. For example, a national study which surveyed over 1,200 college students found that most White students ultimately held underlying racist beliefs and attitudes (Picca & Feagin, 2007). Reason and Evans (2007) found White college students...
who strive to be racial justice allies, on the other hand, must continuously and critically examine their White-ness. Both these findings suggest that educators must (or should) bring college students’ ‘racial interactions’ to the forefront and create an environment where White students can hold each other accountable for racist behavior.

Ultimately, the most insidious form of White privilege that can easily escape any classroom is the ability not to have to think or talk about race (Reason & Evans, 2007). Colorblind racism is commonplace among White students at predominately White institutions (Bonilla-Silva, 2006), but even more alarming are White higher education instructors who either choose not to engage in the topic of racism with students or do not feel they know how. For both White students and White instructors, White fragility leads to White silence, White comfort, and White supremacy in the classroom (DiAngelo, 2011). On the contrary, White educators might also reinforce White supremacy through discourses encompassing ‘morality’ (Applebaum, 2005). By situating moral responsibility as an ‘action’ that focuses on the individual, this relieves a White educator from ever acknowledging how they are situated and complicit in the system of White supremacy.

CWS requires that White educators reflect on the hegemonic control Whiteness holds on the imagination and study the ways White people ‘deflect, ignore, or dismiss’ their role in the permanence of racism (Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, & Galindo, 2014, p. 291). Indeed, simply acknowledging individual White privilege not enough for educators to be anti-racist and socially just. Educational conversations about race, racism, and White supremacy in the classroom are not easy. Higher education instructors who employ CWS may find themselves and their students steeped in feelings of guilt, shame, and dread. Aronson and Ashlee share their autoethnographic narratives as reflective windows of critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2011). In writing critical autoethnographic narratives, Aronson and Ashlee intended to “collaboratively cope with the ambiguities, uncertainties, and contradictions” in their work (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011, para. 23). At the end of the Fall 2016 semester, they each wrote a narrative account of their teaching experiences. They shared these narratives with one another and provided questions as well as feedback. These narratives undergird the authors’ overarching argument for CWS as an essential tool for higher education instructors in preparing racially just educators. It is through personal reflections, memories, and dialogue with each other that the authors present their data in the form of autoethnographic narratives, which ask readers to enter the world of the researcher and join in this process of reflexivity.

Brittany’s Narrative

Fall 2016 was a contentious time to be in any classroom, especially one that was centered on justice-oriented ideologies, pedagogies, and frameworks. For three consecutive years, I taught an undergraduate course for preservice teachers required for middle school Leadership class. To explicate, this course was designed to challenge and shape each student’s conceptions of school organization, school culture, professional development, teaching, curriculum, and school leadership for teachers committed to social justice (EDL 318 Course Syllabus, Fall 2016). Mirroring the racial demographics of teachers nationwide (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2016), my courses consisted of predominately White, female, Christian teachers from rural or suburban communities in Ohio. There were some other forms of identities represented in that I had three White male students, three students who identified as Jewish, and one Black female who identified as Muslim (of my 28 total students).

As part of my personal commitment to work for racial justice, I used CRT and CWS as part of an explicit framework. On the first day of class, I tell students they will more than likely be uncomfortable, and this is a part of the learning experience. In my experience, it is usually by week three that students start to resist and become angry with me after I have them watch White Like Me by Tim Wise and read “Why Do You Make Me Hate Myself?” by Cheryl Matias. However, as we continue to work through the semester, they lead projects on justice topics and create a positionality project interrogating themselves that allows for them to continue to work through their own emotional volatility (Matias, 2016a, emphasis added). This past semester, I had some unexpected challenges, when I mistakenly thought several of my students were “buying in” to what we were talking about in class, yet on the midpoint of the semester evaluation, I had been accused of “White-shaming” and not creating a “safe space” for others to express their views. This wasn’t the first time I had heard feedback like this before. But, for some reason, I took this feedback extremely personally. As I read these words, I felt like I had been punched in the stomach. Perhaps it was the “White pain.” This was right before the election in late October. Perhaps it was also me. I got overconfident in my abilities to reach the privileged. I had grown to know enlightenment.
we note that often when you are not feeling “safe” really this means “uncomfortable.” I gave them some additional resources and they went through their way. I felt depleted. I felt like I had failed. Then the election happened. I was one of those people we wrote about in our introduction. As I sat in my small apartment watching the live coverage of the election on November 8, 2016, I was not too worried about it. But as the hours passed and state by state turned red, I was in total shock. I woke up the next morning feeling a dread that I had never experienced before. I didn’t know this feeling as I had lived in the “safe space” mentioned above that I critiqued my students for craving. A post I had written left with a colleague to go to the National Association of Multicultural Educators conference hosted by the National Association of Multicultural Educators (NAME) convention held in Cleveland (which sickeningly was held in the newly constructed Hilton Hotel that had been built for the Republican National Convention the summer before), I had hoped this would be a space for rejuvenation, for inspiration, for comfort. But I imagine everyone was feeling this way. I felt little hope at that moment. Some of my previous students from both K-12 and former college students reached out to me. They were coming to me for some sort of comfort, but I felt I had so little to give them. This made me feel even worse. I sifted through my Facebook page torturing myself by de- vouring everyone’s comments and posts, until I came across one of my former 5th graders who was now in college who had posted something about love. Almost symbolically, as I was reading her post, I looked to the silver bracelet made up of charms on my wrist (that she had given me back in 2008), and had an epiphany that woke me up, and brought me back to reality. More than ever, the work for racial justice and radical love (hooks, 2000) was needed, and as a privileged racially white woman I had to shake myself out of my misery and regain perspective to my role in this battle we would inherently face these next four years.

Two weeks flew by and I was about to see my current students again. I was anxious and nervous. I wasn’t sure what I was going to say to them. I decided that because we had so much to do end semester, I would write them a letter telling them how I felt and what I had learned these past two weeks. I shared with them the story of my former student who had jotted me back to life and who had written the initial letters. I shared with them this story before. I told them how she reminded me of the need to center love and that this is always what I was working towards and how this has been happening in schools witnessing these realities. We never got to our lesson.

What was needed in that space was an opportunity for healing in the best way I knew how at that moment. Students listened. I talked. They listened. Those who felt comfortable shared their political views. No one explicitly stated that they voted for Donald Trump, although they talked about how their families had. I could relate as I had family members who did as well. We worked through our confusion about this. They asked me what to do, how to handle what they were seeing happening in schools. I didn’t have answers as I sat there vulnerable with them in this moment. The only thing I could muster up was don’t stay silent. I did ask the class to be aware of what was happening on our campus. I sent them several emails the next few days about events organized by students’ who had been and will continue to be marginalized under the Trump Administration (and their allies). None of these dialogues or lessons that we had the last day of class was a part of my syllabus or my objectives. I was very aware that I could have easily offended a student or been scrutinized on my end-of-semester evaluations for these political con- versations (which I was not). But when the personal is political, this doesn’t always matter.7

Kyle’s Narrative

In the fall semester of 2016, on the cusp of one of the most divisive presidential elections in recent history, I began co-teaching the first ever graduate-level course at my institution on the topic of critical Whiteness. Located in the heart of “Trump Country,” the Mid-West university where this class was held is home to mostly White, upper-middle class students. Through exploring the literature and observing race dynamics on my historically White campus, I discovered that White students were ill-equipped for conversations about race (Linder, 2015; Reason, 2015). As a Ph.D. student, I designed the Whiteness course alongside a faculty mentor with the hopes of engaging future edu- cators at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and it was brief. The topic for the course was “to ex- plore individual, historical, and systemic conceptions of ‘whiteness’ and consider how critical perspectives on Whiteness impact the development of equitable communities within higher education and student affairs” (EDL660 Course Syllabus, Fall 2016).

Despite the content and timing of the course, I can only recall one instance during the semester when Donald Trump’s name entered the class discussion, and it was brief. The topic for the week was related to the historical construction of Whiteness in the United States. One of the readings for this class was Bacon’s Rebellion and The Advent of Whiteness by Terrance MacMullen (2009). In this chapter from his book, MacMullen outlines the exact time and place in history when race and White supremacy were firmly established in America. Jumping back to 1676, MacMullen (2009) describes a scene in colonial Virginia when Nathaniel Bacon, a newly-arrived settler, led a small resistance effort against the English bourgeoisie. Bacon successfully leveraged the collective frustration of poor African-American and African-American people. Fearful of the threat posed by Bacon’s unifying activity, wealthy landowners began to grant privileg- es to the White indentured servants which enabled European setters and White Americans to gain the Black slaves. In exchange for their new-found privileges, the lower-class Whites were required to patrol the area for runaway slaves and return them to their masters.

Before I could even open my mouth, others started sharing the many hateful events happening in schools all across the country. And then, the ones they had witnessed in their school buildings the past week.

Sitting around a large oak wooden table, nearly all fourteen students in my Whiteness class were buzzing with excitement about this reading. They had never heard the story of Bacon’s Rebellion and were unaware of the specific ways in which Whiteness and race were created out of thin air. Many commented that having this historical context finally explained what is meant by the “social construction of race,” which was vague...
and confusing for them before the reading. Additionally, they said, it demonstrates how White privilege does not result from intentionally oppressing People of Color, but rather from granting special opportunities to White people. Still early in the semester and unsure about how the White students in the class would react to a class on critical Whiteness, my co-instructor and I were thrilled that the students were making the connections from the reading that we hoped they would. Taking the conversation a step further, my co-instructor drew a parallel between the divide-and-conquer tactics used by the wealthy European colonists during Bacon’s Rebellion and the political strategy used by Donald Trump to pit poor southern White people against Mexican immigrants. In his presidential announcement speech on June 16, 2015, Trump said, “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending you… They’re sending it’s best. They’re not sending you… They’re sending the people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.” (He Lee, July 8, 2015). Despite the lack of any factual evidence for this claim, Trump leveraged White peoples’ fear of immigrants to effectively capture the allegiance of many White Americans.

My co-instructor’s comment provided an opportunity to evaluate the mechanics of Trump’s racially charged rhetoric in conjunction with content from the course. At the time of this class, the election race was still underway and the racial tensions in the United States were at a breaking point. From heated conversations at the dinner table to bitter feuds over social media, the divide between Americans was palpable. Some may argue that connecting the course material with current events was a risky decision because the classroom should be a neutral space where students refrain from subjecting their students to political rhetoric. In following pedagogical perspective of hooks (1994) and Freire (2000), however, my co-instructor and I believed that our classroom was an inherently political space. Instead of ignoring political issues and the impact they have on students’ lives, we sought to create a space where students could share their lived experiences and the political context of their lives. Her comment about the similarities between Bacon’s Rebellion and Trump’s campaign was the first time the class discussion ventured out of the intellectual and into the political.

Much to our dismay, my co-instructor’s comment left many students speechless. Like a college campus on the last day of classes, the energy in the room was heavy, emotionally charged, and not quiet and still, as in an instant. Looking around the table and then at each other, we allowed the silence to linger for a few moments to see if anyone would respond to the courage to engage. Rather than reflecting on Trump’s racist campaign strategies or even offering a different political perspective regarding Hillary Clinton’s racist “Super Predator” campaign and the support of her husband’s racist policies, which have enabled the most violent mass incarceration of Black bodies in American history (Alexander, 2012), our students remained silent. After the awkwardness of the silence set in, one of the students redirected the conversation by noting that she had never really studied or been interested in this reading. Disappointed, my co-instructor and I allowed the students to return to their intellectual conversation, leaving the political issue in the corner of the room like an unacknowledged elephant standing next to an unacknowledged donkey.

Sadly, we never revisited the conversation about politics and the Trump campaign. The course finished before the election occurred, but I have a feeling that our students would not have been willing to process their thoughts about Trump’s victory even if it had happened while class was in session. There are countless reasons why our students may have been hesitant to discuss political topics in the course, including fear of disagreeing with the instructor, uncertainty about their political views, or simply being unprepared or afraid to talk about them. While these all likely played a role, I believe the core of our students’ silence about Trump boils down to White fragility, or the feelings of fear, anger, guilt or frustration experienced by White people when exposed to racial discomfort (DiAngelo, 2011). When in a state of White fragility, White people often react with defensiveness, silence, or minimization.

Given the volatility of the political climate in our country at the time and the very real potential for any conversation about the presidential election to result in conflict, our students chose to remain silent. Assuming that the political is indeed personal, my co-instructor’s comment about Trump’s racist campaign rhetoric likely hit close to home for many of our students. Indeed, on numerous occasions throughout the semester, our students commented about how they struggled to talk with their family members about White privilege and racism because they held differing political views. Whether embarrassed to realize their relatives held beliefs that resembled White supremacist strategies of colonialization or simply afraid to say the “wrong thing” and appear racist, White fragility acted like a constraint, binding our students to their White comfort zones.

Given the volatility of the political climate in our country at the time and the very real potential for any conversation about the presidential election to result in conflict, our students chose to remain silent.

Critical Whiteness Revisited

Aronson and Ashlee’s understandings of CWS aided them not only in their curriculum development, but also in analyzing their experiences. In teaching, they both emphasized the importance of starting any conversation on Whiteness and White supremacy through a sociocultural historical lens and discussing how this impacts the material benefits and privileges White people still maintain (e.g., generational wealth through housing loans, Witt, 2017). Importantly, they also analyzed their own roles in complicating the individual from the systemic. As White people doing anti-racist work, it can be easy to fall into complicity of the us/them binary (e.g., overt racists from ‘good Whites’) created, that they too, so desperately want to separate themselves from. However, a CWS theoretical framework posits that White people working toward racial justice must continuously check their own participation in Whiteness because they are not free from White supremacy until systemic racism is dismantled. This means White educators must continue to navigate feelings of hopelessness leading to dread. They must also grip tightly to the hope that a continuous critical examination of Whiteness may one day lead to racial liberation.

There will be ups and downs. As daunting as a reality this may seem, it obviously can never compare to the experiences people of Color face every day. White educators must always keep this relative truth at the forefront of their work, as a reminder of their privilege to ignore race and as motivation to continue the struggle. White educators must realize that they are not free from anti-racist work, it can be easy to fall into complicity of the us/them binary (e.g., overt racists from ‘good Whites’) created, that they too, so desperately want to separate themselves from. However, in alignment with CWS, White educators must also hold onto the hope and belief in the humanity of people, including White people working toward anti-racist work. As White educators who have been learning, unlearning, and relearning about Whiteness, the authors hold a sort of insider knowledge, that is, they have not forgotten the experts – that might aid in ways other White educators teach about Whiteness and prepare future educators to dismantle White supremacy.

Lessons Learned: Implications for Future Educators

The idea that hope alone will transform the world, and action undertaken in that kind of naiveté, is an excellent route to hopelessness, or, better stated, to the attempt to do without hope, in the struggle to improve the world, if that struggle could be reduced to calculated acts alone, or a purely scientific approach, is a frivous illusion. (Freire, 1997, p. 8, as cited in Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p. 181)
Reflecting on the authors’ narratives, which of course come from the perspective of racially-White educators, reveals the important tension between dread and hope. Aronson was left with a somber feeling about her role as an educator, actively working to refuel her reservoir amidst feelings of hopelessness after the election. Ashlee on the other hand, expressed learning from moments that “fell flat” in the classroom, fostering optimism about engaging students in political reflection and transformative action. The opposing realities of these two narratives demonstrate the complexity of being an educator in today’s turbulent political climate.

On the one hand, there may be an overwhelming sense of dread about the realities of racism and White supremacy, which White educators perpetuate despite their best efforts. On the other hand, it can be empowering to leverage the privilege White educators hold to dismantle systemic oppression through an active critical examination of Whiteness. Rather than an immobilizing duality, these disparate truths provide educators with an expansive opportunity to facilitate profound learning and growth, for themselves and their students.

Duncan-Andrade (2009) offers a form of critical hope which rejects staying fixed in a state of despair by becoming committed to the struggle for justice. Building from Tupac Shakur’s (1999) Roses that Grow from Concrete, he suggests a form of “audacious hope” that demands “solidarity to share in others’ suffering, to sacrifice self so that other roses may bloom, to collectively struggle to replace the concrete completely with a rose garden” (p. 186). With this understanding, dread and hope combine and are transformed into action.

The perceived hopeless struggles faced by many communities of Color, including systemic racism and poverty, must first be acknowledged and understood by White educators. Only after this acknowledgement becomes a consistent practice can White educators attempt to align themselves in solidarity with people of Color (we cannot simply claim ‘allyship’). This process of leaning into dread, which includes White educators confronting Whiteness, White privilege, and White supremacy, leads to hope through collective struggle. CWS gives White educators a place to start in their own critical self-reflection and in turn, their teaching. White educators have a responsibility to foster “audacious hope,” engaging future teachers and student affairs professionals in the process of suffering, solidarity, and struggle.

White educators cannot fall prey to singular narratives of either dread or hope. Despite the messiness, both worldviews are necessary to prepare future educators for a world that systemically oppresses Black and Brown students while simultaneously privileging White students. Replacing the concrete of White supremacy with the roses of collective struggle will not happen if White educators throw their hands up in despair and complacency. Nor will it happen if they easily ignore the realities of racism and hope that mere good intentions are enough. Both dread and hope are necessary because either alone is insufficient. When White educators and their students feel discouraged, they must utilize hope to move forward. When hope clouds their ability to recognize their own complacency in White supremacy, they must recognize dread and be in solidarity with people of Color.

At a time when the President of the United States espouses “All Lives Matter” (Levit, 2016) because of a willing ignorance and support of White nationalistic efforts (as evidenced by his selection of Steve Bannon and Jeff Sessions), along with his unwillingness to name the events in Charlottesville as acts of White supremacy, violence and rage, educators can no longer feign neutrality, pretending these conversations hold no place in classrooms. Nicole Truesdell (2017), the Director of Academic Diversity and Inclusiveness at Beloit College, recently argued there is a contradictory nature of being apolitical in classrooms by faculty who are hired to teach about institutional racism. Many higher education instructors are hired to do this sort of ‘work,’ and others must recognize the contradictions caused when they are asked to ‘stay neutral’ in the classroom. This façade is unrealistic, and the authors’ personal narratives are prime examples of the need to address political issues, especially those situated around race and racism, in the classroom. Despite the challenges that arise, White educators must persist in transgressing the dehumanizing depoliticization of the classroom, for their own liberation and the liberation of their students.

Aronson and Ashlee revealed vulnerability and failures throughout their teaching, which have led them to understand that both dread and hope are vital. In teaching future educators and through critical self-reflection, they are committed to creating space for the learning that can occur when the tension between dread and hope is foregrounded. Rather than canceling each other out, these opposing truths build upon each other creating something new, something radical, and something audacious. Indeed, this new “audacious hope demands that we reconnect to the collective by struggling alongside one another, sharing in the victories and the pain” (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p. 190). White educators must be committed to sharing the pain of and they must continue striving for the victories.

Despite the challenges that arise, White educators must persist in transgressing the depoliticization of the classroom, for their own liberation and the liberation of their students.

Navigating the Unknown

Experiences of International Graduate Students From Muslim Majority Countries in the Current Political Climate

When international students from Muslim-majority countries enroll in U.S. colleges and universities, they enter unwelcoming national, local, and campus environments. Graffiti threats like, “kill all Muslims,” found at Virginia Tech and the execution-style murders of three Muslim students at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill exemplify how anti-Muslim sentiment, prejudice, and violence—perpetuated by political rhetoric—continues to worsen on college campuses. Specifically, the international graduate student population deserves special attention as they make up approximately one-quarter of the total graduate student population in U.S. postsecondary education (Okahana, 2017). In addition, these students’ adverse experiences result in challenging identity development involving negotiation of heritage culture and dominant U.S. culture, mental health concerns, and a sense of not belonging (Ali, 2014; Atri, Sharma, & Cottrell, 2006-2007; Dey, 2012; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Stubbs & Sallee, 2013). In fact, 59 percent of graduate students withdraw from their degree program prematurely (Nerad & Cerny, 1993; Strayhorn, 2012). Assessing sense of belonging is necessary to shed light on the lived experiences and success for this student population.

The history of higher education is not distinct from that of U.S., and the national identity of this country has a foundation of systemic oppression (Spring, 2016). This problematic history is illustrated through colonization of Native Americans, enslavement of African Americans, and exclusionary immigration policies implemented to discriminate and oppress minoritized ethnic groups. International graduate students from Muslim-majority countries experience these systemic structures when they arrive in the U.S., and it is impossible to discuss their sense of belonging without examining how systems of oppression impact their experiences. Howard-Hamilton, Cuyjet, and Cooper (2011) defined oppression as an act of control to politically, as well as economically, disadvantaged individuals. Furthermore, Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin (2007) described oppression as a phenomenon where a social group or organization, subconsciously or consciously, marginalizes other groups for their gain. In the U.S. context, current policies and laws create and maintain acts of oppression through forms of discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization. For instance, the Executive Order 13769 (2017), Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the U.S., was created to intentionally restrict the travel of non-citizens, visitors, and residents from seven Muslim-majority countries. This order targeted individuals labeled as ‘dangerous’ and continued the oppression of Arab and Muslim identities who did not pose a threat to the U.S.

Literature Review

International Graduate Student Experiences

International students are those not considered residents of their country of study and are enrolled at an accredited institution on a temporary visa (Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development [OECD], 2013; World Education News and Reviews [WERNR], 2009). More specifically, international graduate students are nonresidents of their country of study with a bachelor’s degree who are seeking additional training and education. These international graduate students face a myriad of challenges when coming to the United States to study, including, but not limited to: cultural adjustment difficulties, limited English proficiency, separation from friends and family, immigration issues, and integration into unfamiliar educational systems (Ali, 2011; Atri, Sharma, & Cottrell, 2006-2007; Dey, 2012; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Stubbs & Sallee, 2013). In fact, 59 percent of graduate students withdraw from their degree program prematurely (Nerad & Cerny, 1993; Strayhorn, 2012). Assessing sense of belonging is necessary to shed light on the lived experiences and success for this student population.

Tumma-la-Nara & Claudius (2013) this study highlights the experience of a select few international graduate students from Muslim-majority countries and give a platform to their lived experiences as college students in the U.S. This study analyzes the experiences of international graduate students from Muslim-majority countries at Midwestern University (MU), a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) in the current sociopolitical environment. The research question focused on how the sociopolitical climate in the U.S. affected sense of belonging for this student population. The purpose of this study is to disrupt the silencing of graduate students from Muslim-majority countries and give a platform to their lived experiences as college students in the U.S.
White supremacy is “a historically based, institutionally to ensure the privilege and power of White supremacy. Immigration policies historically have been a technique United States for centuries (Lee, 2002). Exclusionary regarding immigration, also known as “gatekeeping The United States is founded on exclusionary practices origin, supporting the concept that both racism and traditions, and negotiation of external indicators of others about Islam, difficulty practicing their religious sentiments. These challenges have deterred some Muslim women from wearing hijab (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; exclusionary practices. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 explicitly barred the entry of Chinese laborers into the United States for ten years, as well as complicate and prohibiting natural citizenship of Chinese immigrants (Lee, 2002). This policy gave the U.S. government the ability to limit and exclude, especially non-white, racial groups from entering the United States for decades to come. In recent history, the targeting of Muslim Americans, Arab Americans, and those with perceived Middle Eastern origin has been exacerbated by governmental policy. Examples of policy include “Operation Boulder,” which allowed law enforcement to wiretap individuals of Arab descent; a mandate requiring all transnational students to report their whereabouts to the government; the establishment of the National Security Decision Directive, which called for Arab noncitizens’ mass arrests and exclusion (Akrum & Karmely, 2004). These policies contributed to the racial profiling of Arab and Muslim Americans, and post-9/11 this population saw discrimination rise exponentially (CAIR, 2017). The racialization of Arab and Muslim Americans continues to generate fear within the American public by putting this population in “unenviable positions as, for example, enemies of the state, opponents of freedom and democracy, and oppressors of women” (El Haj, 2015, p. 13). This fear existed before 9/11 and has manifested itself in popular culture, the media, policy, and personal interactions. In the current context, Executive Order 13769 was created by the Trump administration to detect “individuals with terrorist ties and stop them from entering the United States” (Executive Order 13769, section 1, 2017). This rationalization was given to instill fear and provide justification for the creation of the travel ban under the premise that this order would ultimately keep the United States “safe.” Trump stated the “United States cannot, and should not, admit … those who would place violent ideologies over American law” (Executive Order 13769, section 1, 2017), and after the 2015 San Bernardino shooting, he publicly stated that he would implement a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States” (Johnson, 2015). It is impossible to ignore the discrimination and exclusion that this executive order imposed on those who identify as being from Muslim-majority countries. Although the Trump administration has denied the executive order and its revisions are a blatant form of discrimination, it is undeniable that the rhetoric expressed during the election season and thereafter is an indication that this statement is unequivocally false. The administration continues to publicize rhetoric that alienates this population, and it is likely this will continue to happen and impact international graduate students from Muslim-majority countries. Existing literature about international graduate students and Muslim students is helpful in laying the foundation for this research. However, the current political climate adds a layer of complexity that was not foundation for this research. However, the current political climate adds a layer of complexity that was not present in any previous studies. Although the participants of this study are from Muslim-majority countries, not all of them identify as Muslim, therefore literature about Muslim students is loosely applicable. This study seeks to fill the void that exists at the intersection of international graduate students from Muslim-majority countries and their sense of belonging in a politically hostile environment, currently orchestrated by Trump’s administration. Conceptual Framework: Sense of Belonging of Graduate Students Several factors can influence a student’s experience through higher education and among these is a campus climate where students feel they belong and are valued (Kuh, 2001). Strayhorn defined the sense of belonging as “a feeling of connectedness, that one is important or matters to others” (Strayhorn, 2012, p. 1). Strayhorn’s empirical research focuses on addressing a gap in the literature that the underlying causal factors that impact the sense of belonging among graduate students, the most important of these factors being socialization. Agents of socialization, such as faculty members and peers serve as sources of influence for individuals in their process to acquire knowledge and skills. Successful socialization allows individuals to not only develop skills and competencies but is also necessary to fully immerse individuals within the program of study and help positively influence student success, outcomes, and overall sense of belonging. Findings gathered from Strayhorn’s (2012) empirical study suggest persistence among graduate students is largely attributed to a sense of belonging in their communities, and connections to others in the graduate department or professional field. There are important distinctions between undergraduate and graduate student experiences; specifically, graduate students face statistically higher challenges with persistence (Sheldrake & Cambridge, 1993; Strayhorn, 2012). Considering 50% of graduate students withdraw prematurely, assessing the sense of belonging among graduate students is necessary to improve student success and motivations for this student population. Assessing a student’s sense of belonging can help in understanding their perceived feelings of acceptance within the campus climate. The researchers examined how MIU engages and fosters a sense of belonging according to Strayhorn’s definition among international graduate students from Muslim-majority countries through the lens of...
the graduate student socialization theory and sense of belonging constructs. With isolation and fear already existing for Muslim and Arab populations, particularly in the U.S. context, the researchers’ aim was to discover how the international graduate student population made sense of their belonging at MU.

addition, the storytelling element of narrative design allows the lived experiences of students to be centered, which is an important factor considering the historical silencing of this population.

Research Design
Using a critical perspective, based on critical social theory, is important while analyzing the way power and justice manipulate social systems that affect individuals (Kinchelow, McLaren, Steinberg, & Monzo, 2017). The researchers decided on a critical narrative inquiry approach to address the systemic issues at play in the participants’ stories. Therefore, a narrative inquiry is the most appropriate methodological approach to bring forth the voices of these international graduate student experiences. Additionally, participants were asked to bring forth the voices of these international graduate students to create “bridges between different countries.”

Setting
The research team sought to interview students at MU in order to collect and understand their experiences within this higher education setting. MU is a large, public institution with a total student population between 45,000 and 50,000, including both undergraduate and graduate students. International students make up approximately 15% of the total student body at MU, with in which there are about 2,700 international graduate students. A small percentage of the 2,700 international graduate students encompass those from Muslim majority countries.

Sampling
Recruitment of participants was established through purposeful sampling techniques, including contact with various student organizations, specifically those with missions to serve Muslim and/or international graduate students, as well as a majority of academic units on MU’s campus (Creswell, 2015). Select members of the research team emailed these student organizations and academic units to explain the purpose of the study and how interested students could participate. In addition to direct communication, the researchers sought to implement snowball sampling in order to recruit additional participants from those who had interviewed (Creswell, 2015). Once participants expressed interest via email, they completed an intake form, providing demographic information to ensure sample group criteria was met. The researchers aimed to interview six to twelve participants and ended with a sample of nine international graduate students from Muslim majority countries.

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Academic School*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daria</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilias</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janic</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*School names have been modified for confidentiality

Data Collection
The researchers performed semistructured interviews (Creswell, 2015) focusing on the participants’ stories to hold to the tenants of narrative qualitative research. Interviews were scheduled with one member of the research team, which lasted approximately 60 minutes, and were audio recorded for transcription. Each interview started with seven predetermined questions, with the flexibility to divert from the questions, ensuring collect ed data was consistent with participants’ lived experiences rather than the researchers’ preconceived ideas of their experiences. The nature of these questions aimed to understand students’ perceptions about their sense of belonging at MU given their identities and experiences. Additionally, participants were asked to create their own pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Data Analysis
After the completion of each interview, the interviewer transcribed the content verbatim based on the audio recording, utilizing the software Kaltura. After ensuring correct transcription, the raw data from the interviews were then coded by two separate researchers. The research team implemented a generic systematic coding process as outlined by Cooper and Shelley (2009), drawing heavily on open coding to initially categorize the information. To minimize the effects of carrying over any preconceived notions regarding interview content, the researcher who conducted and transcribed an interview did not code the interviews. The first coding member identified initial themes within the transcription, and the second coding member reviewed these emergent themes and made notes on discrepancies identified by the first. Axial coding was used to connect the various themes found in the data as well as to identify central themes and peripheral themes (Cooper & Shelley, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). After the coding process was completed, the researchers met to review the transcripts and identified themes and to collectively discuss any discrepancies that arose.

Trustworthiness
In this study, the research team utilized three central methods to increase the trustworthiness of the study findings: two-person coding, member checking, and
external auditing. This two-person method ensured that themes identified from the interview matched across multiple perspectives and mitigated bias. In addition, the team engaged in member checking by inviting participants to review and edit the transcript of their interview and findings to ensure accuracy. Finally, two external auditors were invited to review the study throughout the process and assist in evaluating the project at its conclusion. In addition, a logbook of this process was kept as an audit trail of those interacting with the data and increase trustworthy (Merriam, 2002). After the completion of the study, the audio recordings were deleted.

The researchers intentionally used the concept of mindful inquiry presented by Bentz and Shapiro (1998), which emphasizes that the identities of researchers are always present in research and researchers should be mindful of this in their studies. All six members of the research team identify as domestic students and have not experienced being international students from Muslim majority countries. Therefore, the researchers engaged in intentional reflection about their individual and group identities throughout the research process.

Findings
The findings of this study reveal the student experiences of nine international graduate students from Muslim majority countries at MU. Uncovering these narratives brings a different perspective to campus environments, including a vast range of experiences summarized with a quote by Diana: “I bring something different to the table … [international graduate students] always have something very different to say. We come from very different backgrounds, political systems in our countries work differently … The culture is different and so there is always something new we can bring to the table.”

The researchers identified four themes persistently throughout the participants’ stories: ambassadorship of international students, influence of faculty and staff on sense of belonging, opportunities and complications building meaningful relationships, and fear and uncertainty in the current political climate. These themes all relate to how the participants experience a sense of belonging (or not) at MU. A summary of the participants’ demographics is included in Table 1: Ambassadorship of International Students.

Several participants expressed that international graduate students serve as ambassadors or educators on campus, teaching others about their culture. One participant, Sarah, lived in the United States as a child and had been in the United States for over seven years as a graduate student. In her interview, she discussed her experience of feeling like she is a part of both U.S. and Saudi Arabian cultures, stating: “I feel like I’m part of both cultures and I feel like the U.S. is my country and Saudi is my country … I always feel that I’m responsible for building a bridge between them because that’s where I live. I live on that bridge, and there are a lot of people that should be on that bridge that are still trying to choose between two places when we’re really, just all of us are one big mix.”

Ilia shared similar thoughts, also using a bridge metaphor and expressing the role of international students to create “bridges between different countries.” Three participants also noted the burden of serving as a role model to undergraduate students with similar national and religious identities, both domestic and international. Sarah noted that within their role in cultural student organizations, they “wanted [Saudi students] to feel proud of their identity and [they] wanted them to feel like they can be part of this community and be with themselves and at the same time, be an MU student.” The duality of the responsibility of being a bridge to both the outside community and members of their own community is certainly a burden for many international students, yet one in which some international students find a sense of belonging and purpose.

However, participants complicated this theme of ambassadorship by expressing that they are not sure that the burden of this should fall on international students. Several participants noted that they should not have to serve in this role. Combating the stereotypes produced in the media about those from Muslim majority countries can be difficult and draining. Sam shared his thoughts on the burden of having to consistently combat others’ perceptions: “But [I’m from] Iraq it is hard for me to get a visa to fly almost anywhere—it’s hard to get a visa.”

I always feel like I’m guilty of something, you know, I felt this way for a long time. Coming here I felt guilty. Now I’m more aware and I realize it, it’s not guilt, it’s a burden. So that’s why I said it’s a lot, yes it’s a burden. It’s a burden in a sense that I need to give a better image because media and politics has distorted [our] image to the people. Although Sam feels it is his responsibility to take on this burden, the above quotation explores the complexity of international graduate students’ role on campus.

Even though participants expressed that they often serve as ambassadors on campus, they also expressed frustration with being seen as outsiders and temporary; they are often not included in the people of color community at MU. Sarah frames this in the following statement: “I mean the logo is ‘MU for All.’ We really need to work on ‘MU For All.’ It’s a great logo, but I don’t believe that ‘MU for All’ includes international.” Although this bridge-like role exists prominently in the themes pulled from each interview, often this role is one of isolation and separate from each shore of the bridge, unable to truly exist on either side.

Influence of Faculty and Staff on Sense of Belonging
All the participants spoke about how their interactions with faculty and staff impacted their sense of belonging, but responses varied depending on the participant and whether or not these interactions positively or negatively impacted their sense of belonging. Every participant stressed that they felt a greater sense of belonging to their academic school than to MU as a whole. Participants identified faculty, advisors, academic school-based support services, and the staff at the International Student Support Office (ISSO) as sources of support. Overall, participants identified that campus support...
Resilience, Resistance, & Reclamation

services their basic needs as international stu-
dents. One participant, Mustafa, stressed his apprecia-
tion for offices like the ISSO and international student
support in the School of Law by telling a story of
how his law advisor helped him apply for internships
and get approval for a modified exam schedule. He
stated, "I think it’s important that you feel welcomed.
You know, if you have a problem, you know where
to go." Participants spoke favorably of their academic
advisors, with one participant noting that her
advisor always tried to make her feel comfortable and
welcome. "I am really, really blessed that my advisor
actually has some international experience and that
is where he and I really clicked … I think he is the best
advisor I've ever had."

Several participants spoke specifically about the sup-
port they received from faculty and staff after news of
the travel ban. Communication included emails sent
to international students from faculty and provost,
vice provost, the ISSO, and academic departments, as
well as conversations with faculty and staff. Sam stated,
"People especially from faculty and my advisor, asked
do you want to talk about it, so I felt good." A couple
of participants noted that faculty specifically asked
about the well-being of their families. Communication
after the executive orders impacted ed of the nine
participants positively. Ibrahim stated, "I feel more
comfortable and I have more support after Trump's
actions more than before. Although this quote seems
like a positive reflection, Ibrahim said this in compar-
ison to the lack of support that was available prior
to the media coverage of the travel bans. Institutions
have a long history of ignoring these students despite clear
knowledge of how xenophobia and Islamophobia neg-
atively impact the student experience. It is clear that
every participant has had different interactions with
faculty and staff, and this is again why the researchers
emphasize that each student’s experience is unique
and must be considered individually.

Opportunities and Complications Building
Meaningful Relationships

Participants identified that their experiences with U.S.
culture and MU helped shape their sense of belong-
ing and ability to build meaningful relationships. Many
international graduate students in the study expressed
feeling a culture shock when entering a new environ-
ment, especially when they were in a small city, very
very quiet … I don’t know but when I came here I feel
like shock, it’s not what I imagined in like the nation" was Ilia’s thought when he first arrived at the institu-
tion. In her interview, Daria reflected on her transition
in the United States. A fellow international student asked
if she felt as though she belonged on campus, and she
responded: “And the first thing that crossed my mind
was that it’s a White institution, why would I belong
here?” Although this sentiment of shock was expressed
by several participants, several also spoke about the
opportunity to engage in programming that helped
ease the transition and form relationships.

Five participants spoke or alluded to difficulty building
and maintaining relationships with domestic stu-
dents at MU. Diana noted, “One interesting thing
is that most of my friends are international students
and not Americans.” Six other participants echoed
this sentiment of having more ease connecting with inter-
national peers. Mustafa stated:

“is difficult in this country to make friends with
Americans. So. Sometimes, like most of the time, if I
want to hang out or just do fun activities, I go with
friends from my country or, you know, who speak
my language. I know a lot of international students
in the law school and I have friends, but Americans,
I’ve found it’s difficult. Just classmates, but not
friends.”

Joey explained that conversing with domestic students
was challenging because they didn’t “have time to
speak” or “were not familiar with second language peo-
ple, how they are speaking.” Sam shared an example of
losing a relationship he had formed with a domestic
student after a news story broke of an Arab man who
drove a pickup truck down a bicycle path near the
World Trade Center, killing eight and injuring twelve
people.

So there was a guy [domestic student] for two days
he didn’t talk to me. I don’t know, I thought that
he just feel bad or something, but then [I asked]
and he said “it’s my fault.” “What’s wrong with that guy?” He
said, “He’s just upset about New York,” and I said,
“Oh, but why he’s not talking to me if he’s upset
about New York?” So that’s a shocking to me really
like a shock … The problem is I know that guy. We
laugh together, we take class together, and yeah, so
his reaction, I never spoke with him again to be
honest. This example is the reality of international
students from Muslim majority countries because of the
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Resilience, Resistance, & Reclamation

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When asked how the current political climate impacts
their sense of belonging, participants disclosed varying
degrees of fear and uncertainty. Some participants
expressed feeling extremely scared to be in the United
States, while others felt there was no need to feel afraid
at all. A factor that contributed to participants’ elevated
fear is the Islamophobia that exists in the United States.
For example, Sarah felt the need to protect her children
in the current climate:

“I still feel the repercussions of September 11th and I
still felt that I needed to protect my kids … I am
not joking that there were many nights … the way I
sleep was one foot out of the bed and one foot on
the bed with the lights on, and I was ready in case I
heard anything.

And another participant, Ilias, mentioned that he is
concerned about political rhetoric validating Islam-
ophobia, especially amongst Trump supporters. Ilias
also expressed that Islamophobia can create great
fear for women, concluding that Muslim women have
a harder time feeling safe because their hijab
identify them as Muslim; he mentioned knowing a woman
who is too afraid to wear her hijab. Ibrahim shared his
opinion on the experience of women who wear hijab:

“Women here, who wear hijab or acting as a Muslim,
have many difficulties more than men. I notice that
with colleagues and with my wife as well. They feel not
as comfortable as us.” At least two female-identifying
participants expressed concern as well. Ilias can be
terminated to female-identifying participants’ fear of
outwardly identifying themselves through ele-
ments such as religious attire.

Although higher degrees of fear were a concern for
several participants, others expressed having lower lev-
els of fear. Ilias, a student in the School of Law, said
he feels safe because of the government’s checks and bal-
ances—he feels everyone is protected by the law and
that studying the law of the United States gives him
a sense of security. Ilias said he is not afraid of President
Trump because “no one person runs the country.”

Feelings of fear related to uncertainty were also men-
tioned by participants. Six participants expressed feel-
ings of uncertainty regarding their abilities to obtain
visas, their abilities to go home and have their loved
ones come to the United States, and postgraduation
opportunities. Sam expressed the level of uncertainty
by stating:

“I’m doing a masters or to continue Ph D, and I’m
genuinely thinking that I should apply [outside of the
United States] or maybe Germany or some-
thing. I don’t want to stay because I thought the
situation would change, but at the end of the
day this is really bad. And based on today I’m okay,
tomorrow there might be a ban, and then I will not
be able to go to United States. I wasn’t traveling
but I know of friends that were traveling to
their families they couldn’t get back and you know
what happens with the airports and courts.
“A special emphasis should be given to educating faculty and advisors on culturally responsive practice because students consistently mentioned the importance of their academic units in their sense of belonging.”

Several participants were also sure to mention that personal safety and feelings of fear are not new phenomena due to the current political climate, noting difficulties obtaining visas and extensive airport security screenings as examples of preexisting challenges. The United States has experienced Islamophobic sentiment for an extended period. Participants disclosed that Arab and Muslim people already do not feel safe in the United States and the current political climate simply exacerbates their fear.

Discussion

Together, the four themes explore how participants conceptualize their sense of belonging at MU and how both the campus and sociopolitical climates impact their student experience. The first two themes, ambassadorship and influence of faculty and staff, focus on how campus life influences their sense of belonging. Every participant noted that they feel a stronger sense of belonging within their academic department than at MU at large. Specifically, participants expressed the importance of culturally responsive faculty. Several participants noted that faculty regularly bring up global current events in the classroom or reach out to ask about their families. These examples demonstrate a sense of belonging within academic departments. For these participants, supported by Strayhorn’s (2012) assertions that graduate students seek and find support from those who seek to create more campuses where all students feel like they belong, but not just students with dominant identities. It may be difficult for domestic students, staff, and faculty to comprehend the constant fear that is present for these students. This study exposes the stories of international graduate students, especially when considering their plans for the future. While institutions are focused on creating supportive environments for international graduate students, they must also focus on cultural differences, ethnic origin, and the ways identity (including gender) can affect students’ sense of belonging.

Implications

There are two sets of implications to improve the sense of belonging for this population: one for immediate action and one for broader consideration to address systemic problems that create an unwelcoming environment for this student population. On a daily basis, faculty and practitioners should continue the positive practices noted by the participants including actively voicing support for international students, creating meaningful relationships with students they advise and teach, and displaying symbols of support and cultural validation on campus and in text, including posters, flyers, and emails. A special emphasis should be given to educating faculty and advisors on culturally responsive practice because students consistently mentioned the importance of their academic units in their sense of belonging. Institutions should take this study as an impetus to examine conditions that maximize success for diverse student populations on their campuses.

Although these practices have the potential to contribute to a greater sense of belonging for this student population, the researchers recognize that these recommendations focus on making an issue better without addressing the larger problem. The researchers acknowledge that these recommendations will not create a long-term change in campus and national culture in an environment built upon White supremacy. Throughout all the interviews, the researchers noted an underlying tone of the normalization of oppressive, isolating, and exclusionary practices, especially in how students discussed how the MU community does not see the value in investing in them. Participants spoke of exclusionary practices as normal and expected. This normalization is dangerous and should inspire action from those who seek to create more campuses where all students feel like they belong. To truly achieve a welcoming environment, a broader change of campus and national culture is needed. Additional research on how this student population experiences the collegiate environment is needed. Systemic change will require collective action to break down systems of oppression.

*References: Can be found at the end of this special issue.*

Suggested Citation:

Students of color have reported encountering significant challenges while entering and attending institutions of higher education (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Turner (1994) stated that students of color feel like strangers in some institutions of higher education. As a result of racism and anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy positions of the Trump administration and like-minded individuals, students of color have reported encountering significant challenges while entering and attending institutions of higher education.

Several of Trump’s proposed policies have targeted communities of color through bills that would prohibit Muslim refugees, end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and deny rights to transgender individuals. Consider the immediate shock and heightened discussion of such policies among students, this paper investigates the impact of the racist and anti-immigrant policies on Latinx/Chicanx undergraduate students leading up to the 2016 presidential election and after the election of Donald J. Trump.

The paper uses the campus racial climate as a theoretical framework to understand their experiences on campus. The paper asks three questions:

1. What are the impacts on Latinx/Chicanx undergraduate students (on and off campus), regardless of documentation status, due to the election of Trump and the anti-immigrant and anti-Latinx/Chicanx rhetoric?

2. How has the campus racial climate for Latinx/Chicanx students been altered by the heightened discussion of potential anti-immigrant policies?

3. What are the intended and unintended consequences of the Trump-era discourse on the Latinx/Chicanx college student experience?

In the following section, we introduce racist nativism and its influence on political rhetoric and policy.

Nativism is defined by Hingham (1955) as an intense fear of the foreign or “un-American.” Nativism has a connection to nationalism in the sense that nationalistic ideologies justify the fear “that some influence originating abroad threatens the very life of the nation within” (Hingham, 1955, p. 4 as cited in Huber, López, Malagon, Velez, & Solórzano, 2008). The discourse around nativism can be described as “dog whistle politics,” or a form of strategic racism spoken in code and targeting a specific audience (López, 2008). Such discourses emphasize racial divisions while masking themselves as “neutral.” For example, Attorney General Jeff Sessions justified the rescinding of DACA by stating that the program “denied jobs to hundreds of thousands of Americans [citizens] by allowing those same illegal aliens to take those jobs” (Shear & Davis, 2017). This fear is exacerbated when foreigners are racialized as Latinx/Chicanx and that traditional American values will be lost if overtaken by this growing minority population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). Through this fear, racism becomes an important factor in how nativism is exercised where it begins to attack the Latinx/Chicanx community as non-native.

During his presidential candidacy announcement, Trump played off of this fear by stating that “when Mexico sends its people … they’re not sending their best … They’re raping … They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists …” Racist nativism is then defined as assigning people of color, like the Latinx/Chicanx, values that are perceived to be inferior to traditional native (White) values. Furthermore, racist nativism and proposed policies that are anti-immigrant, Latinx/Chicanx, Muslim, Black, and LGBTQIA+. The rhetoric and policy positions of the Trump administration and like-minded individuals are nothing new in American society, but the delivery method has become anything but subtle. Universities have experienced racist propaganda found on campus and a rise in controversial conservative guest speakers that have led to students across the nation protesting these events. For instance, at the institutions where this study took place, signs stating “STOP THE RAPE, STOP THE CRIMES, STOP THE MURDER, STOP THE BLACKS” were found the week before school started. Additionally, other signs were posted once the semester began that stated, “It’s Okay to be White.” In other words, as the political rhetoric has become blatant, actions targeting communities of color have followed suit.

This paper investigates the impact of the racist and anti-immigrant policies on Latinx/Chicanx undergraduate students leading up to the 2016 presidential election and after the election of Donald J. Trump. The paper uses the campus racial climate as a theoretical framework to understand their experiences on campus. The paper asks three questions:

1. What are the impacts on Latinx/Chicanx undergraduate students (on and off campus), regardless of documentation status, due to the election of Trump and the anti-immigrant and anti-Latinx/Chicanx rhetoric?

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3. What are the intended and unintended consequences of the Trump-era discourse on the Latinx/Chicanx college student experience?

In the following section, we introduce racist nativism and its influence on political rhetoric and policy. Next, we cover how literature describes the Latinx/Chicanx student college experience. Then we delve into our study that draws from campus racial climate frameworks and literature. After presenting our methods and data sources, we present eight themes across all focus groups and end the paper by discussing the findings and the impact on Latinx/Chicanx students.
Latinx/Chicano Students and the College Experience

Studies have demonstrated that hostile campus racial climates create traumatic and unwelcoming experiences for Latinx/Chicano students (Franklin, Smith, & Hung, 2014; Gonzalez, 2002). Many of these experiences are perpetrated by racial microaggressions (Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009) or the subtle, innocuous, preconscious, or unconscious degradation and putdowns aimed at reducing, discrediting, and excluding the person from the space. Additionally, Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) correlated racial microaggressions to racial battle fatigue, or the stress responses due to constant exposure to racial microaggressions. These traumatic experiences contribute to why students of color report that the campus climate is more hostile compared to their White counterparts (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Negative campus racial climates are facilitated by the institutional campus culture that often perpetuates “prejudice and discrimination, racial stereotypes, low expectations from teachers and peers, exclusions from the curriculum, and pedagogy that marginalizes and tokenizes the voices of Latinx/Chicano college students and other undergraduates of color (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Lopez, 2005 as cited in Kiyama, Museus, & Yosso, 2015). For instance, studies have found that Latinx/Chicano students experience racial stereotypes and anti-immigrant sentiments that are perpetuated by entities across the college campus, including campus staff, faculty, and students (Gloria, Castellanos, Scull, & Villegas, 2009; Sanchez, in-press; Yosso et al., 2009). Latinx/Chicano campus climates have also been described partly because of the narrow perception of racial and ethnic identities by universities and colleges (Cavazos, Johnson, & Sparrow, 2010; Cerezo & Chang, 2013; Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Perez & Saez, 2017). A large body of research has demonstrated how Latina/Chicana and fellow students of color feel “out of place,” lack a sense of belonging, feel unsafe, and experience regular racial microaggressions on college campuses (Gonzalez, 2002; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Kiyana et al., 2011; Rossouw et al., 2015). Nonetheless, some of these resources that foster multiculturalism and diversity traditionally have not had the full support of educational institutions (Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimon, Brown, & Barteet, 2005). Hostile racial climates, institutions are contributing to the trauma of students of color and, with it, the barriers they must navigate.

Furthermore, studies have also demonstrated that Latinx/Chicano students have to fulfill family commitments such as being caretakers and helping financially while in college (Cerezo, Lyda, Beristianos, Enriquez, & Connor, 2013; Kouyoumdjian, Guzman, Garcia, & Talavera-Bustillos, 2017). Studies have also revealed that finances play an important factor in how Latina/Chicana experience college (Gloria et al., 2017; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017; Dequegua, Locks, & Vega, 2009). Perez and Saez (2017) interview students that underwent physical and psychological trauma due to the possibility of losing scholarships and other financial aid. These challenges add to how Latinx/Chicana experience their college campuses and demonstrate a lack of commitment and/or understanding on how to support, retain, and graduate historically minoritized students (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

Theoretical Framework: Campus Racial Climate and Culture

To understand the impact of Trump-era rhetoric on Latinx/Chicana student experiences, we use campus racial climate and culture literature as our theoretical framework. The campus racial climate and culture are often referenced when discussing the experiences of historically marginalized students on campus. However, there are important distinctions between the two. Solórzano, Cep, and Yosso (2000) define the campus racial climate as the overall racial environment of the college campus, and this is supported by studies that have found that there are racial differences in the perceptions of campus climate (see Harper & Hurtado, 2007, for a review). The campus racial climate is more relevant to the experiences of students of color than the general campus climate as it is a recognized component to their postsecondary experience due to historical and contemporary exclusion (Hurtado, 1992). Schuster and Tyree (2006) have described that hostile campus climates negatively impact students’ sense of belonging, academic outcomes, and health outcomes (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Solórzano et al. (2000) stated that a positive racial campus climate includes at least four elements: (a) the inclusion of underrepresented students, faculty, and administrators; (b) a curriculum with an underlying historical context of people of color; (c) programs that encourage the recruitment, retention, and graduation of students of color; and (d) a university commitment to a racially diverse college campus. Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, and Miliem (1998) and Miliem, Chang, & Antonio (2005) provided a framework to understand campus climate that included organizational structures, histories, and external forces such as governmental policies and sociohistorical forces. The campus racial climate is focused on finding these discrepancies, measuring students’ attitudes, perceptions, observations, or interpretative responses due to constant exposure to racial microaggressions and encasing the hapless into their place. Additionally, Schwartz and colleagues (2015) define/minoritized groups. Through this discourse, there is a strong urgency to revert back to so-called traditional American values while assigning negative values to historically marginalized communities. Through this paper, we intend to look at how discourses of the Trump administration are impacting the sense of belonging for Latinx/Chicanx students and how they experience the campus racial climate.

Latinx/Chicano Students and the College Experience

The campus racial climate is more unwelcoming for Latinx/Chicanx students when compared to their White counterparts (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). The campus racial climate is more hostile for Latinx/Chicanx students and other undergraduates of color (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Participant Selection Participants in this study were selected purposefully to ensure a participant pool composed of individuals who are likely to have experience with the topics studied (Patton, 2002). Participants in this study were selected purposefully to ensure a participant pool composed of individuals who are likely to have experience with the topics studied (Patton, 2002). We used sampling for intensity, snowball sampling, and personal network sampling to recruit participants. Sampling for intensity refers to seeking information-rich cases and snowball sampling provided us the opportunity to ask current participants to recommend other participants (Patton, 2002). One of the authors is a first-year coordinator and advisor in the Office for Equity and knew many of the students, which assisted with recruitment and was used extensively for sampling we employed. The sampling methods used ensured that participants who could speak meaningfully about the institution and the experiences of Latinx/Chicanx students.
The final sample consisted of 23 students who identified as Latinx/Chicanx. The gender breakdown was nearly even with 12 participants identifying as male and 11 as female. All the students attended the same four-year institution in the western United States. The total enrollment of the institution was around 34,000 in the fall of 2017 and was primarily a commuter school, but recently offered greater on-campus housing options. The city and state in which the institution is located is experiencing rapid growth of Latinx/Chicanx populations. In addition, the enrollments of Latinx/Chicanx have been growing year over year. In 2015, Latinx/Chicanx students were 15% of the first-time freshman and 12% of the undergraduate population. Focus groups occurred between September 2016 and September 2017.

Data Collection Procedures

Each student participated in one of two focus groups lasting between 60 to 90 minutes. Prior to the focus groups, students were asked to fill out a brief demographic questionnaire. Focus groups were conducted using a semistructured protocol. Participants were asked general questions about what it is like to be a Latinx/Chicanx student at the institution and their perceptions of the campus racial climate before and after the election of Trump. Participants were also asked how they were impacted by the political rhetoric occurring that was seemingly anti-Latinx/Chicanx and immigrant. Interviewers asked probing questions to better understand how students view their experience at the institution and what it was like to be Latinx/Chicanx. Authors had participants pick pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Data Analysis

Each focus group was audio taped and transcribed. Data was analyzed using methods described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Moustakas (1994). HyperRESEARCH 2.8 qualitative data management software was used to organize, manage, and code the data. First, the authors created textual-structural descriptions to review each interview and to better understand how students experienced the campus racial climate (Moustakas, 1994). Second, the authors utilized open and axial coding to generate themes and identify the corresponding elements of these thematic categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Specifically, open-coding procedures were utilized to identify eight themes that cut across the focus group transcripts. Using HyperRESEARCH, the authors generated a code report for each theme and then used axial coding techniques to identify salient properties of themes. The eight themes and related quotes are presented in the findings.

Additionally, several participants mentioned how they felt the institution did not take into account the impact the rhetoric and election were having generally on historically marginalized students and their ability to perform academically.

Findings

This analysis resulted in eight themes: (1) power of political rhetoric and Trump; (2) coded language; (3) unsafe academic spaces; (4) racialization of immigration as a Latinx/Chicanx issue; (5) burnout, stress, and racial battle fatigue; (6) balancing academic commitments and social activism; (7) the reactive university; and (8) students doing the work of the administration. The themes presented below are not an exhaustive list of all the ways that Latinx/Chicanx students experience the campus racial climate.

Power of Political Rhetoric and Trump

Participants discussed the impact political rhetoric was having on their everyday experiences and academics before and after the election. For example, Vanessa (female), a senior getting ready to graduate, mentioned: I remember when Trump got elected, you know how it was at 3 a.m. or something, the next day I had an exam at eight in the morning and I went and I did it … I remember going to my teacher after he graded and I got a like a C, so I was like, “Yeah I really couldn’t study or think for this test because of the election.” And he was just like, “Oh yeah … I guess I couldn’t find the people that gave a fuck. Vanessa had been impacted heavily by Trump and his political rhetoric prior to the election. Once Trump was elected, the anxiousness and stress of the rhetoric and what it might mean for her friends and family negatively impacted Vanessa’s ability to focus and prepare for an exam and other academic responsibilities. This anxiousness and what it meant for the future was a common thread among participants.

Additionally, several participants mentioned how they felt the institution did not take into account the impact the rhetoric and election were having generally on historically marginalized students and their ability to perform academically.

Participants referenced how the political discourse impacted their perceptions of safety in certain spaces. For example, students protested the visit from Ben Shapiro, a conservative commentator, citing his rhetoric was harmful to the student body, campus racial climate, and attacked students of color, queer students, and trans students. By the institution allowing Ben Shapiro and his rhetoric on campus, several students indicated fearing for their safety. Roberto (male), a first-year student, described the day of Shapiro’s visit to campus: There was tension in the air … you could feel it. I realized I was the only person of color there [near the auditorium where Ben Shapiro was speaking]. I felt like I was unsafe, like oh no, everyone is going to start looking at me. They were just like saying the rhetoric that Ben Shapiro was saying. I’m like this is not a safe space for me, I should head home.

Roberto’s comments expressed the fear participants felt with the increased brazenness of anti-Latinx/Chicanx rhetoric on campus.

Coded Language

Participants identified the role of coded language in creating a hostile campus racial climate especially when issues of immigration were discussed. Coded language was used to communicate that Latinx/Chicanx students were not welcome on campus and was rooted in racism, xenophobia, and American exceptionalism. Hector (male), a graduating senior, explained how general comments on campus were rooted in liberal politics and those making the comments often made the comments in a subtle way that created a hostile campus racial climate. Hector stated: It’s not directly anti-Latino, but this place is weird. All of these attacks on racist hide behind anonymity and liberal politics that White people buy into that make them seem like they are not racist.

Brenda (female), a third-
ti-Latino/Chicanx and immigrant rhetoric, students overwhelmingly identified the classroom as a place of increased hostility and increased microaggressions during the election cycle and after the election. Paco (male), a senior, described experiences in classes when discussing immigration:

There has been a lot of hostile encounters in the classroom. There have been cases when we are talking about the benefits of immigration and immigration reform. And there have been times when people have spoken out aggressively and dehumanizing comments, something along the lines of “we should exterminate these people” is something I actually heard in the classroom when I was presenting … and the professor did NOTHING.

Despite years of meeting with Latinx/Chicanx students, professors and/or administrators did not take any action in challenging microaggressions as in Hector’s experience with the chemistry professor. In addition to discussing the general campus racial climate created by the increased discussion of anti-Latino/Chicanx and immigrant rhetoric, students overwhelmingly identified the classroom as a place of increased hostility and increased microaggressions during the election cycle and after the election. Paco (male), a senior, described experiences in classes when discussing immigration:

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It’s like extra stress on top of like homework and work. It’s a lot of shit to deal with, it’s like psychologically and emotionally overwhelming. I have depression and anxiety so I’m taking medication for it. There is a pattern that I have noticed that when I’m away from school I am fine you know, I’m good, but once I’m back in school all these things start hitting me at once. In terms of how I navigate, I started being selective of where I spend my time, who I talk too, what classes I even participate in, and what classes I don’t. Sometimes I feel like there’s no point on wasting my energy on these people who are not going to care about what I have to say.

Luz’s experience echoed other students that highighted they wanted to disengage from the campus and even changed majors to avoid certain spaces. For instance, Vanessa stated, “I don’t engage, I disengage. I want to fucking cry all the time. I hate everyone. I changed majors because I don’t want to fucking interact with these people anymore.”

When asked about how students were handling the increased anti-Latinx/Chicano rhetoric on and off campus, students expressed that increased stressors were directly related to the political discourse and created a hostile campus racial climate. Glenda (female), a graduating senior who led organizing efforts to protest Ben Shapiro’s campus visit, described the energy drain she experienced and how it has set her back on her thesis.

This semester I have just been super tired. I get people who are not going to care about what I doing. During the sit in, I spent the whole day [there], that’s when I started to fall behind in readings for class. It’s stuff that I don’t regret doing because it had to be done and I wanted to be there, but again it’s like, you know, it falls on the students. Participants demonstrated that they were consistently willing to sacrifice their academic standing by falling behind and possibly receiving bad grades in order to advocate for their communities. This sacrifice that Latinx/Chicanxs and fellow students of color make is rooted in history, but the increased time and energy students used to combat Ben Shapiro’s visit and other anti-Latinx/Chicano rhetoric is an unintended consequence of the election of Trump.

**The Reactive University**

A common theme throughout the focus groups was a feeling that the university was only reactive and not proactive to the social and political climate. Blue described this phenomenon as the university “always playing catch up.” Students had an expectation that the university would be proactive in supporting students during contentious times. Several of the participants stated fellow students, staff, administrators, and faculty distrusted the negative impact of the national discourse had on the campus racial climate. When the institutions did acknowledge these events, it was usually with a statement. Glenda elaborated, “They [the institution] only come up with a statement when something happens, something big has to happen in order for them to start thinking about it.”

The feeling that the institution was not proactive in dealing with the increased political discourse created the sentiment that the institution did not care about them as students. For example, Luz stated, “I don’t feel like the university supports me at an organizational level, more like people in certain offices, certain professors you can talk to.” Juan continued, “What the Women’s Resource Center did, the massages [a day after the Ben Shapiro event], that’s something proactive they did, not that the university [administrators and other departmental] staff supported us, they wouldn’t have us do their job. So they were the ones telling them, “Hey you need to do something about it.” Like with the student organization that supports undocumented students, they pushed a lot to open an undocumented resources center, for [full-time] staff to get hired, and for funding. If it wasn’t for students advocating, they would have never happened. Glenda supported this notion saying:

A lot of what the university ends up doing is because of students, we are the ones telling them, “Hey you need to do something about it.” Like with the student organization that supports undocumented students, they pushed a lot to open an undocumented resources center, for [full-time] staff to get hired, and for funding. If it wasn’t for students advocating, they would have never happened.

Luz commented: “The Latinx/Chicanx students in our study not only have to compete academically, but also have to survive against hostile climates, culture, microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue, while civically engaging and advocating for their communities.”

Due to the perceived lack of proactive behavior of the institution, students felt they needed to do the work or put pressure on the administration to create more welcoming environments. Students discussed how they were taking on extra responsibilities and work that other students did not have to take on. Participants discussed how this led to feelings of hopelessness and feelings of fighting an endless fight they were bound to lose. Javier (male), a third-year student, noted, “There needs to be more serious repercussions for professors who do say problematic stuff to hurt individuals.” For Javier, even at the focus group, he felt compelled to advocate for his community however he could. Glenda put into perspective the extra work Latinx/Chicanxs were taking on by saying:
When you come to the university, initially all I thought I was going to focus on was my academic, the same way I did in high school. You never think, “Oh I’m going to devote a lot of my time fighting administration and advocating for my community.” That was not initially what I thought about my college experience.

Glenda highlighted the different directions Latinx/Chicanx students are being pulled compared to their peers. For several of the participants, being a Latinx/Chicanx college student meant they had a deep responsibility to their communities and they demonstrated this commitment through social activism.

**Discussion**

Findings from this study contribute to the literature on contemporary experiences of Latinx/Chicanx college students. Students indicated that the election of Trump and like-minded political leaders profoundly and negatively impacted their perceptions of the campus racial climate and their sense of belonging to the institution. Student responses demonstrated there was a shift that occurred on campus as a result of the election that caused Latinx/Chicanx students to perceive the environment as physically and psychologically dangerous. Previous studies have highlighted the prevelance of negative campus racial climates and cultures (Hurtado & Carter, 1997), but participants in this study demonstrated that universities are sometimes complicit in the shift to greater anti-Latinx/Chicanx and immigrant rhetoric without proactive action.

We want to acknowledge that campus racial climates have always been unwelcoming and hostile for people of color, but participants expressed the immediacy of the climate shift with the election of Trump. Findings reflect previous studies that demonstrate the academic sphere of campuses are extremely hostile towards Latinx/Chicanx and students of color (González, 2002; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Yosso et al., 2009). Students highlighted how their peers, staff, and professors often perpetuated macro and microaggressions and/or failed to address such aggressions, which created a hostile campus racial climate. Furthermore, the rhetoric of Trump and his policies often seeped into classroom discussions and made students feel unwelcome. For Latinx/Chicanx students—and possibly other communities—these discussions often brought about unwanted emotional trauma in the classroom and even caused students to miss classes (e.g., some students indicated they missed classes the day DACA was rescinded).

Scholars have argued we witnessed a shift in racism from the overt racism of the Jim Crow era to a subtler, “color-blind” racism that is equally injurious to the everyday lives of people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Our findings partially challenge such assumptions when we see overt racism and xenophobia operating at the forefront of the daily lives of Latinx/Chicanx students with the election of Trump. Participants noted a specific shift from the color-blind racism they experienced to a more overt anti-Latinx/Chicanx discrimination during and after the election. Students provided examples of how the campus racial climate became increasingly hostile to their presence. Participants highlighted the institution only reacted to overt acts of discrimination and frequently failed to address any subtle forms of daily racism. As seen with the Ben Shapiro and other conservative talks on campuses around the country, institutions of higher education often cited freedom of speech reasoning for allowing such individuals to speak on campus. Such color-blind, ahistorical reasoning can be harmful to the sense of belonging of students of color and their health.

Students expressed the toll that rhetoric and action/inaction took on their level of energy, psychological health, and physiological health. Participants cited they were dealing with mental health issues that were heightened when attending the institution. These findings align with previous research on racial battle fatigue that found as a result of racial microaggressions, students experienced different types of stressors (Franklin et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2007; Yosso et al., 2009). Although there has been some scholarship on how discrimination and racism impact Latinx/Chicanx students (Franklin et al., 2014; Yosso et al., 2009), additional scholarship is needed. Furthermore, scholarship is needed to understand how institutions of higher education can support Latinx/Chicanx students and students of color after the Trump presidency.

Fifth, we found that universities are putting a greater onus on students of color with institutional inaction. Several students could pinpoint that the sit-in they participated is where they began to fall behind in their classes. Student activism and participation are sources of both direct and indirect benefits (Rhoads, 2007). Although these types of activities are fruitful, they can also have negative impacts on the emotional and psychological health of students (Rhoads, 2016). In further analyzing comments made by participants, we pose a question of what it would look like for institutions to acknowledge students’ labor of love for their community. Rhoads (2016) acknowledges the extra strains students take on; however, he also commends their work and the sophistication of the insights and forms of knowledge student activists glean from and acquire through their civic participation. Institutions need to be better at acknowledging and rewarding students who are taking on such extra work to better the campus climate and culture.

Finally, students expressed the negative impact of the escalation of Trump-era policies had on all Latinx/Chicanx students and their intersectional identities. Although we expected this finding considering certain phenotypes as signifiers of being associated with a Latinx/Chicanx background, we were unsure, at first, how prevalent this would be among our participants. One student spoke about what Picca and Feagin (2007) refer to as performing race in the backstage and frontstage depending on who is present. The student spoke about her light complexion that would enable her to “pass” as White and, thus, hear conversations that were openly anti-immigrant and anti-Latinx/Chicanx. The student was able to see the friendly and hostile sides of the campus racial climate based on her ability to “pass.”

**Conclusion**

The findings in this paper demonstrate the complicated campus racial climates, cultures, and feelings that Latinx/Chicanx students had to navigate leading up to, during, and after the election of Trump. Latinx/Chicanx students have always faced hostile and unwelcoming climates, but students expressed that such occurrences have become more frequent and harsher. The focus groups illustrate what it takes to enroll, persist, and complete a degree in the current political climate. The Latinx/Chicanx students in our study not only have to compete academically, but they also have an obligation to be civically engaged and continuously advocate for their communities. Given the political and anti-Latinx/Chicanx climate of universities need to create programs and policies that are more inclusive of Latinx/Chicanx students. Furthermore, institutions of higher education need to proactively challenge microaggressions and Whiteness on campus that act as the catalyst for anti-Latino/Chicanx immigrant rhetoric.

*References:*

Can be found at the end of this special issue.

Suggested Citation

It’s as if my family’s immigration status and experience lie delicately between the two kawayan, bamboo poles, and we’ve been dancing the tinikling with immigration ever since our arrival in the US. ICE sets the pace of how fast we should be dancing, how we weave through the poles as a family. Although it is in our blood, 15 years of dancing between the kawayan becomes tiring. Do we get to walk freely or are we forever bound and trapped to the confines of the kawayan?

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