Journal of Students Affairs at New York University
Volume XV | 2019

EDITOR IN CHIEF – Vanessa Kania
CONTENT EDITOR – Carol Dinh
COPY EDITOR – Danielle Meirow
PRODUCTION EDITOR – Benjamin Szabo
DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLICITY MANAGER – Luis A. Cisneros

INTERNAL EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD
Luis A. Cisneros, NYU Office of Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation

Molly Cravens, Fordham University - Lincoln Center
Danielle Cristal, NYU Tandon
Emilee Duffy, School of American Ballet
Kenya Farley, NYU Financial Education Program
Meryll Anne Flores, New York University
Zackary Harris, Pace University
Lica Hertz, New York University
Alex Katz, School of American Ballet, New York University
Daksha Khatri, New York University
Samantha Micek, NYU Law
Taylor Panico, New York University
Veronika Paprocka, Stevens Institute of Technology
Stephanie Santo, New York University
Craig Shook, Stevens Institute of Technology
Alexa Spieler, NYU Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute/FAS
Guicheng “Ariel” Tan, Stevens Institute of Technology
Kayla M. Walker, New York University
EXTERNAL EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

Ana Angeles, Barnard College, Program Coordinator for Student Life
Lesley Heffel-McGuirk, Association of Yale Alumni, Data Strategy Manager
Lauren Jordan, LearnServe International, Seeding Social Innovation Director
Lydia Keema, New York University
Andrew LaVenia, NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing, Assistant Director, Undergraduate Student Affairs & Admissions
Annie Le, NYU Rory Meyers College of Nursing, Academic Advisor
Megan Murphy, Southern Methodist University, Cox School of Business, Associate Director of Student Services
Staci Ripkey, NYU College of Dentistry, Assistant Dean, Student Affairs & Academic Support Services
Buffy Stoll Turton, Miami University, Director, Office of Orientation and Transition Programs

FACULTY ADVISOR

Stella Flores, Professor of Higher Education, New York University
MISSION
JoSA is an annual peer reviewed journal that explores the field of student affairs and addresses contemporary issues and current trends among professionals in higher education. As a student-run publication, JoSA aims to highlight research and scholarship that further develops the practice of student affairs and are of particular relevance to professionals throughout higher education.

EDITORIAL BOARD
The Editorial Board of the Journal of Student Affairs at New York University consists of graduate students in the Higher Education and Student Affairs program in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University. The Board has been established to coordinate and carry out all editorial functions for the Journal and to ensure the continuity of future publications. The Editorial Board of the Journal of Student Affairs at New York University promotes the submission of articles that address issues of critical interest to the NYU community and among the larger community of higher education and student affairs professionals. Articles that explore topical issues, suggest innovative programming, and embark upon original research are encouraged. The opinions and attitudes expressed within the Journal do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
We would also like to acknowledge our sponsors as well as the individuals that make up these departments and organizations for their vision, leadership, dedication, and passion for higher education and student affairs—all which make this publication possible:

NYU Association of Student Affairs Professionals
Leadership Board, 2018
Joseph Washington, Executive Chair
Guicheng “Ariel” Tan, Communications Chair
Dharini Parthasarathy and Kayla Walker, Professional Development Co-Chairs
Fatimah Chishti, Academic Support and Advocacy Chair
Hannah Thomas, Social Chair
Danialie Fertile, Social Justice and Community Service Chair
Megan Hallissy, Part-time and Alumni Relations Chair
Carol Dinh and Emily Wolschlag, Recruitment and Orientation Co-Chairs

Leadership Board, 2019
Michelle Mondrey, Executive Chair
Alex Katz, Communications Chair
Stephanie Micek and Stephanie O’Neill, Professional Development Co-Chairs
Luis A. Cisneros, Academic Support and Advocacy Chair
Tysa Vulcain, Social Chair
Jermaine Graham, Social Justice and Community Service Chair
Estefanie Lliguichuzca, Part-time and Alumni Relations Chair
Molly Cravens and John Jimenez, Recruitment and Orientation Co-Chairs

NYU Office of the Vice President for Global Student Affairs
Marc Wais, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs
Tom Ellett, Senior Associate Vice President, Student Affairs

Carlo Ciotoli, Associate Vice President, NYU Student Health - GNU; Executive Director, Student Health Center

Christopher Bledsoe, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs; Director of Athletics, Intramurals & Recreation

Monroe France, Associate VP for Global Student Engagement & Inclusive Leadership

Allen McFarlane, Assistant Vice President for Outreach and Engagement

Zoe Ragouzeos, Assistant Vice President, NYU Student Mental Health - GNU; Director, Counseling & Wellness

Trudy Steinfeld, Associate Vice President & Executive Director, Wasserman Center for Career Development

Elizabeth Kuzina, Chief of Staff

NYU Steinhardt Department of Administration, Leadership & Technology

Colleen Larson, Department Chair

Noel Anderson, Program Director, Educational Leadership

Teboho Moja, Program Director, Higher and Postsecondary Education

Jan Plass, Program Director, Educational Communication and Technology

NYU Steinhardt Department of Higher Education and Student Affairs

Stella Flores, Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Diversity; Associate Professor of Higher Education; Director of Access and Equity, Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy

Michael Sean Funk, Clinical Assistant Professor of Higher Education; Program Coordinator, Masters in Higher Education & Student Affairs

Ann Marcus, Professor of Higher Education; Director of The Steinhardt Institute of Higher Education Policy

Teboho Moja, Clinical Professor of Higher Education; Program Director

Frances Stage, Professor of Higher Education

Liang Zhang, Professor of Higher Education

NYU Steinhardt Office of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Delmy Lendof, Associate Dean
Linda Chin, Assistant Director, Undergraduate/Graduate Academic Advising
Belkis Baez, Student Advisor
Kate Legnetti, Director, Advisement & Registration Services
Jackie McPhillips, Director, Community College Transfer Opportunity Program
Jeanne Bannon, Director, Counseling and Student Services
Justine Kelly-Fierro, Assistant Director for Student Services
Nija Leocadio, Graduate Student Services Counselor
Nicholas Voelker, Student Services Counselor – International/Diversity
Angela Ellis, Student Services Counselor – Opportunities Programs
Paula Lee, Director, Wasserman Center for Career Development
Tanya Gary, Executive Assistant to the Associate Dean
John Myers, Director of Enrollment Management
Andrea Fannelli, Registration Administrator
Yvette Brown, Associate Director of Graduate Admissions
Nancy Hall, Research and Doctoral Studies
Mark Perez, Teacher Certification Officer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Author/Institution</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter from the Editor</td>
<td>Vanessa Kania</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges and Recommendations for Practitioners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurological Process of Development</td>
<td>Annie Cole - University of Portland</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracting and Supporting International Graduate Students in Higher</td>
<td>Jung-Hau (Sean) Chen - University of</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Student Affairs</td>
<td>Massachusetts Amherst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carli Fink – Northeastern University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Commuter Students: Challenges and Strategies for Success</td>
<td>Fanny He - New York University</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reframing the History of Affirmative Action: A Feminist and Critical</td>
<td>Zackary Harris - New York University</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Theory Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Student Organization</td>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for Authors</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Colleagues, Academics, Students, and Friends:

On behalf of the 2018-2019 Executive Editorial Board, I am proud to present the fifteenth edition of the Journal of Student Affairs at New York University. This year we had many submissions from authors across the United States that highlighted various issues within higher education and student affairs. After countless hours of review and deliberation from our editorial team, we are beyond excited to present the following six articles. We hope these articles will introduce you to a new topic or further expand your knowledge.

This edition of the Journal of Student Affairs includes articles revolving around the challenges faced by minoritized groups and non-traditional students in higher education and how to best support them, neurological processes of development, and policies around anti-discrimination and affirmative action. Without the extensive research and high-quality writing from our authors, this exquisite Journal would not be possible.

The success of this journal would not have been possible without the unyielding commitment of the Executive Editorial Board. I thank each and every one of you for your continuous dedication to the team and journal. On behalf of the 2018-2019 Executive Editorial Board, I want to express my gratitude to our faculty advisor Dr. Stella Flores, who has supported the Journal of Student Affairs in various capacities throughout the year. I also would like to thank the Internal Review Board and External Review Board for spending countless hours editing and providing feedback to ensure that this journal has quality peer-reviewed articles. Lastly, I would like to thank our wonderful authors for their time and commitment to this process. It was apparent that each author was passionate about their respective topics. We thank you for sharing your insight and congratulate you for your contributions to the field.

On behalf of the 2018-2019 Executive Editorial Board, Internal and External Review Boards, and authors, it is with great pleasure I introduce to you the fifteenth edition of the Journal of Student Affairs at New York University.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Kania

Editor-in-Chief, JoSA Volume XV
Asian Americans in Today’s U.S. Higher Education: 
An Overview of Their Challenges and Recommendations for Practitioners

Guicheng “Ariel” Tan
New York University

Abstract
Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the US, yet their experience within higher education has been understudied. Many practitioners are familiar with the term “model minority myth”, yet their understanding of Asian American students remains overly generalized and superficial. By examining the experience of the Asian American through a public policy and demography perspective, this literature review identifies the root of the model minority narrative as it exists beyond the political tagline. As an effect of racial complexity and historical discrimination, Asian American students are disparate based on the ethnically heterogeneous nature of the population, overlooked microaggressions and academic barriers on college campuses, and mental health challenges due to lack of family or social support. Intergroup conflicts among different Asian racial and ethnic groups further perplexes the sense of unity of this student group on educational issues. Through this paper, practitioners will gain an overview on challenges faced by Asian American students in today’s college campuses, along with recommendations for practitioners and institutions to improve support for Asian American students on college campuses.

Keyword: Asian American students, college experiences, student support

When searching for information about competitive universities in the U.S., one may encounter a few acronyms and puns stereotyping successful Asians in universities, such as “University of Caucasians Lost Among Asians” for the University of California, Los Angeles; “Made in Taiwan” for Massachusetts Institute of Technology; or “University of Chinese Immigrant” for the University of California, Irvine (Hartlep, 2014). These terms allude to an overrepresentation of Asian Americans on college campuses, accompanied by assumptions of successful Asian students being raised under highly educated and disciplined parents, also known as the Tiger Mom parenting style (Kim, 2013). Although the public assumes Asian American students are overachievers on college campuses, their experience in higher education says otherwise. As such, the goal of this paper is to unpack the problematic formation of model minority stereotype and to provide context to the educational reality experienced by Asian American students. Moreover, the paper calls for student affairs practitioners and institutions to assume responsibility in educating themselves and supporting the development of Asian American students.

Reality Check: Asian American Student in Today’s College Campuses in Numbers
The first glimpse of Asian American college experience involves low rates of enrollment and complicated demographics. Contrary to common misconceptions, Asian Americans constituted only 5.25% of the total college enrollment during the fall 2014 semester despite their increase in population, which was lower than their white, black, and Hispanic peers. While China, India, and the Philippines are the largest countries-of-origin among the overall Asian American population, there are about 19 different origin groups within the Asian
American population (López, Ruiz, & Patten, 2017).

When disaggregating data by ethnic group, college readiness is a core issue faced by many Asian Americans. In California, more than half of southeast Asian American high school juniors are not prepared for college due to limited English proficiency or low-income household status (The State of Higher Education in California, 2015). Additionally, about 47% of Asian and Pacific Islander students attend community colleges (Institute of Education Sciences, n.d.; Maramba, 2017), a reality starkly different from the assumption that Asian Americans typically attend elite universities. These misconceptions raise dissonance and questions when considering their reality.

The Political Factor of the Asian American Race

Before exploring the current experiences of Asian American students, it is important to unpack the origin of Asian immigrants in the U.S. and its relations to the model minority myth. Xenophobia was experienced by Asian Americans since their arrival in the U.S., such as the Asian immigrants ban in the 1880s caused by the anti-Chinese sentiment. These movements emphasized the sense of invasion and danger of Asian communities (Lee, 1990), and it was not until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that Asian immigrants were allowed in the U.S. again. Contrasting from the first wave of manual laborers, the new legislation asked for skilled and educated workers (Lee, 1990). Over the next few decades, post-World War II refugees, Asian brides married to U.S. soldiers, and Asian adoptees into U.S. families diversified the Asian American population (Lee, 2015). Despite their different historical backgrounds, the U.S. public often stereotyped Asian Americans as wealthy and privileged, known as a group of “best-educated and fastest-growing” foreigners (The Rise of Asian Americans, 2012).

This perception of Asian Americans as successful immigrants highlights the negotiation between rejection and acceptance in a social scheme that deems them as the model minority. In 1966, William Peterson introduced “model minority” to the U.S. lexicon in a magazine article (p. 21). Through his appraisal of Japanese Americans, he portrayed a successful minority group with desirable qualities thriving in the U.S. (Peterson, 1966). This initiated an ongoing perception of Asian Americans being a high-achieving racial group accumulating wealth, academic success, upward social mobility, and civic obedience in the U.S. (Wong & Halgin, 2006; Chang & Demyan, 2007; Wong, Owen, Tran, Collins & Higgins, 2012). As pointed out by many scholars, this model is contingent on society’s selection of accepted ethnic traits listed in the previous sentence and the broader political purpose these groups may serve (Lee, 2015, p.29-30). In other words, the U.S. publicly accepted Asian Americans when their existence and cultural values were in line with a political picture that the U.S. wanted to paint justifying that the U.S. is a merit-based society without prejudices.

On college campuses, the model minority myth introduced a new wave of political opinions towards Asian American students, using their experiences to counter affirmative action led by the civil rights movement. In the middle of the 1990s admissions controversy, Asian Americans were perceived as both victims of admission policies and intruders on college campuses. Media and politicians argued that affirmative action programs negatively impact Asian Americans’ acceptance at universities (Lee, 2006). This emphasis on Asian American students’ academic success transitioned narratives about Asians in the U.S. from intruders taking away resources to foreigners making positive social contributions. Simultaneously, college campuses alleged that the overrepresentation of
Asian Americans in higher education negate their contributions toward diversity (Omi & Takagi, 1996; Lee, 2006). Asian Americans found themselves in an awkward position in political debates as they did not fit into the black-white paradigm that exists within higher education spaces. Described by Sharon Lee (2006) as the racial triangulation and the “racist project” (p. 3), policymakers placed Asians between whites and blacks and changed arguments depending on their needs. In the college admission process, they omitted Asian Americans as a silent minority by arguing that Asians are not underrepresented on college campuses. But on the topic of affirmative action policies, they argued that Asian Americans’ opportunities have been undermined by other racial groups. This directly translated to the recent court case led by conservative politicians, who argued that Asian Americans are penalized by Harvard College for taking race into their admission considerations instead of only focusing on merit (Jung, 2018).

Overall, the racial status of Asian American students was in a way de-minoritized because of assumptions of their access to education and wealth. Although a heterogeneous group, Asian American students were positioned by white Americans as a frame of comparison against other racial groups, generating unhealthy interracial competition (Ho & Jackson, 2001). To conclude, the model minority myth underlined an illusion of acceptance for Asian American students in the U.S.: Asian Americans were too accomplished to be minority students but too foreign to be white students. As a result, issues faced by Asian American students, which require further self-education and institutional actions, are often neglected by educators.

**Issues faced by Asian American Students Today**

With the model minority myth as their backdrop, Asian American students face disparity among their own ethnic groups and social barriers when engaging with today’s higher education system. In order to provide further support for Asian American students, educators and practitioners must have an in-depth understanding of their experiences in today’s higher education system. This section focuses on educating educators on issues faced by Asian Americans through dissecting wealth and educational disparity among subgroups, negative college climate, and additional academic and mental health barriers.

**Wealth and Education Disparity**

Because the model minority myth endorses a problem-free image of Asian Americans and generalizes subgroups, society cannot identify or address individual needs on poverty and education issues in this student group. While Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Koreans represent the largest Asian American ethnic subgroups, about 12% of the Asian American population includes Hmong, Cambodian, Thai, Pakistani, and other southeast Asian origin groups. When disaggregated by subgroup, southeast Asians in the U.S. earn as low as $36,000 in the median, and eight out of the 19 Asian subgroups had a poverty rate higher than the U.S. average in 2015 (López, Ruiz & Patten, 2017). In perspective, the 2015 U.S. median income per household was $56,516 for all races and $77,166 all Asians (Proctor, Semega & Kollar, 2016, p.15). Statistics like these counter the wealthy and middle-class Asian narratives led by the model minority myth.

For academic and educational support, southeast Asian adults are less likely to have a bachelor’s degree, to speak proficient English, or to be American-born compared to their Asian peers (The Rise of Asian Americans, 2012). Besides this, Asian immigrants constituted about 13% of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. in 2015, an identity and area of support that many people overlook (López et al., 2017). These
numbers contextualize the experiences of Asian American students in the U.S., implying that the model minority stereotype affects Asian American students differently as it induces more barriers by overlooking southeast Asians. As illustrated by the provided data, a significant portion of Asian American students are suffering from issues such as low socioeconomic status, undocumented status, lack of social capital, and first-generation college status. But the level of attention they receive in both the social and political sphere is less than visible.

**Academic Barriers**

The model minority myth leads to less educational resources and more academic barriers for Asian American students. In line with stereotype threat research, studies have found that students did worse on tests when burdened with the model minority expectation, as the fear of failing undermines their actual performance (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). Recent data further reveals that Asian American students do not receive enough academic support (Poon & Byrd, 2013). For example, many Asian American students are first-generation college students, receiving limited to no parental support on their college pathway. Instead of family, they identify counselors and teachers as important support systems for college access and applications (Poon & Byrd, 2013). Society is less likely to contribute resources that would alleviate disadvantages experienced by Asian Americans (Ho & Jackson, 2001; Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Overall, the perception that Asian American students do not need as much academic support appears to be another myth curated by the model minority narrative. By assuming Asian American students are the student group with the most academic readiness, the K-12 system in the U.S. neglects and deprives them of the support necessary to achieve their actual academic potential.

**Campus Climate**

Asian American students continue to experience isolation and microaggressions on campuses today, but these incidents are often overlooked or unheard of. Compared to their white peers, Asian American students experience a stronger sense of otherness on college campuses (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007). In a 1996 case study on various University of California (UC) campuses, the model minority stereotype led to the tendency of administrators to avoid characterizing harassment against Vietnamese American students as racially driven (Delucchi & Do, 1996). At present, Asian American students still face racism in college as demonstrated by a more recent UC report. On a campus with the largest Asian representation, 71% of Asian Americans have reported hearing negative comments perpetuating racial stereotypes on their campus (The Racialized Experiences of Asian American, 2016). A 2014 study at a west coast institution echoes this finding by showing that even on a campus with large Asian American presence, Asian American students do not have a sense of belonging. In fact, Asian American students experience significant harassment and less positive cross-racial interactions (Asian Americans and Climate, 2014). While many scholarly works recognize the issues derived from model minority stereotypes, some further indicate that this stereotype minimizes and even excludes Asian Americans from research on race and racial formation (Museus & Kiang, 2009). Contrary to common assumptions, Asian American college experiences still resemble those of other marginalized identities.

**Mental Health Barriers**

The model minority myth also induces mental health barriers caused by internalized racism. Once students internalize the problem-free aspect of the model minority stereotype, Asian Americans students become more reluctant to
share their problems or seek help (Inman & Yeh, 2007). They also experience serious self-doubt and depressive thoughts when they fail to meet social expectations of high achievement (Kim & Park, 2008; Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011). A 2015 study has examined the comparisons between how Asian American students’ personal college expectations differs from how others expect them to succeed in college. Researchers found that Asian American students reported pressure to navigate between the meeting family expectations and fighting against stereotype in colleges (Samura, 2015). To conclude, studies have revealed that among mental health professionals, the model minority stereotype contributed to counselors’ misdiagnosis, underdiagnosis, and delayed intervention (Leong & Lau, 2001). In combination with campus climate issues, these studies demonstrate additional stressors experienced by Asian American students led by internalized stereotype threats and illustrate the lack of mental health support for Asian American students.

**Recommendation for Practitioners**

Recognizing these challenges and barriers derived from the model minority stereotype, practitioners and institutions need to initiate awareness and support of Asian American students and staff. Practitioners working with Asian American students need to understand the multi-layered identity impacting Asian American students beyond the basic acknowledgment of their cultural backgrounds. Having such awareness allows practitioners to combat biases, thus alleviating the negligence caused by the model minority stereotype and introducing intentional support. Self-educating, disaggregating demographic data, and supporting Asian American resources center and staff are all intentional practices that can better serve Asian American students.

**Expanding Asian American Identity Development Theories**

To better provide student support and combat implicit biases, this paper suggests practitioners renew their understanding of Asian American identity development. Although Social Justice and Inclusion is one of the core student affairs competencies (American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2015), the current widely utilized student identity development curricula lack content regarding diverse Asian American identities (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quay, 2016). This limitation produces practitioners who miss opportunities to support Asian American students since they are unaware of the complexity and importance of Asian American identity. In a 2011 study, Asian American and Asian international college students reported their sense of racial identity and ethnic identity as two positive indicators for their psychological well-being (Iwanmoto & Liu, 2010), therefore mediating academic and mental stress. This study also highlighted the differences between one’s racial awareness and ethnic awareness, pinpointing the importance of enabling Asian American students’ awareness of their racial and ethnic relationships (Iwanmoto & Liu, 2010).

Before one can support students’ individual identity development, practitioners need to first address their own blind spots and biases caused by model minority myth through self-education. With the rise of Asian American studies, recent scholars have been proposing new theories that capture the multiple identities Asian American students have to navigate, such as bicultural identity integration and transnationalism. Several studies have redefined bicultural individuals as people who can identify and navigate between two cultures (Nguyen, Huynh, & Benet-Martínez, 2009; Mok & Morris, 2009). Within this framework, Asian Americans who perceive their different cultures as
compatible have higher self-esteem, lower depression, and a more diverse social network than those who view their different cultures as conflicting (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2007; Mok, Morris, Benet-Martínez, & Karakitapoglu-Aygün, 2007). Another recent identity framework, transnationalism, has expanded the analysis of Asian American identity by adding international influences as a factor in one’s cultural identity formation. Transnationalism criticizes other theories’ single-dimension approaches which only focus on ethnic or cultural backgrounds. It raises awareness on the Asian diaspora that was driven by new labor markets formed through global capitalism while prioritizing migrants’ social class (for example, white-collar workers versus blue-collar workers) as another important factor in shaping the Asian American experience (Tunc, Marino, & Kim, 2012; Yang, 2005).

While different in their approaches, both theories demand more conscious recognition for Asian American student groups’ dispositions by emphasizing intersectionality. Therefore, practitioners should expand their understanding of Asian American diversity and identities to better understand the transitional experiences of these students. Such efforts include but are not limited to renovating curricula to increase literature dissecting multi-dimensional Asian American student identities, updating diversity training to include more issues faced by Asian American students, supporting relevant workshops at conferences, and expanding programs that focus on helping Asian American students to process multiple impacting issues. Tangible resources for practitioners to self-educate include *The Asian American Achievement Paradox* by Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou (2015), *The Making of Asian America: A History* by Erika Lee (2016), and *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White* by Frank Wu (2003).

**Understanding Data Disaggregation**

To better identify support that caters to each student’s needs, this paper highlights the importance of disaggregated data for more in-depth analysis. Since the 1900s, U.S. government has been modifying and expanding its inclusion of additional racial and ethnic groups on the census. As of 2010, there were only seven response categories for Asian groups on the national census data. Within this categorization, *other Asian* was meant to include all those who do not identify as Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese (Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim, & Shahid, 2012). As discussed in earlier sections, this type of overgeneralization does not support the diverse experiences embedded in different Asian communities. In the recognition of Asian diversity, several legislations have attempted to disaggregate Asian American data in different regions (Wang, 2017; Fuchs, 2016). These legislations aim to override the effect of model minority stereotype by exposing disparities within Asian American communities. However, local Chinese American communities have challenged these issues in fear of losing access to school admissions or experiencing racial profiling (Fuchs, 2016; Wang, 2017; Jarwala, 2018).

Similar community divisions are also observed in affirmative action issues. In recent years, while most Asian Americans remained supportive of affirmative action or race-conscious admission practices (73% supportive), Chinese Americans have made a significant drop in their support from an initial 78% support rate in 2012 to 41% by 2016 (Survey Roundup: Asian American Attitudes on Affirmative Action, n.d). Some scholars speculate that this phenomenon is related to the Chinese community’s impression of data disaggregation as racial profiling, along with their economic privileges and incognizance on disadvantaged Asian Americans’ issues (Wang, 2017; Ramakrishnan,
Echoing the earlier demonstration on wealth and educational disparity among Asian subgroups, these contrasting reactions towards social and political issues make data disaggregation even more relevant. Without proper data, institutions and practitioners cannot assess risks and develop informed support for diverse group of students. To better strategize support, private institutions can collect the needed data pertaining to Asian American students through student registration. For public institutions, practitioners can collect voluntary information from the student body, such as including demographics in orientation assessments or residential life program evaluations. Partnering with school cultural organizations, hosting focus groups, and collaborating with student government can also help practitioners to gain access to voluntary information that can shape better institutional support. Once obtained, practitioners can develop an assessment plan to review their departmental initiatives and goals. For example, if there is a certain percentage of a particular group of Asian students studying on this campus or living in the local community, and the participation rate for this student group is consistently low in leadership programs, practitioners should assess what the institution is doing to actively support and outreach to this student group. To learn more about data segregation, institutions can refer to organizations such as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) Data.com that have free and accessible resources for policy research demographic data on Asian American students.

**Supporting Cultural Centers, Programs, and Resources**

Lastly, this paper asks institutions to provide resources to Asian American students on remaining involved in or building connections with Asian American organizations, as these organizations are crucial in unpacking diverse narratives and providing assistance for Asian American college students. A study has shown that Asian ethnic student organizations can increase students’ sense of cultural belonging, their motivation for self-advocacy and institutional change, and the acceptance of their culture and expression (Museus, 2008). Similar to their black and Hispanic peers, Asian Americans need representation in leadership roles and campus involvement to break down barriers, and they need empowerment when negotiating and navigating racial and ethnic identities. As indicated by the annual report from UCLA, student organizations help to create inclusive, educational space for the Asian American community on their college campuses (The Racialized Experiences of Asian American, 2016).

Additionally, supportive school agents can improve Asian American students’ college experiences by providing access to social capital. Specifically, school agents like advisors with the same cultural and racial background help southeast Asian students by developing mentorship as role models and providing educational and social resources for students (Museus & Mueller, 2018). Aside from giving help when students seek them, proactive approaches such as outreach programs or consistent encouragement have important benefits on southeast Asian students, since many of them were not aware of school resources or the social climate in college due to first-generation college student status (Museus & Mueller, 2018). In simple terms, Asian cultural organizations and resourceful student affairs professionals can reduce the sense of otherness experienced by Asian American students in higher education. This requires institutions to evaluate their budgetary and human resources support for establishing and maintaining cultural centers and resources, as well as to reflect the body composition of university staff and their cultural competencies. Existing local resource
centers such as the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) by UCLA, or national initiatives such as the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) program by the U.S. government provide helpful guides or resources for institutions to benchmark and educate.

**Conclusion**

By the end of this paper, one should have gained broad but useful insights to unpack their assumptions about Asian American students. As Ng, Lee, and Pak (2007) have emphasized, society must understand the race and racialization of Asian Americans to fully comprehend the experience of Asian American students. By diving into the history of Asian immigrants and the model minority discourse, the system of oppression that continues to marginalize these groups becomes apparent, and the social construct of being an Asian American appears to compound. Although Asian American communities have dedicated their efforts to deconstructing the oversimplified narratives created by model minority stereotypes, intentional support for Asian Americans should remain a constant reflection for practitioners and institutions working with Asian American students. On an individual level, practitioners need to connect the past cultural history and the cultivation of self-advocacy to expand their understanding of Asian American issues, and to take active steps to self-educate and challenge assumptions. On an organizational level, the field of higher education needs to unpack false assumptions by generating more narratives. For institutions that have limited access to Asian American centers or resource programs, organizational assessment can still inspect ways in which diversity initiatives are or are not including Asian American students: Are staff aware of recent issues faced by Asian American population and their impact on students? Does the department organize cultural education programs outside of the Lunar New Year celebration? And does the institution recognize the challenges faced by Asian American students masked under the assumed visibility on campus and stereotypes.

**References**


Neurological Process of Development

Annie Cole
University of Portland

Abstract
Although prominent theories in college student development cover a breadth of developmental aspects and draw from various fields of study, the literature lacks a developmental theory that explains the neurological processes that occur during student development. This literature review uses Neuro-semantic Language Learning Theory (Arwood, 1983; 2011) as a foundation to explore the triangulation of neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and language learning literature to speak to the gap in student development literature. Literature for each of the three subjects (neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and language learning) is presented, analyzed, and compared to current literature on student development theory. The purpose of this literature review is to supplement existing student development theory and provide a more holistic understanding of student development. Implications and suggestions for application of literature to student affairs work are offered.

A History of Student Development Theory
Since the 1950’s, higher education scholars have studied student development and key factors that influence students’ lives (Kimball & Ryder, 2014). Student development theory emerged from the research to provide a framework for student affairs professionals to understand and serve students, resulting in an increase in college students’ self-direction and complex task mastering (Miller & Prince, 1976). Student development is defined in multiple ways, including, “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (Rodgers, 1990, p. 27). Student development can also be understood as, “some kind of positive change that occurs in the student (e.g., cognitive complexity, self-awareness, racial identity, or engagement)” (Jones & Abes, 2011, p. 153), and “the organization of increased complexity” (Sanford, 1967, p. 47).

Between the 1950’s and the present, the average college student profile has changed, prompting the ongoing study and evolution of student development theory. Beginning in the 1950’s and 1960’s, student affairs professionals relied on human development theories to guide their practice. Human behavior research grew rapidly during this time, and researchers focused on understanding the development of the individual to “see the world through their eyes” (Wilson, Damiani, & Shelton, 2002, p. 89). Human development theories lent valuable insight to college administrators, who sought to better understand the lives of their diverse students. Erikson’s (1959) Theory of Psychosocial Development was a prominent theory during this time, and still exists as a foundation for many student development theories today. Erikson describes personal identity as one’s sense of meaning and purpose. Identity develops through a series of personal assessments of values, roles, and beliefs during a stage of crisis, concluding with a personal commitment to previous or new values, roles, and beliefs. Erikson highlights the importance of role experimentation as it promotes the assessment and commitment process to personally defined values and beliefs (Newman & Newman, 2015).

The 1960’s and 70’s brought new human development theories for student affairs
professionals to draw from. Psychologists and sociologists began to narrow their general human development studies to focus on student development, leading to the first development theories specific to college students. Early psychological theories emphasized the need to both challenge and support students in a balanced way, while early sociology theories emphasized emotional support as a way to assist students seeking family independence (Patton et al, 2016). Perry’s (1970) Cognitive-Structural Theory and Chickering’s (1969) Seven Vectors Theory were two notable theories from which college administrators drew. Perry’s theory delved into the realm of the ethical and intellectual growth of college students, a new area of expansion and growth in college student services. Chickering’s (1969) Seven Vectors Theory stated that students develop uniquely across seven vectors, each of which impact student development individually and as overlapping vectors. The vectors include emotion management, developing interpersonal relationships, identity establishment, purpose development, integrity development, competence development, and developing interdependency with others (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering built upon Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development (1959) to understand the developmental issues faced by college students specifically. Chickering wrote Education and Identity (1969) with the intention of guiding college faculty in how to support student development through the creation of systematic college programming.

Theories in the 1980’s and 1990’s were created with the intention to understand specific student populations (i.e. gender-specific support theories) and student development during academic and personal hardships. Racial identity also became a new topic of research, and psychologists and sociologists together established the Minority Identity Development model in 1979 (Patton et al, 2016). Research from this point forward focused on understanding diverse student backgrounds and on how to create programs that best served unique student groups. Carol Dweck (1986) studied the impact of motivation on learning, while Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) studied the effect of emotional, social, and academic adjustment on college attrition. Schlossberg’s (1984) Transition Theory also emerged during this time. Schlossberg explained that adult life transitions are caused by events and non-events. A non-event is an expected event that does not occur, such as failing to obtain the grade one was hoping for. Schlossberg emphasized context as an important factor in determining how an event or non-event will cause change for an adult (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 2010).

In the early 2000’s, Baxter Magolda developed Self-Authorship Theory (2001), which outlined the process of learning to create and trust one’s internal voice during young adulthood. According to Magolda (2001), students move from dependence on external authority figures for knowledge to trusting and establishing internal belief and knowledge systems. Baxter Magolda’s (2001) Self-Authorship Theory defines a development process through which college students start to define their own meaning; students diminish dependence on values and beliefs they have integrated from other sources, including their parents, friends, and experiences (King & Magolda, 2008). Self-authorship Theory explores the process of listening to one’s internal voice and committing to personally defined values and beliefs (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito similarly describe self-authorship as the ability to internally define one’s own identity, belief system, and relationship to others (2010).

In reflecting on the past five decades of history, it’s clear that student development
theory has expanded to give a clearer picture of student growth and change, understood through multiple perspectives and approaches. Although student development research has continued from the early 2000’s into the present day, no additional theories have been established that appear to have influenced student affairs practice. As of 2019, student affairs professionals are still referring to the following prominent theories for guidance and professional development: Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development (1959), Schlossberg’s Transition Theory (1984), Chickering’s Seven Vectors Theory (1969), and Baxter Magolda’s Self-Authorship Theory (2001).

Current student development theory, as reviewed in the contemporary textbook *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (Patton et al, 2016) and outlined above, is limited to theories that consider development from observation of change over time. In these theories, development is defined using an older definition: development as behavior change in response to stimuli in the environment (Skinner, 1953). With the study of the neural processes behind behavior growing substantially since the 1990’s (Nelson, Haan, & Thomas, 2015), it’s important that student development theory incorporate this new research into the field and expand the scope of the literature on student development. The exclusion of neurological processes limits student affairs professionals’ understanding of student development to a purely observational perspective. Alternatively, the inclusion of neurological processes expands the body of literature to demonstrate how students are growing neurologically, cognitively, and linguistically. The Neuro-Semantic Language Learning Theory (NsLLT) (Arwood, 1983; 2011) offers a new lens through which student affairs professionals can understand student development from an internal perspective.

**Incorporating Neurological Processes of Student Development**

Neuro-Semantic Language Learning Theory (NsLLT) (Arwood, 1983; 2011) summarizes the literature in neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and language learning theory into a framework that explains student development from a neuro-semantic (neurologically meaningful) lens. The literature from three overlapping fields emphasizes that student development is a process that unfolds according to a student’s neurological interaction with their environment. Defining student development as an increase in neurological complexity and capacity (similar to Sandford’s definition of student development, 1967), cognitive and neurological complexity is a continuous developmental process that occurs as sensory inputs are processed in the brain and changes are made at the cellular level (Zull, 2004). Development is a process of neuron circuit refinement through the strengthening and pruning of neural connections (Brice & Brice, 2009), which results in increased cognitive complexity and language function: a unique human capability to use language to solve-problems (Anderson, 2014) and express thinking (Arwood, 2011). As students develop neurologically, cognitively, and linguistically, the capacity to process new information through existing neural networks is increased (Nelson, Haan, & Thomas, 2015), resulting in a higher functioning, more complex brain. To further explain the foundation of NsLLT, a brief exploration of the relevant literature behind the framework from the fields of neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and language learning literature are outlined. Each of these fields of literature builds upon the previous field to create a holistic understanding of development from a neuro-semantic (neurologically meaningful) lens.
Neuroscience

Neuroscience is the study of brain development from a neurobiological approach. Since the 1990’s, neuroscience research has expanded rapidly due to the development of machines that track brain blood flow during neural processes, including positron emission tomography (PET) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) machines (Aine, 1995). Through fMRI technology, researchers are able to obtain a deeper look inside the brain, viewing layers of cerebral cortex (Bazin, Weiss, Dinse, Schäfer, Trampel, & Turner, 2013).

Brain development begins very early in human life, shortly after conception. This process continues into young adulthood, spurred by the molecular and electrical exchanges that grow neural networks (Nelson, Haan, & Thomas, 2015). By adulthood, the brain contains 100 billion nerve cells called neurons (Goswami, 2004). Neuron growth continues to occur throughout one’s lifespan as a result of life experiences and learning (Nelson, Haan, & Thomas, 2015). Each neuron is made up of an axon, capable of sending neurochemical messages to other neurons through synaptic connection, and a dendrite for receiving messages (Brice & Brice, 2009).

Neurons in the brain fire in response to meaningful environmental stimuli, sending a neurochemical signal from one synapse to another. As humans receive sensory input from the world around them, the input is processed through an area of the brain known as the sensory store. The sensory store is a cognitive psychology term used to describe the temporary processing point for sensory information prior to memory (Anderson, 2014). An input is processed through the sensory store and may be moved to short-term or long-term memory depending on meaning, attention, and rehearsal of the input (Anderson, 2014). When neurons fire in response to stimuli, they cause permanent change at the cellular level (Baars, 2010).

Through repeated use of the same neuron, myelination (thickening) of the neuron cell occurs, increasing that neuron’s capacity to fire again (Arwood, 2017). Stored information in the brain can later be accessed and shared out loud through language to express thinking (Arwood, 2011).

As a new input is received from the environment, it is processed through the filter of existing neural networks (Nelson, Haan, & Thomas, 2015). In cognitive psychology, this concept is known as schema, which is the representational structure of existing concepts in the brain including its related parts and attributes (Anderson, 2014). Multiple neurons can become connected into circuits, which result in the wiring together and firing together of those neurons (Barr, 2010). The brain works synergistically across multiple areas to perform most neurological processes, rather than depending on individual sections or cells in the brain (Lashley, 1929).

Brain development, specifically dendrite growth (the communication branches extending from each neuron), becomes more unique to each human after the age of five (Giedd, 1999). Because dendrite growth is a sign of neural firing in response to environmental stimuli, individual brains will develop uniquely depending on the environment and stimuli received. Language, which is an expression of thinking based on stored information in the brain (Arwood, 2011), is also unique to the individual and grows out of the environmental stimuli that the individual has experienced. This explains why college students may use different language, or words, to express their thinking about the same idea; thoughts are based on neurologically stored memories that are unique to each individual’s experience.

Cognitive Psychology

Building upon the foundation of neuroscience literature, cognitive psychology is the second of the three fields that contribute to
the NsLLT framework of student development. Cognitive psychology is the study of all higher-level mental processes and capabilities (Lachman, Lachman, & Butterfield, 1979) including, “memory, perception, learning, thinking, reasoning, language, and understanding” (p. 6). This realm of psychology has shifted dramatically over the past 100 years, moving from the strict study of observable behavior (Watson, 1913) and stimulus response patterns (Skinner, 1953) to the expanded study of mental processes today. For example, cognitive neuroscience, “how cognition is realized in the brain” (Anderson, 2016, p. 10), is the study of the neurological structures and functions behind mental processes (Held, Knauff, & Vosgerau, 2006). While neuroscience offers a glimpse at the internal, biological processes of brain development, cognitive psychology attempts to observe and study the mental processes in action.

Within cognitive psychology, the study of the nature of mental states (beliefs, desires, and emotions) is termed Theory of Mind (Flavell, 2004). Theory of Mind research includes the study of various mental states and their relation to behavior, including motivation and self-worth (Covington, 1998), self-directed learning (Zimmerman, 1989), and mental malleability (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). A mental state can also refer to a belief system that someone holds. For example, Kegan and Lahey’s (2009) research on mental development finds that adults can move from a socialized mind, depending heavily on authority figures for knowledge, to a self-transforming mind, capable of complex thought processes and comfortable holding multiple beliefs systems.

Studies in cognitive psychology also demonstrate how meaning, learning, and memory are related. In the context of memory development, studies show that humans extract meaning, not structure, from sentences (Wanner, 1968) and memory of meaningful images is greater than meaningless images (Bower, Karlin, & Duek, 1975). This matches neuroscience research that demonstrates only meaningful information causes neural firing in the brain (Anderson, 2014) and leads to memory. Neuroscience and cognitive psychology research continue to overlap in their findings, showing that nervous system changes (including the brain) and psychological changes are often related (Kolb, Gibb, & Robinson, 2003). This suggest that meaningful information, including relevant and contextual information, is most likely to be stored in memory for future recall.

Development, through the cognitive psychology lens, is an increased capacity to perform higher level mental processes. Development is acquired through the deep mental processing of information from a sensory pattern level to conceptual understanding (Arwood, 2017). During information processing, the depth of information processing is more important to the length of rehearsal at improving memory (Kapur, Craik, Tulving, Wilson, Houle, et al., 1994). For example, a student who is studying a new concept from class can utilize multiple parts of the brain through reading, writing, and thinking critically about the concept. These activities increase the depth of processing and memory better than repetition or the use of flashcards. This is consistent with neurological research and suggests that student affairs professionals can increase student development by having students engage with complex concepts through reading, writing, and conversation. These strategies are much different than providing rules, patterns, or information out of context for students to memorize and repeat.

Language Learning Theory

Language Learning Theory is the last of the three fields to contribute to the NsLLT framework of student development. Under
Language Learning Theory, language is often understood and studied by its parts: phonemes (word sounds), words or vocabulary (combined phonemes), grammar (order of words), and semantics (meaning of words) (Bruner, 1975). Anderson (2016) describes language as a unique human capability that has evolved over time in congruence with the human prefrontal cortex as a problem-solving function. Anderson goes beyond the structure and parts of language to describe the influence of language and thought on one another. Arwood (2011) describes language as an outward expression of inward thinking.

Starting early after birth, children begin to develop an understanding of others and themselves as agents in the world (Bretherton, 1991) and begin to pick up patterns and formulas in spoken language (Kuhl, 2000) including differences in spoken language sounds (Jusczyk, Friederici, Wessels, Svenkerud, & Jusczyk, 1993). As children learn new words, they incorporate them into their existing understanding of language (Brice & Brice, 2009), and then use the new words to better understand new experiences in the world around them. Children usually have the ability to use language abstractly by age 11 (Owens, 2005). For example, a student that can understand the concept of “table” as a way of tabling a conversation for another time is thinking abstractly.

Language is much more than repeating memorized vocabulary, and language development is different than language learning. Language development is the result of conceptual understanding, while language learning is the mechanical use of language (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002). This is why vocabulary tests are not strong indicators of language function. One study found that 33% of students’ vocabulary test scores did not match their word employability (ability to use the word intelligibly in a communication context) for the same words (Kremmel, 2016). Another study found that only one-half to three-quarters of total personal vocabulary is understood meaningfully (i.e. can be used intelligibly in communication) (Schmitt, 2014). In other words, having developed language means being able to understand and express concepts, not merely repeat the symbol (word) for an idea.

Contrary to the view of language being the ability to repeat vocabulary, the NsLLT describes language as an ability to access and utilize concepts formed in the brain neurobiologically over time (Arwood, 2011). Consider the language development process that occurs from childhood through adulthood. As a child experiences the world around them, the experiences are stored as memories in the brain. The memories begin to overlap cognitively and neurologically to form patterns about the world, and then eventually form ideas. Finally, if the child learns the meaning behind an idea and can apply a linguistic symbol (word) to it, then the word becomes something that the student can use to share their thinking out loud. In this way, language allows humans to function in the world, share ideas, and solve problems (Arwood, 2017). Older children and adults can think abstractly to access ideas, or concepts, in multiple ways. For example, a teenager who has acquired the language to understand the word “table” can access the concept of “table” as a four-legged object that sits in a living room, as a periodic table referred to during chemistry class, or as an abstract way to table a conversation for another time.

Understanding the relationship between language development and neuroscience is important because brain systems underlie language functions (Ullman, 2004) and language shapes how new environmental stimuli is received in the brain (Brice & Brice, 2009). Cognitive mental states can also influence language acquisition and perception of environmental stimuli. For example, one study
found that anxiety may influence participants to perceive life events in a negative way (Thomsen et al, 2016). These negative experiences are stored as memories and retrieved when new stimuli are being received, impacting participants’ perceptions. Previous experiences stored neurologically in the brain lay the foundation for how an individual will interpret a new life event. This is especially important to consider when working with college students, who are bringing their previous experiences into their perception of the college environment.

In line with neuroscience and cognitive psychology research, language difficulties have been found to correlate with limited cognitive abilities, especially memory and attention issues (Brice & Brice, 2009). To reduce language development difficulties, new ideas should be presented to students in context (i.e. in a story, in sequence) and adults in the student’s life should explain their thinking out loud as much as possible to help assist in the student’s development of new language concepts (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002). It’s also important to remember that language does not automatically develop with age; it develops according to environmental stimuli. For example, most American children learn color words (i.e. green, blue) by age five, but children who are not exposed to color words through school may not have this language (Brice & Brice, 2009). Language is a reflection of the ideas and concepts a person has been exposed to in the home, the school, and the community, not age or class standing.

**Implications and Applications**

In reviewing neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and language learning literature, one begins to see overlapping patterns in developmental processes. For example, meaningful context supports both cognitive development and language development, and cognitive neuroscience reveals how cognitive processes occur simultaneously with neurobiological processes. These overlapping processes can be applied to student development theory to demonstrate how the college student develops cognitively, neurobiologically, and linguistically at the same time.

Student development, understood through the NsLLT lens, occurs neurologically, cognitively, and linguistically as interaction happens between student and environment. As sensory inputs from the world are processed in the human brain, changes occur at the cellular level (Zull, 2004). Related environmental stimuli are stored in the brain in connected neural networks (Barr, 2010) which can be accessed later as a filter to interpret, and make meaning of, new information (Brice & Brice, 2009). Cognitively, as neurological structures increase in complexity and capacity, mental processes follow the same pattern. Metacognition (ability to think about thinking) increases as neural growth extends into the outer regions of the brain (Allen et al, 2017). Language develops neuro-biologically as a person learns to assign meaning to neurologically stored patterns of environmental stimuli, and then express thinking about that stimuli (Arwood, 2011) or use language to perform complex mental tasks (Anderson, 2014). Language then functions to shape newly received environmental stimuli in the brain during sensory input (Brice & Brice, 2009). As students grow neurologically, they advance cognitively. As students grow cognitively and neurologically, their ability to learn and use language advances. Similar to Magolda’s (2001) Self-Authorship Theory, the NsLLT views growth as the increased ability to apply one’s own language to thinking. Cognitive and neurological complexity is occurring behind the scenes as self-authorship is happening.

The NsLLT framework of development is vastly different than prominent student development theories that are referenced in the
opening paragraphs of this article. By using the NsLLT framework, student affairs staff and faculty can begin to understand the brain functions behind development and apply them to practice. Four implications emerge from the overlapping literature that should be considered in applying NsLLT theory to practice.

First, the overlapping NsLLT literature suggests that student development is not an automatic process that happens to students. Unlike Erikson’s (1959) Theory of Psychosocial Development that involves developmental stages, the NsLLT posits that student development occurs at a unique pace dependent on the individual’s interaction with their environment. If students are restricted in their ability to interact with meaningful environmental stimuli, they will be unable to change their brain at a cellular level (Zull, 2004) which restricts the expansion of neural circuits into connected networks (Barr, 2010) and the eventual acquisition of language. Students must have access to neurologically meaningful stimuli in the world around them (i.e. classroom, dorm room, at home) in order to increase in neurological complexity and capacity. Student affairs professionals can increase meaningfulness of stimuli by making sure conversation with students are focused on topics that are relevant, in context, and use language that is reflective of the students’ current language level. This strategy can be used by advisors discussing degree requirements, resident advisors discussing conduct issues with students, and programming staff discussing student involvement in groups, activities, and events.

Second, the NsLLT literature suggests that student development is individual to each student; each student has a unique set of dendrite connections in their brain based on the environment they’ve interacted with (Giedd, 1999), meaning that each student will have a unique understanding of concepts and ideas (Arwood, 2017). Sometimes, students with low vocabulary scores are viewed as deficient, when in fact, their language is simply different based on their lack of exposure to dominant culture symbols and ideas (Brice & Brice, 2009). This would also be true of a student tested for vocabulary in a non-native language. Supporting student development means acknowledging differences exist for each person, and assessment of development should include individually identifying increases in neurological complexity for each student compared to their previous states of complexity. When working with students, staff and faculty should consider how their concepts of everyday things, like family, school, and career, might be different from their students’ concepts based on past experiences. Each student is at a different level of developmental readiness to explore new concepts. Concepts that are common to student affairs staff may not be familiar to students. Moderating language to match that of the student allows maximum new language acquisition to occur and, therefore, student development to occur.

Third, the NsLLT literature suggests that student development is more than an outward expression of change. Prominent student development theories have tracked observable behavior changes in students across time (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Chickering, 1969; Schlossberg, 1984), but they do so without reference to internal biological or neurological processes. The NsLLT offers an explanation behind the observed changes of student development theories. For example, Self-Authorship Theory (Baxter Magolda, 2001) explains that students learn to develop an internal voice over time. The NsLLT supports this theory and further explains that an internal voice could be understood as the ability to think about one’s own thoughts (metacognition), a result of neurological growth (Allen et al, 2017). Baxter Magolda, Creamer, and Meszaros (2011)
find that conceptual learning is approached differently by students who have developed an internal voice. A student who is not self-aware will focus on increasing knowledge, while a student who is self-authored will focus on questioning, reflecting on, and validating personal knowledge and making a conscious and considered choice on whether to change or adapt existing schema based on new environmental stimuli. The NsLLT research supports this finding, as students with increased neurological complexity and language function will be able to think and reflect on current and new knowledge. The goal for staff and faculty, then, is to support student in their self-authorship process by modeling critical thinking for students, asking questions that encourage self-reflection, and allowing students to express their thinking out loud to make sense of it. This will result in increased cognitive and neurological complexity, and an increased ability to think critically and reflect upon new ideas.

Fourth, the NsLLT literature suggests that context and meaning are important to student development. Schlossberg (1984) states that context determines how an event will cause change in a student. This is supported by cognitive psychology research, which finds context greatly influential in the mental processes of problem solving (Carraher, Carraher, & Schliemann, 1985). One study found that the language development process happens faster when children can use syntax, an understanding of the rules behind word structures (Jackendoff, 2002), to make meaning for new words (Golinkoff, Mervis, & Hirsch-Pasek, 1994). This suggests that student affairs professionals should offer students meaningful learning opportunities that are contextual and neuro-semantic (neurologically meaningful) to spur development, such as opportunities that ask students to reflect on their personal thoughts and experiences.

**Conclusion**

In summary, the NsLLT offers a new perspective of student development that is lacking in the current literature. Defining student development as an increase in neurological complexity and capacity, the NsLLT explains that students develop as sensory input is processed in the brain and changes the brain at a cellular level (Zull, 2004). Students bring neurologically stored memories to college with them, which create a cognitive and neurological lens through which each student interprets and makes meaning of the college experience. Students’ cognitive, neurological, and linguistic development is happening simultaneously throughout college. As neurological structures increase in complexity through sensory experiences, students’ cognitive ability to solve complex problems increases. As cognitive and neurological development increases, the ability to learn language advances. This interconnected research, summarized in the NsLLT, builds upon existing student development literature to offer a more in-depth look at student development from the inside.

Student affairs professionals can better understand holistic college student development through the NsLLT lens and can apply this framework to direct work with students or student programming. Staff can increase the meaningfulness of conversation with students by discussing topics that are relevant and in context, using language that matches the student’s current language level. Remembering that students are likely at different levels of development, staff can be sure to explore concepts that are at the student’s level by asking questions and allowing the student to lead conversations. This will encourage the student to share their thinking out loud and will guide the staff member in how to structure the conversation meaningfully.

Additionally, staff can model the developmental process for students by allowing
students to witness them during critical thinking processes. Modeling this behavior allows students to see what this process looks like and provides a mental picture of how to do this type of explorative thinking. When staff reflect on their own growth, it also invites students into a culture that supports this type of thinking, growth, and reflection.

Through the application of the NsLLT research to practice, student affairs professionals are able to support the whole student: cognitively, neurologically, and linguistically. By understanding the neurological processes that underlie student development, staff can understand why and how students are growing at different rates and in different ways during college. The NsLLT research fills a gap in the literature by explaining how internal human processes overlap with student development theories, such as Baxter Magolda’s (2001) Self-Authorship Theory and Schlossberg’s (1984) Transition Theory. Future research is needed to continue to understand how the NsLLT literature can be applied to student affairs practice and expand upon student development theory.

References


Wanner, H. E. (1968). On remembering, forgetting, and understanding sentences: A


Attracting and Supporting International Graduate Students in Higher Education and Student Affairs

Jung-Hau (Sean) Chen
University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Carli Fink
Northeastern University

Abstract

American higher education increasingly enrolls international students, yet little is known about the specific experiences of international students in the Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) field. Most HESA programs' curricula are American-centric and include integrated work experiences, which can present unique challenges for international students. The authors are international HESA students in Massachusetts. In fall 2018, they conducted the first national survey examining how international HESA students experience the graduate school search, employment, and transition processes. The survey instrument contained quantitative and qualitative items. Distribution occurred through social media and by email to over 120 HESA programs nationally. Respondents (N = 33) represented 20 home countries, and HESA graduate programs across the United States. Findings indicate that these students' academic, sociocultural, and legal needs differ in nuanced ways both from domestic HESA students and from other international graduate students, and are often unmet. This paper explores these nuances, including variation by institutional type and region, and the respective roles of various stakeholders in providing effective support. These insights are pertinent to HESA faculty internationalizing their programs, administrators supervising international students in HESA work, and offices serving international students at large.

Introduction

Over the last several decades, international students have increasingly pursued degree programs at American colleges and universities. Accordingly, higher education administrators and student affairs professionals have been faced with determining and serving these students’ distinct needs. Scholarly work has been generated regarding international undergraduate and graduate students’ decisions to study in the United States, as well as the challenges they face during their transitions to campus life in America (Kuo, 2011; Lee & Opio, 2011; Lee & Rice, 2007; Mori, 2000; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). Additionally, significant scholarship describes the processes by which (primarily domestic) students find out about, apply to, and ultimately choose to attend graduate programs in higher education and student affairs (HESA) (Dam, 2014; Mertz, Eckman, & Strayhorn, 2012; Poock & Love, 2001). Despite these two distinct areas of scholarship, little research has considered how international graduate students fare within the HESA field itself.

The HESA field and professional identity are uniquely American phenomena. As such, most HESA programs’ curricula are American-centric, focusing on the history and current issues of American higher education and preparing students to assume professional positions at American institutions. These
features of HESA graduate programs can present academic and sociocultural challenges for international students. To provide financial support and professional experience(s), most HESA programs also include integrated work experiences (such as graduate assistantships, internships, or practica). Research indicates that the variety and financial support of available graduate-level professional positions is the primary factor driving domestic students’ applications to and selection of a HESA graduate program (Dam, 2014; Mertz, Eckman, & Strayhorn, 2012). This is particularly true for students interested in pursuing a full-time track, which is required of international students in order to obtain a student visa (Poock & Love, 2001). However, the ways in which these professional positions are structured can also constitute a legal challenge for international HESA students to navigate.

The authors of this paper are presently international HESA graduate students in Massachusetts. In fall 2018, they conducted the first national survey examining how international students experience the HESA graduate school search, employment, and transition processes. The University of Massachusetts, Amherst's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study.

This paper aims to illuminate the experiences of a population not often represented in literature or public discourse and, through doing so, offer concrete recommendations to faculty and administrators affiliated with HESA graduate programs on how to best support international students. The results of this study include particular discussion of variation by institutional type and region, and the respective roles of various stakeholders in providing effective support to international HESA students. These insights are pertinent to HESA faculty seeking to internationalize their programs, to administrators supervising international graduate students in HESA work, and to offices serving international students at large.

Methods

The authors developed the assessment instrument in September 2018, using Google Forms to facilitate collaboration across institutions. The instrument was a survey, containing both quantitative and qualitative items. Eligibility criteria were: age (18 years or older), program of study (current or recently graduated (last five years) HESA students at the master’s or doctoral level), and international student status (dependent on an I-20 or visa document to study in the United States).

Prior to accessing the survey questions, participants were required to read a consent form and agree to voluntarily participate. This “opt in” question was the only required question throughout the assessment. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, all questions within the assessment itself were made optional; that is, respondents were able to submit the survey without answering any given question(s), if so desired.

The authors developed four qualitative items related to international HESA students’ origins. These items captured data on international HESA students’ home country or countries, first language(s), country of undergraduate education, and means of learning about the HESA field and American graduate programs. The authors also developed three multiple-choice items related to international HESA students’ choices. These captured data on the institutional type and geographic region of respondents’ graduate programs, as well as on the types of employment (if any) respondents held while enrolled in their HESA graduate program. To avoid identifying respondents’ institutions directly, the geographic regions listed were drawn from the National Association of Students Personnel Administrators (NASPA): Student Affairs Administrators in Higher
Education regional map (NASPA, 2018). One qualitative question in this section provided space for respondents to elaborate on their experiences obtaining employment as an international HESA student. One additional multiple-choice item in this section was drawn from the Comprehensive International Student Needs Assessment and concerned respondents’ primary reason for choosing their graduate program in particular (Berkeley International Office, 2011).

The following section of the assessment addressed international HESA students’ transitions in three domains: academic, sociocultural, and legal. A multiple-choice question posed how long respondents had been studying in their graduate program. The questions in this section were formatted in a matrix, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with a series of statements on a four-point Likert-type scale from “agree” to “disagree”, with no neutral option. A “not applicable” option was also provided for each statement. These questions and statements were drawn from the Comprehensive International Student Needs Assessment (Berkeley International Office, 2011). This assessment sought to determine the needs of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in various programs of study at the University of California, Berkeley; many questions addressed both undergraduate and graduate students’ needs, with some questions geared specifically towards undergraduate students alone or towards graduate students alone. No questions geared towards undergraduate students alone were included in the present study. The language used in select items was adapted minimally to suit the HESA field. The authors also developed one question in this section, which was a matrix-style question that examined the relative helpfulness of various sources of support in students’ transitions to graduate studies in the United States.

The survey closed with three qualitative questions created by the authors. These allowed respondents to express one or more specific ways in which their graduate school program or institution made their journey easier or more difficult, advice they would give to a prospective international HESA graduate student, and any additional comments to help the authors better understand their experiences as an international HESA graduate student.

Distribution occurred online through two primary channels: Facebook and email. The authors shared the survey in four large Facebook groups, two of which were general groups related to the HESA field and two of which specifically focused on issues related to the internationalization of HESA and on international students in the field. The authors also compiled contact information for HESA faculty and student associations at over 120 institutions across the country and emailed them the survey with a request to forward it to any current or recent former international students affiliated with their programs. Respondents’ qualitative comments were extracted directly from their survey responses and remain unaltered.

Participants
The survey yielded 33 responses (N = 33), with respondents representing 20 home countries. The home countries most frequently represented in this sample are China and South Korea (N = 4 for each), followed by Canada, Jamaica, and Mexico (N = 3 for each). This represents a departure from the combined undergraduate and graduate international student population, where students from China and India are the most highly represented, followed by students from South Korea and Saudi Arabia (Institute of International Education, 2018). Within the sample as a whole, 36% of respondents (N = 12) consider English to be their first language and 58% (N = 19) obtained
their undergraduate degrees in the United States. Respondents attended HESA graduate programs at institutions large and small, public and private, and located in every NASPA-defined region of the United States. Notably, 73% of respondents (N = 24) attended public institutions. The nine respondents that attended private institutions were divided nearly equally between attending research universities (N = 5) and liberal arts colleges (N = 4). The NASPA region attracting the largest proportion of international students in this sample is by far Region 3 (N = 12), encompassing eleven states from Virginia in the Northeast to Texas in the Southwest. This could be due to the size of the region, the prominence of public universities within this region, or the region’s climate, which may be relatively familiar and desirable to most international students.

Results
Findings indicate that these students’ paths into HESA resemble those of domestic students. The respondents revealed that their top three sources of information about HESA programs included (1) mentors in college, (2) online research, and (3) study abroad advisors and fairs. The predominant reasons respondents chose to attend their specific graduate programs were (1) availability of a competitive funding package, (2) academic quality, and (3) geographic location. The results of this survey also illuminate the nuanced ways in which international HESA students’ academic, sociocultural, and legal needs differ both from domestic HESA students and from international graduate students in other programs of study and are often unmet.

Academic
The results of academic-related questions indicate that well over half the respondents (60%) consider it challenging to relate to American students in class. Among these respondents, some attributed such struggles to their lack of knowledge and experience in an American context of higher education. For instance, one respondent stated that “... there were so many new concepts in lectures that made it difficult to understand lectures...” Another respondent pointed out that “... almost all of class discussions were held under the assumption that everyone in the room has been a part of the institutional culture for years.” This respondent then added “that made me feel excluded from lot of class conversations.” Still others attributed such struggles to the fact that most HESA graduate programs in the U.S. focused solely on the American context. For example, one respondent indicated that “U.S. higher education and student affairs program is too concentrated on domestic issues (U.S. issues), so the perspectives and the courses with [sic] related to international context is necessary to be expanded.” This is echoed by another respondent who commented “American context based always” when asked about what had made their experience as international HESA graduate student in the U.S. more difficult. In addition to experiencing difficulty in relating to their American counterparts, approximately half of the respondents also ranked their difficulties in keeping up with reading assignments (52%) and with writing assignments (48%) as two other major academic challenges. In fact, one respondent argued that to assign the same workload to international and domestic students was unfair, stating “… it takes me twice as much time to complete them to get prepared for classes, which demotivates me greatly.” These students’ struggle with English language calls into question the current practice of using standardized English proficiency tests, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS), as the only indicator of international students’ linguistic preparedness.
Furthermore, it also urges HESA faculty members to meet their students where they are in classes comprised of both domestic and international graduate students. For example, instructors’ flexibility with assignment deadlines can reduce international graduate students’ anxiety over completing assignments in an additional language. In addition, regular one-on-one check-ins with international graduate students provides an opportunity for faculty members to keep track of their progress.

Our respondents were also asked to speak about what made their experiences in their programs positive. A recurring theme that emerged from their positive experiences focuses on an international-inclusive curriculum. One respondent mentioned “an internationalized syllabus” as beneficial to their study in the program. Another respondent echoed the theme by attributing their positive experience to a flexible curriculum design which allowed them to take classes from the international education program. This respondent further explained:

I was able to take advantage of the courses offered for international ed[ucation] program and created my own specialization, which is extremely helpful because I was able to connect with other international students in other graduate programs.

Sociocultural

The results of the sociocultural-related questions reveal that 70% of the respondents found it hard to balance schoolwork and free time. Over half of the respondents (60%) expressed concerns about being discriminated against by Americans. Two other major sociocultural challenges for international students include communication, such as concerns regarding the ability to be understood linguistically (54%), and coping with homesickness (54%). One respondent mentioned experiencing difficulty in being understood, stating “[m]y graduate advisor does not seem to understand my struggle, and it was hard because I felt like I was on my own at times”. Another respondent further shed light on their concern over tackling homesickness, referring to their graduate program as “not providing us with enough emotional support”. Nevertheless, when asked about their positive experiences in their graduate programs, several respondents stressed the importance of a support system and having people who share similar experiences. One respondent pointed out:

I believe I had a unique experience during grad school as all my supervisors during my time there were either people of color and/or was once an international student themselves, so they understood my struggles, worked with me, advised and counseled me. Overall, they were very beneficial to my studies as they made up part of my support system during my time there, guided me when I needed assistance.

Another response echoed the importance of having friends who share similar experiences by pointing out “…it was much easier for me to make friends with other international students…” Yet another response echoed the importance of a support system in their success:

I think having a cohort model in our program has been instrumental to my success on a personal as well as professional level. We were able to challenge and support each other in ways that I don't think it would have been possible if we weren't in all of this together.

Legal

The legal aspects of being an international HESA student were of significant concern to many respondents. The source of greatest concern (indicated by 82% of
respondents) was understanding U.S. medical insurance and services. Seventy-nine percent of respondents were concerned about securing a job in the U.S. after graduation, as well as about having adequate financial support. Other significant sources of concern for respondents were understanding their U.S. tax obligations (76%) and finding on-campus employment (73%). The qualitative responses overwhelmingly addressed legal concerns related to employment and reflected experiences that occurred during graduate school enrollment as well as while searching for and (for some) obtaining post-graduate positions.

The single greatest challenge respondents expressed regarding their legal transitions concerned others’ knowledge of visa requirements. Respondents were frustrated that faculty had a “lack of general knowledge about visas” and “not much familiar[ity] with the U.S. policy.” One respondent in particular described being frustrated with faculty who “weren’t aware” that the program’s requirement for students to simultaneously hold a graduate assistantship and an internship meant international students had to apply for Curricular Practical Training, a form of work authorization that enables students on F-1 visas to pursue paid or unpaid work off-campus (otherwise prohibited) if required for an academic course. Many responses reflected feelings of isolation; students wrote that they felt “alone in the job search process” and “like [their] graduate advisor didn’t particularly understand [their] struggle, especially related to employment.” One respondent, however, described the reverse: “several faculty/advisors work in international education and can speak to the specifics of being an international student/looking for work in student affairs as an international student.” Another comment underscored the importance of faculty and departmental support. These responses demonstrate the benefits that could result from reducing traditional disciplinary boundaries, such as by faculty connecting with international student advisors or by facilitating increased collaboration between higher education and international education programs.

Three themes emerged in examining the ways institutions alleviated international HESA students’ legal challenges: (1) reducing financial barriers, (2) communicating clearly and often, and (3) being flexible. One respondent commended their institution for providing them the in-state tuition rate and for reimbursing the fees associated with applying for their work visa; others praised their institutions for providing full funding and significantly reducing financial barriers. Many respondents bemoaned insufficient funding and the inability to pursue additional, off-campus employment. International student services offices were recognized for “always answering[ing] [students’] question[s] in a timely manner” and for offering “constant reminder[s] of what to do (visa-related paperwork, tax, housing, and so on).” As international students’ work eligibility is dependent on satisfying visa regulations, flexibility is a necessary component of hiring and supervising an international HESA student-employee. Due to paperwork not being completed in time, one respondent “had to skip the first few days of training for [their] graduate assistantship, which only made [them] feel more isolated.” Another respondent commented that a “flexible start for [their] Graduate Assistant position” was helpful when they were told they “could not start working until August 1.”

Resources for Support

Respondents’ qualitative comments regarding the support they received from faculty members, assistantship supervisors, international student services offices, and peers varied greatly. On a scale from 1 (most helpful) to 5 (least helpful), supervisors were rated the
most helpful with a mean score of 2.4, followed by faculty with a mean score of 2.6. International student services offices were rated the least favorably, with a mean score of 3.4. Fellow international students and domestic students each received a mean score of 3.3. Many respondents indicated, through qualitative responses, that they were the only international student in their cohort, if not their program. The survey instrument did not measure whether respondents were connected with international students in other programs at their institution, or with other international HESA students at other institutions.

Discussion

It is worth noting that over half of the present sample (58%) completed their undergraduate degrees in the United States. Thus, it is not surprising that these students’ paths into the field resemble those of domestic students, particularly when these paths have their roots in undergraduate student involvement, leadership, and interactions with student affairs professionals. Even some individuals who did not obtain their undergraduate degrees at American institutions expressed that they gained awareness of HESA as a potential career path through interactions with the American higher education system, such as through study abroad programming or through an advisor in their home country who had, at some point, studied or worked in American higher education. Others who did not interact with American higher education as undergraduate students were more likely to pursue full-time work in their home country while utilizing online tools to investigate their options for graduate study. Several respondents mentioned that programs which required in-person interviews (as opposed to interviews via phone or through software such as Skype) were considered inaccessible due to the high cost of travel.

Despite the resemblance, it is also worth noting how international and domestic students’ sources of information about student affairs as a potential field of study and career differ. This study indicated that (1) mentors in college, (2) online research, and (3) study abroad advisors and fairs comprise the major sources of information for international students. This result departs from Taub and McEwen’s (2006) study where the authors surveyed 300 then-enrolled domestic students in 24 master’s programs in HESA-related fields and concluded (1) interaction with student affairs professionals, (2) involvement in student activities, and (3) reading a graduate school catalog, as the most frequently employed sources of information on a career in HESA. This difference can be attributed to the lack of knowledge or awareness of student affairs as a profession and field of study outside of the U.S. Thus, international students who completed their undergraduate study outside of the U.S. are rarely exposed to the possibility of assuming a career as a student affairs professional. Their sources of information about student affairs thus largely come from mentors, or study abroad advisors who might have experiences studying in the U.S. or are aware of this profession.

That the primary factor affecting international HESA students’ program choice was the availability of a competitive funding package is unsurprising, yet significant. One common reason institution seeks to enroll international students is their perceived ability to pay, as they are not eligible for federal financial aid. However, in a field marked by fully-funded master’s programs and low entry-level salaries, prospective international HESA graduate students are emphasizing the importance of price. Academic quality and geographic location were also rated as important in prospective students’ decision-making, yet the criteria used to determine
favorability remain unclear. Do prospective international HESA students rely on institutional or program rankings to determine academic quality, or are the contributions of specific faculty members more important? When prioritizing geographic location, does this population tend to prefer urban, suburban, or rural locations, and do they gravitate towards any region in particular?

Institutions seeking to internationalize their HESA programs would therefore benefit from engaging with involved international undergraduate students on their campus or in their region, or those who have participated in study abroad programming through their institution. It would also behoove institutions to maintain an active and up-to-date online presence.

Academic
Two major academic issues confronting international students emerged from this study. First, international students in our study indicated a struggle with an American-centric curriculum which placed a major focus on the American higher education system with little reference to contexts outside of the U.S. As our results indicate, many international HESA graduate students—especially those who completed their undergraduate study outside of the U.S.—have found it challenging to grasp ideas and contribute to discussions with their American counterparts due to their limited knowledge of American higher education. Additionally, the profession of student affairs, an integral component of American higher education institutions, remains a very under-researched field outside of the U.S. In many national contexts, student affairs do not even exist as a field of study. This also explains why many international students in HESA programs experience difficulty relating to the experiences of their American peers.

Secondly, speaking English as a foreign language also posed a great challenge for international students academically. Many respondents pointed out that it took them twice the time of their domestic counterparts to complete the same amount of work. This suggests a need for HESA programs and faculty members to pay attention to international students’ needs and struggles, particularly with regard to their reading and writing speed. For example, it is a common practice for many instructors to hand out short readings in class and ask students to read them within 10 minutes before the class reconvenes to discuss. This practice causes tremendous anxiety for international students who speak English as a second or foreign language because they might read at a much slower pace and thus cannot keep up with the rest of the class given such little time to read.

In conclusion, it is imperative that HESA programs and faculty members be aware of their assumptions about what students know and propose a flexible course design that accommodates students with different levels of background knowledge, and reading and writing speed.

Sociocultural
Our study revealed that international students’ concerns over the sociocultural aspect of their pursuit of study in an American HESA program included striking a balance between personal life and work, encountering discrimination in the U.S., communication, and dealing with homesickness. The struggle for a work-life balance for student affairs professionals and graduate students in student affairs has been well discussed in literature (Stimpson & Filer, 2011). The result of our study is consistent with the literature and reiterates that international students are not exempt from such struggles. With regard to international students’ concern over discrimination, our
finding echoes Lee and Rice’s (2007) study, which found that international students, at both undergraduate and graduate levels attending an institution located in the southwestern U.S. experienced different types of discrimination ranging from cultural to verbal discrimination. This study also reveals that the sources of discrimination include peers, faculty members, and the local community. In addition, numerous respondents also pointed out that they were the only international students in their programs, a fact that further isolated them academically and socioculturally.

Legal
The results of this study demonstrate that international HESA students are highly concerned about finding and maintaining employment while enrolled in graduate programs. This is particularly notable given that most HESA programs require students to pursue at least one applied experience (such as a graduate assistantship, internship, or practicum), which is not the case in many other fields. It is clear that international HESA students appreciate the opportunity to obtain financial support and gain practical experience; however, this is also a significant source of stress due to faculty and supervisors’ lack of knowledge around visa requirements and limitations. For example, residence life offices commonly require graduate assistants to begin work in July; however, international students cannot be admitted into the U.S. on their student visas more than 30 days prior to their program start date (University of Chicago, 2018). Supervisors’ awareness and accommodation of such nuances are greatly appreciated. International HESA students would be well-served by a collaborative effort by faculty, supervisors, and international student services offices to foresee these issues and proactively develop solutions. Respondents expressed gratitude for faculty and supervisors who were supportive and understanding of their circumstances.

Quantitative and qualitative data from this study also make evident that international HESA students are highly concerned about obtaining post-graduation employment, whether in the U.S. or abroad. HESA is a uniquely American field, both in curriculum and in the structure and availability of professional opportunities. Many respondents described fears about finding employment in the U.S., given that “student affairs skills are not considered ‘special,’” and “getting a job after graduation is extremely difficult.” If not finding employment in the U.S., international graduates of other programs will generally be able to transfer their knowledge and skills to their home country’s context. However, given that HESA work is much more prevalent in the U.S. than in most other countries globally, this can be challenging, prompting questions of certainty and value. One respondent asserted “you have to be sure this is what you want to do, because employment is tricky, and you may not have opportunities to work in this field in your home country.”

Interestingly, the statement that the highest number of respondents rated as a source of concern - U.S. medical insurance and services - was not addressed in the qualitative responses. However, interpreted in light of the fact that 58% of respondents attended a U.S. institution for their undergraduate education, the fact that this is still a prominent concern is problematic.

Resources for Support
Although individual student relationships with faculty, supervisors, international student services offices, and peers tended towards extremes, the trends are fairly moderate. Faculty and supervisors were generally rated as more helpful in supporting international HESA students than were international student services offices, domestic peers, and even fellow international students. This could be because (1)
students spend the most time with their faculty members and supervisors, and thus develop overall stronger relationships with them; (2) international student services offices on some campuses were perceived to focus on immigration compliance rather than student support; and (3) many students report being the only international student in their cohort or program, thus limiting the helpfulness of fellow international peers.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study examined the experiences of international HESA graduate students, a relatively small population who are not well-represented in literature or discussion nor well-connected to one another. It remains to be determined whether the sample of 33 individuals is representative of the larger group’s demographic backgrounds, academic and sociocultural experiences, and employment outcomes. Future research in this area should aim to recruit a larger and broader sample, including those who attended HESA graduate programs at private institutions and/or in the Rocky Mountain and Mid-Atlantic regions.

One of the main methods of participant recruitment in this study relied on faculty members sharing the survey link with current or former international students in their programs. Some faculty responded that they had only enrolled one or few international student many years ago or that they did not have current contact information for their international alumni. This could be due to changes in program leadership, or indicate that faculty (and perhaps even alumni relations offices) should be maintaining stronger relationships with former international students. In addition to contacting faculty, future researchers should consider reaching out to institutions’ international student services or alumni relations offices.

Finally, some of the qualitative data entered into the survey instrument was unclear or did not directly answer the questions posed. Even in collecting quantitative data, the assessment instrument was not always sensitive enough. For example, learning that prospective international students value an institution’s geographic location does not reveal which factors about a location (urban vs. rural, North vs. South, climate preferences, and so on) make it more or less appealing. Having the opportunity to clarify responses and probe details would yield a richer picture of this population. For this reason, future researchers should consider conducting interviews with eligible participants. In-person, video, and phone interview formats should be considered to reach eligible participants located around the globe.

Conclusion

This study yielded new insights into the experiences of international HESA students, particularly regarding their graduate school search process and their academic, sociocultural, and legal transitions. In evaluating offers of admission, international HESA students value competitive funding packages, academic quality, and geographic location. Once enrolled, students’ experiences tend to be more positive when faculty, supervisors, and international student services offices work together to provide collaborative support. It is critical that faculty recognize and honor international students’ perspectives in the classroom, particularly given that HESA curricula are largely American-centric. Practicing cultural competence is also key to helping international students succeed both in the classroom and in the workplace. The practical requirements of HESA programs can present nuanced challenges for international students, who are often responsible for explaining their employment eligibility to faculty and supervisors. Faculty and supervisors who demonstrate an understanding of, and empathy for, international HESA
students’ experiences are deeply appreciated. Future studies of this population should aim to capture richer, more comprehensive data from a wider sample.

References


Undergraduate Commuter Students: Challenges and Struggles

Fanny He
New York University

Introduction

Approximately 85 percent of college and university students enrolled in postsecondary institutions are commuter students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Commuter students, as defined in this paper, are students who do not live in institution-owned housing and must travel for their studies. Astin (2001) reports that commuting is negatively associated with attaining a bachelor’s degree and furthermore, “substantial commuting seems to raise the level of stress experienced by undergraduate students” (pp. 390-391). As a first-year student entering college, commuting can be an added stress factor to an already overwhelming experience. It is important for students to receive support from their institution to create their own community. Without finding a community during their first year, students may feel isolated in their new academic environment and fail to fulfill their academic goals.

Higher education institutions should seek to bridge the gap by providing support for students with differing housing statuses by creating targeted programs and resources to offer commuter students the same opportunities afforded to residential students. These opportunities should include faculty interaction outside of the academic setting, a peer mentor who can offer institutional resources and answer institutional related questions, and opportunities to form a tight-knit bond with other students who share the same housing status identity through space allocated on campus. While these programs would benefit at all postsecondary institutions, they are even more crucial in large urban institutions, as it is harder for students to find their place and receive individual attention in an academic environment with hundreds other students vying for the same resources. Commuter students should have their institution’s support through a structured cohort model, programming of goal setting, and institutional navigation that integrates academics and social mentorship in order to go beyond surviving their first year to succeed as a higher education student.

Undergraduate Commuter Students: Challenges

While the commuter student population makes up a large portion of the higher education system, it is vastly underserved and lacks adequate support from higher education institutions. Commuter students are thought to be academically unmotivated in comparison to their resident peers (Jacoby & Garland, 2004). However, what many institutions fail to realize is that these students often juggle multiple identities outside of their role as a student due to their commuter status. Many commuters must balance life roles outside of academia, such as acting as a caretaker for their siblings or as a translator for their parents. Jacoby (2004) supports this notion and says that this student population, “seek to be involved in the campus community and in their learning; however, their lives consist of balancing many competing commitments, including family, work, and other responsibilities” (p. 62). According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 80% of undergraduate commuter students work, with 46% of full-time students working 25 or more hours per week simply to
make ends meet (2002). In addition, commuter students are more likely to be employed, work more hours, and have jobs off campus than resident students (Jacoby, 2000). These traits of a commuter student indicate that their needs surpass what resources many higher education institutions currently offer to these students.

According to Jacoby (1989), commuter students have felt marginalized on campus since they first participated in American higher education. Maslow’s (1982) hierarchy of needs provides a framework for understanding commuter students’ experiences both on and off campus and why institutions need to better serve and provide programming for these students. This hierarchy is based off a pyramid, with basic needs located at the bottom tier and self-actualization, which Maslow defines as fulfilling one’s potential, at the top. For students, their potential lies within their academic achievements. The bottom tier consists of tangible needs such as food, shelter, water, and sleep. Once fulfilled, the student’s needs move on to safety and security, and then on to social and psychological needs such as friendship, self-esteem, and love before moving to the top tier of self-realization. Based on the pyramid model, bottom tier needs must be met before advancing to the next tier. In other words, students who do not have their basic needs fulfilled cannot focus on fulfilling their potential such as education.

Commuter students are often preoccupied with fulfilling their bottom tier needs. Some challenges include figuring out what food can be prepared at home and works best for traveling as well as where on campus has a microwave and refrigerator for them to use. Another bottom tier need commuter students are preoccupied with is sleep; commuters must allot additional time for travel. No matter the mode of transportation, commuting to and from campus drains time and energy from students. Jacoby and Garland (2004) summarize the need for fulfilling the bottom tier needs in order for students to move on to focusing on their education:

It is essential that institutions provide services to meet their basic needs for housing, transportation, security, food, health care, and child care. A student who has not found satisfactory living or transportation arrangements simply cannot focus sufficiently on learning or achieving educational goals. Moving up the pyramid, all students need to feel a sense of inclusion and belonging to the campus community. (p. 65)

Jacoby’s research shows that institutions must provide services to fulfill their students’ basic needs. Beginning from the bottom tier, commuter students are already at a disadvantage compared to their residential counterparts as they must dedicate time and energy towards fulfilling their needs of food, housing, and transportation. As the next level on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs advances to the psychological and social level, commuter students need support in building self-esteem through peer and faculty relations in order to feel integrated in the institution. As commuter students have a history of feeling marginalized on campus, institutions must take extra steps for ensuring this specific population develops a sense of belonging and self-esteem in their community. According to Jacoby (1989), marginalized student populations are less satisfied and successful and leave their institution at a higher rate than their peers. Commuter students have to fulfill their basic needs before journeying on to self-realization and achieving their potential in the academic setting.

In determining retention rates during their first year, commuter students have more to contend with in addition to their academic classes. Retention is an indicator of academic
performance as well as social integration into the institution. Studies that focused on academic ability as a predictor of retention found that academic performance explained no more than half of college student dropout decisions (Pantages & Creedon, 1978). For first-year students, academic adjustment included more than a student’s scholarly potential. Rather, motivation to learn, taking action to meet academic demands, and satisfaction with their academic environment were also important factors for their academic adjustment and transition (Baker & Siryk, 1984). Knowing that commuter students must find satisfaction in their institution along with being motivated to learn, higher education institutions should develop programs that address obstacles that commuter students face. Commuter students are as dedicated to their education as their residential counterparts (Jacoby, 2004). However, their social integration may pose a bigger threat to retention as they have fewer opportunities to interact with their peers without a residence hall to act as a foundation for social meetings.

First-year commuter students, like other first-year resident students, experience a transitional period when they enter higher education. Schlossberg (1989) defines a transition as any event or non-event that changes relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles. For many residential students, this transition is clear cut, such as when they first move into the residential hall. However, for commuter students, their transition may not be as clear cut. Commuter students could be transitioning from working full-time to taking part-time classes at their local college while still balancing other responsibilities. Other commuter students could be taking full course loads but still returning home to eat dinner with their family as they did every night before, working the same job they have held since high school, and keeping to the same routine.

Colleges need to recognize these transitions and provide appropriate support (Jacoby & Garland, 2004). Institutions should be asking themselves how they can make the commuter student’s transition to higher education a significant event in order to validate their experience when entering a higher education institution.

Undergraduate Commuter Students: Strategies for Success and Discussion

To fully recognize the commuter student’s transition into higher education, one recommendation would be for institutions to host a two-fold First-Year Experience program that focuses on goal setting and institutional navigation while integrating academic and social mentorship. The ideal program for commuters should be adjusted to fit every commuter identity, including adult learners returning to the academic setting for the first time. This should be a year-long program that includes faculty, staff, as well as peer mentors facilitating workshops around topics that would be beneficial to the commuter population.

While commuter students are dedicated to their educational goals, their multiple obligations can make it difficult for college to be their first priority. The structure of the course should be once per week, with weekly rotations of different staff, faculty, and peer mentors that will host various workshops that will benefit commuter students. For example, an academic advisor can host a workshop on developing goals targeted to specific individuals. If a first-year commuter student has set a goal to complete their degree early to find a job to support their family, their academic advisor should work with them during the course to set a timeline for reaching that goal. The course should serve as a resource for first-year commuter students to better understand how their institutions work, as many cannot take the time out of their busy lives to conduct the research themselves. Jacoby and Garland (2004) believe that commuter
students are dedicated to their educational goals but may not have the time nor opportunity to set up steps to follow through on their plans: “while commuter students are serious about and committed to achieving their educational goals, they are less likely to have the opportunity to make college their only or even sometimes the top priority” (p. 71). Since commuter students juggle multiple roles, institutions can better support them by developing a course to dedicate a mandatory time for these students to receive the support they need from academic staff. The course would serve as a general elective as to encourage students to engage and make progress towards graduation.

Faculty interaction with commuter students is also crucial to further their academic goals. Weimer (2002) suggests that undergraduate students benefit from a shift in power with their faculty members. In the classroom, faculty members have a distinct upper-hand in the relationship whereas outside of the classroom, there is a better avenue for sharing power. Commuter students may not have much faculty interaction outside of a classroom setting. Endo and Harpel (1982) note that there is a difference between informal interaction and formal interaction with faculty:

Frequency of informal student-faculty interaction describes student contacts with faculty where there is a concern for wide aspects of the students' development including personal/social and intellectual growth, academic achievement, and satisfaction with education. Frequency of formal interaction describes student contacts with faculty members where there is a more limited concern for specific intellectual or academic considerations. (p.120)

Institutions should recognize that faculty members have more to offer than just in academia. The First-Year Experience course for commuter students will focus more on the interactions faculty and commuter students have together outside the classroom. As commuter students do not have the benefit of informal interaction with faculty members, this course will provide that opportunity for those students. Faculty members will be able to focus on commuter students’ personal and social growth as well as their satisfaction with their current educational path and can also offer guidance towards reaching their self-realization. Faculty members can have either a positive or a negative impact on a student’s higher education experience. Endo and Harpel (1982) note that by having informal interactions with students “which are more personal and reflect a broad concern with students' emotional and cognitive growth, student intellectual growth can be increased” (p. 134). Faculty members can increase intellectual growth outside the classroom by having these conversations and discussion off-campus in a non-academic setting.

The third part of the course should allow commuter students to interact with peer mentors. These peer mentors should be commuter students themselves who have gone through similar experiences that the first-year commuter students are currently experiencing. Fordham University-Lincoln Center, for example, has a Commuter Freshmen Mentor (CFM) program specifically designed to connect first-year commuter students to an upperclassmen mentor who guide and support their mentee (Fordham University, n.d.). The CFM program is intended to help first-year students adapt to college life through social and academic support. Jacoby (2004) states “Well-trained peer advisors can also serve to ease the transition of new students by informally providing information, guidance, companionship, and introductions to others who have experienced similar issues and concerns” (p. 72). Peer mentors can help
integrate first-year commuter students into the institutional setting on a more informal level than staff or faculty members. As students who have finished their first year of commuting, peer mentors can host workshops that focus on providing resources to better aid the first-years’ transition into their institution. Commuter students are already balancing multiple roles with their life outside of academics and may not feel motivated to explore the institution’s resources and assimilate into the institution’s community on their own. Walters and Kanak (2016) believe that “at an institutional level, successful orientation programs can positively affect retention rates from the first to second year” (p. 59). Based on Walter and Kanak’s findings, we can conclude that the First-Year Experience program can aid in students’ involvement in their institutions and bolster retention rates. Tinto’s (1997) research indicates that the greater a student’s involvement and integration into the life of the university, the less likely that student will leave. With peer mentors to guide them along their first-year experience by providing tips, advice, and resources, first-year commuter students are more likely to become integrated into their institution.

Returning to Maslow’s (1982) hierarchy of needs, once commuter students are able to move past their third tier of establishing self-esteem and creating friendships, they will be able to move upwards on the pyramid model and work towards self-realization, which in this case means fulfilling their educational goals. Peer mentors in the course will be able to guide first-year commuter students on their journey to self-realization by working with them to socially integrate into the institution’s community.

As commuter students are not on campus as often as their residential peers due to their transportation schedules, these courses should be held during a time frame where commuter students can attend several classes back to back. This ensures that the courses are commuter friendly by allowing the students to have the freedom to stack their courses together.

The academic buy-in for this orientation course would be to provide faculty and staff members with statistics showcasing the student success with informal interactions. Faculty members would be helping themselves and academia in general if they participate in facilitating a few of the workshops throughout the course of the year. Staff and faculty members would provide the tools for first-year commuter students to reach their academic potential and unfold their self-realization. In addition, faculty members should be granted additional research aid for their participation in the courses. The aid provided would be at the discretion of the institution and can range from financial aid to general resources (i.e. providing additional research assistants). Ideally, this would encourage buy-in from the faculty members. Student Affairs as a division should have incentive to recruit staff members to participate in the First-Year Experience program. This incentive includes an increase in student leadership, involvement, and retention.

Peer mentors will gain leadership skills by offering to participate in the orientation course for first-year commuter students. The mentors will be able to develop their facilitation, communication, and social skills by leading weekly workshops for the first-year commuter students. Peer mentors, who are commuters themselves, would be giving back to the community that spearheaded their personal growth. The faculty, staff, and peer mentors will be given the opportunity to apply and be interviewed for the position to ensure the commuter students are receiving facilitators who truly care about their development. With a program this big, it can serve to bridge the gap between different divisions of Student Affairs, who will ultimately spearhead the program, and Academic Affairs.
While it would be ideal to have enough funding from a single source, the reality is that the course would be from a funding stream of multiple sources such as student fees, donations, and governmental support such as the Department of Education. If possible, different offices around the institution could also allocate their student budget to this course. Offices such as the Office of the President, Office of Student Activities, and all the academic departments would greatly benefit from the success of this program and should contribute as such. This program proposal is for institutions with a large commuter population and as such, the retention, involvement, and engagement of commuter students would positively impact all the offices in any higher education institution. In addition, funding could come from applied grants. Once the course is in place, policies should be reinforced to ensure future funding for years to come.

Outside of this academic program, another type of support institutions could offer is to allow commuter students to have access to residential lounges or create a commuter lounge to provide them with space on campus in between classes. According to Mount Holyoke’s website, “At Mount Holyoke” (n.d.), this primarily residential college offers commuter students the option to relax in their residential lounges as well as offering a commuter lounge as space for students to stay connected and engaged.

**Assessment Measures**

The course has set goals for the institution's commuter student population. Success of the course comes in the success of the commuter students. For each individual commuter student, success can be defined in different ways. As Tinto’s (1997) research indicates that the greater a student’s involvement and integration in the life of the university, the less likely that that student will leave, student involvement and student retention should go hand in hand as outcomes of success through the course. One version of success would be to measure the commuter student population increase in student involvement on campus. The course tackles academic and social mentorship through the informal interactions with peer mentors, faculty, and staff members and measures the personal and cognitive growth of each individual commuter student. Another version of success would be to assess the level of knowledge and interaction first-year commuter students have with other members of their community. As Jacoby (2004), Walters and Kanak (2016), and Endo and Harpel (1982) have shown, peer mentors, advisors, and faculty members have significant impacts on a student’s involvement and integration into their higher education institution. Commuter students should be assessed at the beginning and end of the orientation course to evaluate the effects the course has on their first year in higher education. If commuter students’ involvement and retention rates increase after a five-year period, to allow for the course to pick up momentum, then the institution will know that the course has made an impact on a severely underserved community. First-year commuter students should also be reporting a higher level of institutional satisfaction, whether socially or academically. The goal of the program is to enhance commuter student success and success is found through commuter student involvement and retention.

**Limitations**

This paper should be considered an attempt to identify related literature on the subject of first-year commuter students and institutional support. This review does not aim to speak for all first-year commuter students and residential students, and as a result may not be generalizable. The reviewer recognizes that
the suggestions provided for commuter student success is shaped by the reviewer’s own experiences. The reviewer also recognizes that the informal course structure may not work for all institutions serving the commuter population.

Conclusion

As commuter students make up a large portion of college students, institutions will need to alter the way they accommodate students who live off-campus. The First-Year Experience program would greatly benefit commuter students in aiding them to becoming an active part of their institution. The engagement of first-year commuter students requires a different approach due to the nature of their experiences. While there are challenges, additional resources provide greater opportunity to retain students. By offering better resources to commuter students, institutions can ensure all students are receiving equitable support in student engagement.

References


Reframing the History of Affirmative Action: A Feminist and Critical Race Theory Perspective

Zackary Harris
New York University

The current debate on affirmative action has persisted across multiple political and social arenas in the United States for over half a century now. In general, affirmative action is any form of law, policy, or procedure that “grant[s] a more or less flexible kind of preferential treatment in the allocation of scarce resources” to groups of people who have been historically underrepresented and legally discriminated against in society (Sabbagh, 2007 p. 2). The primary focus of affirmative action is attempting to correct unjust discrimination that has occurred over an extended period of history. These policies are cognizant of social identities such as gender, race, and class, and the limited access marginalized groups have in areas such as the economy, education, and employment. The implementation of affirmative action in each of these social sectors, and the impact across individual social identities, deserve individual inquiry. However, for the sake of this research, the focus will primarily be on affirmative action in higher education. The primary method of implementation has been through admissions practices that utilize racial identity as a factor in their overall formula for acceptance to the university. These practices have been in place at universities for almost as long as the debate on affirmative action has been occurring, and shifted over time along with the entire debate on affirmative action. Unfortunately, discussions and debates about the history and implementation of race-conscious admissions have lost touch with the main foundation of affirmative action, improving equity in a higher education system with barriers for communities that were historically marginalized. This paper will bring the current debate back to this focus through an argument in favor of affirmative action. First, this article will contextualize the political and social foundation and trace the legal history of affirmative action through significant court cases. From this historical foundation, a proposed directive grounded in feminist and critical race theory will assert the importance of affirmative action in higher education and emphasize the founding concepts of redistribution and equity.

Foundational History of Affirmative Action

When discussing topics related to race-conscious admissions practices, it is important to understand where modern ideas of affirmative action first began. All present-day policies have derived from the political and social setting of the 1960’s. This era for the United States was a time of great unrest, primarily across racial identity. The largest social movement of that time was the Civil Rights Movement (Garrow, 2010), which is widely known for its effort to fight for racial equality in the United States, especially for Blacks and African Americans. Leaders of this movement put immense pressure on a system that was designed to keep white privilege and racial inequality intact, and their efforts resulted in the birth of modern-day forms of affirmative action through new federal and state policies. As it relates to race-conscious policies, the phrase “affirmative action,” is widely considered to have been coined in President John F. Kennedy’s Executive Order 10925 which helped to establish what is known today as the EEOC, or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (Dorsey...
Under this executive order, federally funded contractors were required to “take affirmative action to ensure that” future and current employees were treated “without regard to [their] race, creed, color or national origin” (Executive Order No. 10925, 1961, section 301). This piece of legislation was released at a time when the Civil Rights Movement pressured elected officials to codify forms of employment protection that align with the Fourteenth Amendment (Garrow, 2010). The term affirmative action eventually solidified itself as a key phrase for discussing any form of identity-conscious policies that relate to anti-discrimination of minority groups. Three years later, affirmative action practices became essential to the passage and enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Dorsey et al., 2014; Spann, 2000; Graves, 2014). Under this act, provisions prohibited discrimination based on race, sex, national origin, and religion across areas such as education (Title VI) and employment (Title VII). Moving forward, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was crucial in establishing race-conscious affirmative action policies “as a necessary means to address entrenched racial inequalities in American society” (Dorsey et al., 2014, p. 59). Affirmative action practices took up many forms depending on the sector, policy, or program in which they were implemented. However, they are all connected together by their relationship to the immense policy reform and the sociopolitical impact of the Civil Rights Movement.

History of Affirmative Action in Higher Education Admissions

The push to establish affirmative action practices in higher education came primarily in the form of race-conscious admissions policies. These policies were not founded overnight, and each had individual influences and social movements behind their creation. By 1960, colleges and universities had enrolled no more than ten percent of the United States population and only “four percent of black men and women” in the United States had completed their college degree (Graves, 2014, p. 200). These statistics changed with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. The Civil Rights Act ban on identity-based discrimination in education along with the newly established streams of grants and federal aid from the Higher Education Act of 1965 created the conditions necessary for postsecondary institutions to reexamine their admissions practices, diversify their pool of student admits, and expand overall enrollment (Paguyo & Moses, 2011). Although these two Acts were significant in expanding race-conscious admissions, universities such as Harvard College in 1961 or Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania in 1963 were at the forefront of implementation (Stulberg & Chen, 2013). While some university race-conscious admissions practices preceded the Civil Rights and Higher Education acts, they all of these policies were influenced by the Civil Rights Movement and the need to end racial inequality in the United States (Stulberg & Chen, 2013). Although there were opposing forces that inhibited some universities from adopting policies early on, such as stakeholders’ interests or lack of shared liberal values across institutions (Stulberg & Chen, 2013), the push to create affirmative action policies was widespread. Eventually, race-conscious affirmative action became a permanent standard in higher education admissions in the immediately following decades. Overall, this conglomerate of legal and educational reform was attributed to the increase of enrollment and graduation rates for students of color, especially for black students during this time. Enrollment for black students rose significantly from 1964 to 1974, increasing from 234,000 to 814,000 students across the country. By 1978, the
percentage of black men and women in the country to graduate with a four-year degree was 7.3 and 7.1 percent respectively (Graves, 2014). The integration, expansion, and success of affirmative action in the 1960’s and 1970’s played a crucial role in changing the entire landscape and student demographic of U.S. higher education. While the success of these affirmative action continues to this day, it has not gone unchallenged over the years. The legal history of affirmative action in university admissions will help to establish how these policies have shifted over time based on the decisions of the judicial system.

**Legal History**

Another complex component of the history of affirmative action in higher education admissions policies is its prevalence in the U.S. judicial system. Court cases on affirmative action shared a connection, which involved discrimination claims made by white students who felt that they had been “negatively” impacted by these policies. Most affirmative action cases claimed a plaintiff’s rights under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and/or Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had been violated (Defunis v. Odegaard, 1974; Hopwood v. Texas, 1996). Under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, states cannot “make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privilege and immunities of citizens” and they may not “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (U.S. Const. Amend. XIV). Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, one cannot be excluded, denied benefits, or discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity for any “program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI). Higher education institutions were under the purview for these laws because they receive federal funding and are regulated by the constitutional laws of the United States. These two clauses constituted the grounds for a plaintiff’s argument, stating that race-conscious admission decisions had undermined their rights to access higher education. In order to determine the constitutionality of these legal claims, courts were required to use the legal procedure of strict scrutiny (Spann, 2000). In order to pass this process of review, the admissions policies should be narrowly tailored to maintain consistency across all student populations and could not negatively impact some students over others (Leiter & Leiter, 2002). These policies must also serve a compelling state interest that the university must prove exists or the plaintiff must disprove in its entirety (Leiter & Leiter 2002). While strict scrutiny may be a standard of review, each court interpreted this standard differently based on the verdicts of the subsequent cases.

The first case to significantly impact race-conscious admissions policies came from the Supreme Court’s decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978). In this case, Allan Bakke brought a lawsuit against University of California, Davis School of Medicine because they denied him admissions in 1973 and 1974. He claimed that the university’s separate admissions protocol for self-identified “minority groups” and the reserved 16 seats for this admissions process prevented him from gaining an acceptance to the university, and denied him his rights under the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978). Ultimately, the Supreme Court determined that the university’s usage of racial quotas did not pass the strict scrutiny standard, and ruled in favor of Bakke, granting him admissions to the university. The majority opinion delivered by Justice Lewis Powell was essential in establishing the precedents that affirmative action policies cannot use racial quotas of any kind.
Additionally, it emphasized that although pure quota system is unconstitutional, the pursuit of a diverse student body was a potential compelling state interest for admissions practices, which included the considerations of racial and ethnic identity to be a ‘plus’ factor in an admissions decision (Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 1978; Spann, 2000).

The next significant case to reach the courts did not come until 1996 with Hopwood v. Texas. While this case never made it to the Supreme Court, it did have a significant impact on the state level. This case questioned the admissions policy at the University of Texas’s School of Law which utilized race as a factor and created a separate review process for Black and Mexican American students with lower admission requirements (Hopwood v. Texas 1996). The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals critically examined the Bakke case as a potential precedent but ultimately determined that the university’s goal to create a more diverse student body with this policy did not hold under strict scrutiny, and their entire separate admissions process violated the Fourteenth amendment (Hopwood v. Texas, 1996). This case was the first state specific case that denounced the usage of race in a university’s admissions policy and prompted some states to replace their race-conscious policies in education with race-neutral standards. In 1997, Texas implemented a race-neutral policy called the Top 10% Program, which guaranteed admission for the top 10% of public high school graduates in the University of Texas system. Other states abolished affirmative action practices entirely, such as California’s Proposition 209 in 1996 (Alhaddab, 2015; Dorsey et. al., 2014; Kauffman, 2007).

Following the aftermath of the Hopwood v. Texas (1996) case, the Supreme Court was met in 2003 with two cases from the University of Michigan, Gratz v. Bollinger and Grutter v. Bollinger. The first case, Gratz v. Bollinger (2003), involved the university’s undergraduate admissions procedures that utilized race as an additional scoring factor that put minority students significantly close to the threshold of admissions. Their procedure also included a separate, express review process for racial minority students. The Supreme Court struck down their admissions procedure under the Equal Protection Clause and Title VI because it did not allow all students to be considered along the same playing field and created a quota-like system that goes against the decision of Bakke (1978) (Gratz v. Bollinger, 2003). While this case was a potential criticism to affirmative action at the federal level, the case of Grutter v. Bollinger (2003) had the opposite result. Grutter v. Bollinger (2003) brought into question the University of Michigan’s law school admissions process that utilized race as only an additional factor in a holistic student profile and was highly focused on reaching a “critical mass” of racial minority students (Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003). The court determined that this policy passed strict scrutiny because the university’s focus on critical mass was not a quota system and fell under a compelling state interest of diversity. This was narrowly tailored because all candidates were considered under the same procedures even with race as a plus factor (Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003). While these two cases had different outcomes, they reaffirmed the validity of race-conscious admissions policies as long as race remained a plus factor, every candidate was reviewed under the same procedures, and no racial quotas could be established (Kaufmann, 2007). They renewed the importance of diversity in higher education and allowed these policies to be a primary method to attain a level of “critical mass” of diversity (Kaufmann, 2007).

Since these four cases, the state of affirmative action has remained relatively intact even after the most recent case, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin (2015). This set of court cases
ultimately established a narrative for the legal and structural evolution of affirmative action policies and showcased the adjustments universities make due to the implications of the ruling court system. In order to understand the future of these policies, the present debate on affirmative action admission practices must remain grounded in its founding values and theories that exemplify the importance of these principles.

A Future Grounded in Feminist and Critical Race Theory

Feminist and Critical Race Theory (CRT) are two bodies of theory and methods of inquiry that place their emphasis on the social, political, and structural systems of our society. These two structures of knowledge exist in tandem with one another because their primary purpose is to address historical and present-day inequalities. Feminist theory is primarily focused around issues of gender, but a critical principle of feminist scholarship is intersectionality. According to this framework, identities do not stand alone, but instead, come together to produce our unique experience as it relates to historically structured forms of power, privilege, and oppression (Steinbugler et al., 2006). Under intersectionality, oppression is “not hierarchical nor additive” and one group is not more oppressed than another. People’s particular position in the world is constructed holistically from all of our identities, privileged or oppressed (Hurtado, 2005, p. 280). Intersectionality is crucial for affirmative action debates because it recognizes the influence of different identities on controversial issues. When placed in the context of higher education, it reaffirms the presence of historical injustices across multiple marginalized identities attempting to gain access to an already rigged institution. Combined with the identity focus of intersectionality, the tenets of Critical Race Theory establish an influential relationship with race and racial hierarchy in our society.

CRT operates on the “fundamental premise that racism is ordinary, not aberrational, and a common everyday experience of most people of color in this country”, as well as the prevalence of discrete forms of everyday racism that are never addressed by the larger society (Dorsey et al., 2014, p. 60). CRT directly challenges many oppressive social and political structures and reaffirm laws such as affirmative action that are designed to establish racial equity (Jimenez Morfin, Perez, Parker, Lynn, Arona et al., 2006). CRT is critical of how white supremacy, privilege, and entitlement have been upheld throughout history, the law, and other sectors of society (Savas, 2014). Overall, CRT is one of the most widely used lenses to view issues in our society as they relate to our construction of race, racial difference and racial hierarchy. Combined with the necessary foundation of intersectionality, CRT establishes a basis to critically engage with and rebut arguments against affirmative action. Additionally, it aids in the reconceptualization of the overall history of race-conscious admissions practices.

Reframing Affirmative Action with Theory

Within the debate of affirmative action in higher education admissions, there are opposing sides that argue the impact these policies have on student communities. Primary proponent focuses on the necessity to remedy past forms of discrimination, the need for greater access to higher education for previously underrepresented populations, the enhancement of diversity in the student body and its improvement on greater educational experience (Alhaddab, 2015; Hurtado, 2005). On the other side, opponents often argue that these policies are unconstitutional because they are not race neutral, a form of reverse discrimination that disadvantages and limits the
access of white applicants. Opponents see these policies allowing for potentially underprepared or underqualified students to be admitted to universities and assert that other race neutral systems could produce the same levels of diversity on campus (Alhaddab, 2015; Hodgman, 2013; Kaufmann, 2007; Plaguy et al. 2011).

While data showing decreased enrollment and percentages of racial diversity after the elimination of race-conscious practices provides rebuttal against opponents’ arguments (Alhaddab, 2015), tenets of feminist and critical race theory also offer insight on why affirmative actions are beneficial and needed. In addressing issues of constitutionality and reverse discrimination led by affirmative action practice, one can use CRT to explain why the latter cannot exist because of the immense amount of structural power and access that is upheld for white people even when proactive practices like affirmative action are in place (Savas, 2014). The impossibility to discriminate against those in power is not always the most palatable logic, especially to white people. It is crucial to a CRT based argument because white people do more to maintain systems of racism and white supremacy through their cries of reverse discrimination (Dorsey et al., 2014). These claims of reverse racism are most easily demonstrated in the actions of the plaintiffs in the previously mentioned Supreme Court cases. By challenging the race-conscious admissions decisions and asserting them as a form of white discrimination, the plaintiffs refuse to acknowledge the limited access students of color have to higher education and continue to promote their exclusion.

The next assumption that feminist theory and CRT challenge is the idea that affirmative action policies admit unprepared college students, which is perpetuated by stereotypes about students of color and their inability to succeed academically compared to white students (Steinbugler, Press, and Dias, 2006). The inability to see academic competence in students of color is a byproduct of a larger system of power where people of color are not meant to achieve success. Through a framework like CRT, the underlying racism in our assumptions about success in higher education becomes clearer and allows for greater change to occur in order to achieve racial justice and promote the implementation of more affirmative action policies that grant greater access for marginalized students.

The last assumption opponents make against affirmative action is the idea that race-neutral policies produce the same desired effects as those that are race-conscious. Understanding affirmative action policies through the lens of CRT requires us to recognize the daily and perpetual existence of race, racism, and racial hierarchies in society (Jimenez Morfin et al, 2006). By choosing the route of race-neutral policies, admissions offices in effect ignore how race has influenced students’ access to higher education, and further perpetuate a cycle of discrimination.

This feminist and CRT centric rebuttal toward the opposing arguments against affirmative action has highlighted how claims of reverse discrimination, the inability to see success in students of color, and race-blind practices further perpetrate the systems of oppression and power that exist today in society. In order to work towards racial justice, there must be some level of commitment to race-conscious practices that are designed to directly combat historically limited access to higher education.

Along with these rebuttals, feminist and critical race theory possess a unique perspective in regard to viewing the overall history and implementation of affirmative action policies. Under CRT, the mass expansion of federal laws that allowed for the development of race-conscious admissions policies was not just due to the work of the Civil Rights Movement. This
time of social movement also falls under what Derrick Bell terms as a period of “interest convergence,” a time when a “temporary alignment of the self-interests of elite white and the interests of black” exists to allow for the passage of laws and legislation that help to remedy the present tensions between racial justice and white supremacy (Dorsey & Chambers, 2014, p. 61). This viewpoint opens up the understanding of how bills like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are able to get passed at a time of such social unrest. They also point to the lengths in which systems of power are maintained in events that are progressive towards justice.

Along with these foundational concepts of legislation, feminist and critical race theory also focus on the legal cases that impact the policies designed to remedy racial inequality. From the CRT scholar Cheryl Harris, we comprehend that the identity of “Whiteness is associated with status and power, thereby connected to property rights of ownership” as historically prescribed by the law (Jimenez Morfin et al. 2006, p. 253). Harris’s theory points out that access to higher education became a type of property that has been claimed and reclaimed by white people over a long period of time (Dorsey et al, 2014; Jimenez Morfin et al. 2006). One way this right has been reclaimed is through the legal challenges previously mentioned. In these cases, white students filed suit against a university when they were “disadvantaged” by race-conscious policies and their rejection was perceived as a loss to their property rights to higher education (Dorsey et al. 2014). Critical race theory helps to understand the perpetual nature of this cycle by showing how systems of power have historically and legally maintained and reasserted their interests in access of higher education. The insights offered by feminists and critical race theory provide a glimpse into the complexities that exist when discussing a history that has always been entangled with issues of racism, white supremacy, and power. Without these theoretical frameworks, this complexity may not be realized and our ability to engage with the history would be limited.

**Conclusion**

This paper traced through the social, political, and legal history that has led to what we know of today as race-conscious affirmative action policies in higher education admissions. These policies were the result of a complex set of legislation, social movements, legal cases, and systems of power, that continue to influence affirmative actions in higher education spaces today. In order to truly comprehend this complex history and set of actions, a framework feminism and critical race theory are needed to explain the ways in which the challenges of affirmative action continue to uphold exclusion within higher education, particularly for students of color. These theories engage across identities and recognize their interconnectedness. Although, this paper focuses primarily on race-conscious admissions, there is still more work to be done in order to address other marginalized students who have been excluded from higher education. These theories’ primary emphasis on racial identity, oppression, and power produces an enriched intellectual perspective on practices within higher education and the need to address historical inequities within the field. These theoretical frameworks set up a potential future in the fight to maintain race-conscious admissions practices in higher education, as they highlight the importance of proactive measures to correct racial injustices that limit students of color from accessing higher education. Moving forward, feminist and critical race theory should be the primary viewpoints when making determinations about policies and legal decisions. Our society must recognize the ever-present forms of racial injustice and
question reassertions of privilege and power over those who have historically been discriminated against. Lastly, higher education must always be ready to address its deep history with systems of power and oppressions. The frameworks provided by feminist and critical race theory allow our system to have an expansive level of engagement. However, the time is now to start thinking deeper about how this method of thought can be implemented and made the standard for producing equity in higher education and other areas of society that have historically limited access to certain social identities.

References


DeFunis v. Odegaard, 416 US 312 (Supreme Court 1974).


Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, 136 S. Ct. 2198 (Supreme Court 2015).


Gratz v. Bollinger, 539 US 244 (Supreme Court 2003).


Equality vs. Freedom: Anti-Discrimination Policies and Conservative Christian Student Organizations

Kevin Singer
North Carolina State University

Abstract
Over the last two decades, many colleges and universities strived to make their campuses more inclusive to the LGBTQ+ community. Many institutions incorporated sexual orientation into their anti-discrimination statements and policies, placing sexual identity in the same category as racial or gender identity as a protected class. Additionally, some institutions adopted all comers’ policies under which all students are eligible for membership in registered student organizations and all members in good standing within those organizations are eligible to compete for leadership positions. As these policies became more robust, some colleges and universities scuffled with student organizations who, on the basis of their ideology, excluded some students from becoming members or serving in leadership roles. The most prevalent instances included public universities and evangelical Christian student organizations. In these cases, the institution moved to derecognize the evangelical group on the basis of their anti-discrimination or all comers’ policy. Some of the barred groups pursued litigation, arguing that their First Amendment rights to free speech, religion, or association were violated. This paper will examine the policies prompting the derecognition of evangelical Christian student organizations, and the arguments used by these groups to defend themselves. In addition to investigating what these policies have in common, arguments for and against these policies will be presented. Finally, implications for policy, practice, and future research will be presented.

Introduction
Over the last two decades, many colleges and universities in America strived to make their campuses more welcoming and inclusive to minority student populations (Grubbs, 2006). This includes groups with significantly more exposure and advocacy over the last several decades, such as the LGBTQ+ community (Hong, Woodford, Long, & Renn, 2015; Pitcher, Camacho, Renn, & Woodford, 2016; Taylor, Dockendorff, & Inselman, 2017). As colleges and universities worked to accommodate the needs of sexual minority students, they also began to incorporate these identities into their anti-discrimination statements and policies (Affolter, 2013; Paulson, 2014; Pitcher et. al, 2016; Woodford, Kulick, Garvey, Sinco, & Hong, 2018; Stotzer, 2010). In doing so, they effectively placed sexual orientation in the same category as racial or gender identity as a protected class under Title VII and Title IX (Ringenberg, 2016). An “all comers policy” is an increasingly common anti-discrimination measure in higher education under which all students are eligible for membership in registered student organizations, and all members in good standing within those organizations are eligible to compete for leadership positions (Banks, 2012; Nondiscrimination FAQ, n.d.).

As anti-discrimination policies became more robust, some colleges and universities scuffled with student organizations who exclude certain groups from becoming members or serving in leadership roles. Mostly, this pertains to the exclusion of sexual minorities (Crouch, 2003, McMurtrie, 2000; Ringenberg, 2016; Whitford, 2018). The most prevalent instances of this included public colleges and universities and
evangelical Christian student organizations such as Christian Legal Society (CLS), Business Leaders in Christ (BLIC), InterVarsity, and CRU, formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ. With anti-discrimination policies in-hand, some institutions attempted to and succeeded in stripping these groups of their status as recognized student organizations, along with their privileges to reserve campus space, request funding, and advertise on campus (Choate-Nielsen, 2012; Paulson, 2014; Sanders, 2004; Stetzer, 2014). In a number of these instances, the group that lost recognition and privileges pursued litigation against their institution with varying degrees of success, arguing that their First Amendment rights to free speech, religion, or association were violated in some way (Miller, 2018; Shellnut, 2018; Shibley, 2012).

A recent highly publicized iteration of these events occurred at the University of Iowa. In March 2016, a student who expressed interest in becoming vice president of the student group Business Leaders in Christ (BLIC) was told by the sitting president that he was ineligible to become a leader because of his decision to pursue romantic same-sex relationships. The student filed a complaint requesting that the university either obligate the group to abide by their anti-discrimination policy or revoke their status as a recognized student organization. When the university determined that BLFC violated their human rights policy and moved to withdrawal recognition, the group sued the university. They also cited that hundreds of other groups were also in violation of the policy by failing to include the full and correct human rights clause in their constitutions. Hence, they argued that the university seemed to be specifically targeting BLIC rather than seeking to apply their policy in a viewpoint neutral manner as required by law.

Following the incident, the university moved to derecognize 31 additional groups that required student leaders to conform to their beliefs including InterVarsity Graduate Christian Fellowship, who pursued additional litigation against the university (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, n.d.). This move to derecognize additional groups, the university hoped, would demonstrate that they did not intend to single out BLFC, but intended to apply their human rights policy in a viewpoint neutral manner. Nonetheless, a federal district court agreed with BLFC’s complaint and subsequently ordered that all 32 groups’ status as student organizations be maintained while litigation was pending (Miller, 2018; Whitford, 2018). On February 6, 2019, a federal court ruled in favor of BLIC, paving the way for their permanent recognition as an official student organization on-campus (Cimmino, 2019). The case between InterVarsity and the University of Iowa will likely be decided in late 2019.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the anti-discrimination policies that prompted colleges and universities to seek the derecognition of conservative Christian student organizations, and the arguments that these organizations used to defend themselves against these maneuvers. In addition to investigating what these anti-discrimination policies have in common, arguments for and against these policies will be presented. Finally, implications for policy, practice, and future research will be presented.

Literature Review

Christian campus ministries have been a staple in American higher education since just after World War II, beginning with the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) movements and followed soon after by mainline Christian groups like Methodists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians (Alleman & Finnegan, 2009; Cawthon & Jones, 2004; Schmalzbauer, 2013; Schmalzbauer, 2018). For some time, these
groups enjoyed a privileged status on their respective campuses; for example, college and university chaplains were oftentimes selected from these groups (Schmalzbauer, 2013; Xia, 2017).

Eventually, the YMCA and YWCA movements began to fade in their prominence, and mainline Christian groups began to lose their institutional influence (Schmalzbauer, 2007; Stone, 2017). Historically, mainline Christian groups maintained their influence on campus through the presence of chaplains who provided oversight for campus religious life, including the campus chapel (Schmalzbauer, 2013). However, the rise of religious diversity in higher education disrupted this common arrangement. Chaplains representing other religious and nonreligious faith traditions were hired, and institutions began to make interfaith engagement a priority in their chapel programming. At times, institutions altered their chapel’s physical space to be more hospitable to minority religious practices (Karlin-Neumann & Sanders, 2013; Lohr Sapp, 2013). At the same time, the slow tide of secularization destabilized the centrality of any faith tradition on many campuses, forcing mainline Protestant chaplains to operate from “outposts” on the fringes of campus (Kazanjian & Laurence, 2007, p. 3). Schmalzbauer (2013) described how the decentralization of Protestant Christianity altered the scene at many elite universities: “The Gothic Revival chapel at the center of campus sits empty except for Sunday morning services that attract a handful of worshippers. Once overflowing with young Methodists and Presbyterians, Wesley and Westminster Foundations face tighter budgets and lower student participation” (p. 115). The once sure grip that Protestantism maintained in American higher education was loosened significantly by the 1960s, followed by a steady decline in numbers and influence after 1970 (Portaro & Peluso, 1993).

Beginning in the 1960s with Bill Bright and his ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ (now CRU), evangelical Christian groups began to grow and expand at a rapid pace (Grubbs, 2006; Mahoney, Schmalzbauer, & Youni, 2001). In 2013, it was estimated that at least 250,000 students participated in evangelical student groups (Schmalzbauer, 2013). In 2018, CRU had 5,300 campus chapters worldwide (CRU, 2018) and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship had more than 1,000 chapters at over 650 college campuses across the United States (InterVarsity, 2018).

Traditionally, Evangelical student groups share a few core values. These include (1) biblicism, or a strong emphasis on obedience to the Bible, (2) crucicentrism, a centrality on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as necessary to redeem humanity, and (3) conversionism, the belief that God’s gift of redemption through Jesus Christ can transform lives if people choose to accept it (Moran Craft, Lang, & Oliver, 2007). In addition, these groups traditionally share a conservative moral stance on homosexual practice, which they hold to be averse to God’s intended purposes for sexuality (Todd, McConnell, Odahl-Ruan, & Houston-Kolnick, 2017; Shea, 2014; Shellnut, 2016). To maintain ideological and theological clarity on these matters, they require staff and student leaders to adopt these values and beliefs.

When it comes to their campus experiences, Evangelical student groups occupy a paradoxical space. Though some would say they maintain a significant amount of privilege in relation to other groups and identities, Evangelical students frequently report feeling marginalized on their campuses for their beliefs (Hyers & Hyers, 2008; Larsen, 2010; Mayhew, Bowman, & Rockenbach, 2014; Mayhew et. al, 2017). This was found to be the case at two public universities in the Midwest, where Moran Craft, Lang, and Oliver (2007) interviewed 25 Evangelical students about their campus
experiences. Their findings led them to adopt two terms to describe the experiences of their interviewees: cultural incongruity and social status ambiguity. Cultural incongruity describes the feeling among some Evangelical students that their intra-group norms do not fit within their campus culture. Whereas, social status ambiguity describes the tension that they navigate as a normative yet increasingly unpopular religious group on campus. These negative outlooks are only further strained when institutions attempt to take away their student organization privileges.

Since the multicultural movement started cutting across American higher education in the late 1990s, many colleges and universities evolved to meet the challenge of creating campus environments that enable students of all identities to persist and graduate (Villalpando, 2002). Additionally, a plethora of research emerged on the importance of diverse campus environments toward helping students develop good academic, social, and civic habits (Gottfredson et. al, 2008; Levine & Stark, 2015; Rockenbach et. al, 2017; Tsuo, 2015). As a result, incremental shifts occurred in admissions decisions, hiring trends, and institutional policies to ensure the realization of a diverse and inclusive campus climate. Student affairs professionals in particular have been catalytic in championing efforts to celebrate of all types of diversity in their campus environments (Parnell, 2016; Sandeen, 2004). Though higher education is frequently critiqued for its capacity to exacerbate inequities in American society (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017), many institutions are at least trying to deconstruct institutional norms that are perceived as threats to equality and inclusivity.

Institutions are also reevaluating policies on student organizations and their conduct. Some are facing renewed challenges to their policies that require students of all identities to pay student fees, while these funds go to support student organizations where students of certain identities are not permitted to become leaders (Block, 2014; Wiggin, 1994). Furthermore, institutions must consider how to reconcile the presence of these student organizations with their enhanced messaging of welcome and inclusion (Grubbs, 2006). Therefore, some institutions moved to adopt policies that require student organizations to open up their membership and leadership positions to all students, regardless of their ideology or lifestyle. If student organizations refuse to accommodate the new policy, their status as a recognized student organization is revoked, and on some occasions, they are asked to refrain from organizing or meeting on campus or in campus facilities (Pritchard, 2013; Russell, 2018; Victor & Boomerang, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, these decisions are met by intense scrutiny from the derecognized student organizations. Non-profit entities such as the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), which helps conservative-minded groups retain their rights and privileges in higher education, also challenged these decisions (Ringenberg, 2016). The full gamut of arguments used in support of these organizations will be discussed in greater specificity later in this article, however, the most common critique is that universities that derecognize student organizations on the basis of their ideological exclusivity intrude on students’ First Amendment right to freedom of association. Although not explicitly written into the constitution, freedom of association is “well established as an implicit constitutional right” (Knight, 2008, p. 256). Freedom of association encompasses a group’s freedom to expressive association, or the right to associate with others in pursuit of the political, social, economic, religious, and cultural ends of their choosing.
Policy Context

In higher education, the policy context concerning these matters is the Supreme Court case of Christian Legal Society v. Martinez (2010). In a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court upheld the University of California Hastings Law School’s decision to require the Christian Legal Society to give students of homosexual orientations access to leadership roles on the basis of their anti-discrimination policy (Ringenberg, 2016). Soon after this ruling in 2011, the Court refused to hear an appeal on a similar case at San Diego State University (SDSU), which adopted a similar policy to the University of California Hastings Law School (hereafter UC-Hastings). In the related case of Alpha Delta Chi vs. Reed (2011), the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that the faith-based sorority Alpha Delta Chi and fraternity Alpha Gamma Omega could not require members to share the groups’ Christian faith and retain their status as student organizations under SDSU’s non-discrimination policy. This proved to be a significant moment, because the entire California state system (23 colleges and universities) moved to derecognize their InterVarsity chapters in 2014 (Ringenberg, 2016).

At the center of the CLS vs. Martinez case was the question of whether or not the Christian Legal Society was actually discriminating against students on the basis of their sexual orientation, or merely on the basis of their belief/ideology (Knight, 2008). This distinction would become very important in future cases and rulings. CLS argued in both cases that they would allow (and did actually allow) students with a homosexual orientation to become leaders, as long as these students recognized that to act on this orientation would be immoral (Affolter, 2013). What they did not allow was students to become leaders who engaged in homosexual activity.

In CLS vs. Walker (2006), a similar case that preceded CLS vs. Martinez, the Seventh Circuit United States Court of Appeals ruled in favor of CLS because they found that they were not discriminating against students on the basis of their sexual orientation. In its decision, the Court argued that CLS “interprets its statement of faith to allow persons ‘who may have homosexual inclinations' to become members of CLS as long as they do not engage in or affirm homosexual conduct” (as cited in Goldberg, 2011, p. 164). To be consistent, CLS would also need to exclude heterosexual students who disagreed that homosexual activity should be forbidden.

In CLS vs. Martinez, the United States Supreme Court made the opposite decision, though citing different rationale. The Court decided that “the university’s compelling interest in protecting students from discrimination substantially outweighed the hardship that fell upon CLS when it was derecognized as a student organization” (Knight, 2008, p. 252-253). Furthermore, the Court determined that UC-Hastings’ policy was not unduly burdensome on CLS’ rights because “Hastings still permitted the group to meet on campus and express its views” (Knight, 2008, p. 253). The Christian Legal Society would go on to file similar suits at Pennsylvania State University, Washburn University, Arizona State University, and The Ohio State University. At Florida State University, University of Iowa, University of North Dakota, and University of Oklahoma, CLS was granted exceptions from their anti-discrimination policies and litigation was avoided (“Leaving Religious Students Speechless,” 2005).

One particularly important aspect of the Martinez ruling was the Court’s note that the intention of CLS to select leadership on the basis of ideology would normally be constitutionally protected in society at large. However, they found the opposite to be true when a student organization utilized university facilities — the rationale being that UC-Hastings’ facilities, like
the university itself, were partially subsidized by the State of California and student fees. Goldberg (2011) noted that for the first time, “The Court imported the concept of ‘subsidies’ into a case involving student organizations, affording Hastings unprecedented latitude in its treatment of student organizations” (p. 132). UC-Hastings successfully argued that no student should be compelled to assist in funding a student organization that would reject them as a member/leader.

Since CLS vs. Martinez, similar policies to that of UC-Hastings were adopted at public and private institutions. The most prevalent policy at a private institution is the all-comers policy adopted by Vanderbilt University in 2012, which was inspired by the Martinez ruling. The all-comers policy ensured that Vanderbilt’s 14 religious organizations could not exclude any students from becoming leaders and also remain a recognized student organization (Pritchard, 2013; Ringenberg, 2016). Though the Tennessee state legislature attempted to pass legislation that would require Vanderbilt to scale back their policy, it was vetoed by the governor (Sher, 2012).

Most instances of student group derecognition since the Martinez ruling pertained to InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. In 2013, out of their approximately 600 chapters at colleges and universities across America, InterVarsity reported encountering challenges with anti-discrimination policies at 40 of these campuses (Ringenberg, 2016). Some of their noteworthy legal victories occurred at University of Michigan, The Ohio State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of Maryland, Harvard University, and Rutgers University. InterVarsity has experienced greater difficulties at private institutions, such as Vanderbilt, as those were less restricted by the First Amendment (Grubbs, 2006; Tilley, 1996).

Conceptual Frameworks
The conceptual frameworks most commonly applied to cases such as Christian Legal Society v. Martinez focus on freedom of association, the parameters of limited public forums, the appropriate application of viewpoint neutrality, and the distinction between speech and conduct with regards to sexual orientation. Varying perspectives on these issues prove to be consequential as institutions consider their course of action on anti-discrimination policies. In this section, each framework will be described insofar as it is relevant to the larger issue of anti-discrimination policies and the status of student organizations with exclusive ideology.

Freedom of association: Freedom of association pertains to one’s right to voluntarily join or leave groups, work collectively toward shared interests, and most importantly in these cases, the right to open and close a group’s membership to people on the basis of certain criteria. When it comes to student organizations on university campuses (and especially public campuses), the question becomes how far that freedom of association extends before there is compelling governmental interest to restrain it (“Leaving Religious Students Speechless,” 2005).

Limited public forums: Student organizations express their freedom of association on public campuses in what are called limited public forums. In these forums, the administration of public universities, as governmental actors, has the right to regulate behavior within the forum, as long as there is a rational basis for its regulations and the regulations are viewpoint neutral (Goldberg, 2011). Allowing governmental actors to regulate limited public forums is important to ensure that an unbridled freedom of expressive association does not give groups leeway under the law to unduly discriminate. However, there remain questions about whether governmental actors at public institutions are leveraging their regulatory powers in the limited public forums
they oversee to suppress or silence views that they do not agree with. In addition to the two criteria for legitimate regulation mentioned above (rational basis and viewpoint neutrality), their regulations should not single out particular viewpoints for unequal treatment (Affolter, 2013).

**Viewpoint Neutrality:** In the Martinez case, the Supreme Court held that a “viewpoint neutral” regulation is one that applies equally to all: “It is hard to imagine a more viewpoint-neutral policy than one requiring all student groups to accept all comers,” the Court believed (as cited in Pritchard, 2013, p. 291). A counterpoint is that although an all comers policy could appear neutral, it could actually serve to silence certain groups more than others. The majority in *CLS v. Martinez* did not ascribe this counterpoint much consideration, nor did they ascertain that some groups may actually have good reason for their exclusionary practices, according to critics. Critics also argued that when it comes to sexual orientation, there is really only one kind of club — a religious club of a conservative moral persuasion — that would experience the full effect of this supposedly viewpoint neutral anti-discrimination policy. Furthermore, as student fees are utilized to fund the forum, it is possible that the university could abuse those funds as a vehicle to suppress speech that they do not like (“Leaving Religious Students Speechless,” 2005).

**Speech vs. conduct:** Of central importance is whether universities that derecognize exclusionary student organizations are also levying a substantial burden on their right to free speech. Some would suggest that these anti-discrimination policies are not being enforced as a result of a group’s speech but rather as a result of their conduct, which is perceived as discriminatory. In other words, they are free to hold and speak whatever ideology they wish as long as they do not conduct themselves in a discriminatory manner when selecting members and leaders (ACLU, n.d.).

**Arguments and Evidence**

**Arguments Against Policies that Compel Groups to Accept All Students**

A 2005 Harvard Law Review Note entitled “Leaving Religious Students Speechless: Public University anti-discrimination Policies and Religious Student Organizations” detailed some of the prominent arguments against derecognizing student organizations under anti-discrimination policies. First, when anti-discrimination policies are wielded to derecognize student groups, they have real potential to squash free speech where it occurs the most frequently on a typical campus. In contrast to classrooms, where a faculty member exercises “practical control” over any discussion, student organizations facilitate environments where students can be more open about their beliefs and ideas (p. 2885). Therefore, policing these environments would be tantamount to frustrating the freedom of speech where it manifests most transparently on campus.

Second, the Note cited the practical difficulty that student groups would have maintaining their expressive message if they were required to accept students who objected to it. If they are unable to administer their own membership, the Note argues, they will likely struggle to maintain the particularity or consistency of their message. Furthermore, objectors could cause division, strife, and make it very difficult for the group to speak collectively. Even if one does not have these intentions, they could alter the organization’s message on account of their visible presence simply by being a non-adherent. The Note argues that when governmental actors attempt to remedy historical inequalities by obligating some organizations to accept objectors to their message, “what it is really doing is using the state’s coercive power intentionally to privilege one expressive-association message over another” (“Leaving Religious Students Speechless,” 2005, p. 2892). Furthermore, the
state privileges two viewpoints over that of the organization: the viewpoint of inclusion advocated by the state, and the viewpoint of those who object to the organization’s message, yet desire to be leaders in the organization, nonetheless.

Finally, the Note recalled that universities, like student organizations, are expressive entities that are afforded the freedom of association. However, to allow the associational rights of the university to supersede that of a student organization would be to amalgamate students’ viewpoints with that of the university, when in reality the viewpoints of students and their organizations “are not attributable to the university itself as an expressive entity” ("Leaving Religious Students Speechless," 2005, p. 2896). Furthermore, the viewpoint of a public university cannot trump that of a student organization, as this would undercut the principle that public colleges and universities are to be free and open marketplaces of ideas, not echo-chambers exempt from dissenting opinions.

Goldberg (2011) offered an additional argument that is purely pragmatic: ensuring compliance with these policies would be very difficult to monitor. A university that chooses to administer an all comers policy would be taking on the exceedingly burdensome responsibility of policing all of their student groups, whether they are political, religious, advocacy-based, or campus newspapers, in order to make sure they are not in some way preventing objectors from joining or becoming leaders. This becomes even more complex when organizations find loopholes to make it seem like they are complying with the policy, when in reality they are not. Goldberg employed the example of a libertarian publication that allows all students to join, but never gives non-libertarian students any editing responsibilities. In this case, while non-libertarian students are technically members, they are essentially excluded because they are denied the full benefits of membership.

Arguments in Favor of Policies that Compel Groups to Accept All Students

Knight (2008) offered support for anti-discrimination policies. She argued that when student groups with exclusive leadership requirements are stripped of their student organization status, this does not necessarily infringe on their First Amendment freedoms. The thrust of Knight’s argument was that universities are not forcing these groups to admit objectors or to represent them in some way. Furthermore, they are not refusing them the right to speak freely about their beliefs. Rather, they are “simply denying them the ‘perks’ associated with being a recognized student group” (Knight, 2008, p. 264). Consequently, their constitutional rights are not being violated. On the contrary, this action is necessary so that universities can protect students from invidious discrimination.

Knight offered two reasons why the derecognition of discriminatory student organizations is not unconstitutional. First, it is not the group’s speech that compels the university to wield its anti-discrimination policy, but the group’s discriminatory conduct. Second, the anti-discrimination policies imposed by entities like UC-Hastings are viewpoint neutral. While some argue that anti-discrimination policies are a slippery slope toward denying freedom of association and freedom of speech, Knight insisted that it is possible for universities to both enforce their anti-discrimination policies and protect the First Amendment rights of the student groups that are being derecognized under those policies.

In Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s’ majority opinion in CLS v. Martinez, she emphasized that while CLS was stripped of its status as a recognized student organization, the group was still able to exercise certain privileges on
campus. This included the use of some bulletin boards and chalkboards to promote events, as well as maintaining the same access to off-campus resources like social media platforms to host group communication (Bhagwat, 2011). The burden levied on CLS, therefore, did not outweigh the state’s compelling interest to enforce the all-comers policy at UC-Hastings on behalf of a protected class (sexual orientation).

In a concurring opinion, Justice Kennedy emphasized the important pedagogical function of UC-Hastings’ policy. He cited the Law School’s legitimate interest in exposing students to viewpoints and beliefs they do not share; the policy ensured that student organizations like CLS did not become echo-chambers (Bhagwat, 2011). Woodford and Kulick (2014) argued in favor of this point, noting that when spaces exist on campus where heterosexual and sexual minority students can dialogue about topics like heterosexism, campus climate, and allyship, this can contribute to increased awareness about the experiential and psychological climate on campus. In turn, this dialogue can “encourage heterosexual students to stop intentionally or unintentionally perpetuating discriminatory actions, to intervene in response to instances of discrimination, and to engage in behaviors that foster an inclusive climate where students might feel safe to disclose their minority sexuality” (p. 22).

Perhaps the most pressing concern for proponents of anti-discrimination policies is that groups that seek to exclude sexual minorities are doing so because they are homophobic. Even worse, they are able to maintain their negative attitudes and false stereotypes under the guise of the freedom of association. Commenting on a perennial case on the freedom of association, Boy Scouts of America v. Dale (2000), Chemerinsky and Fisk argued that the freedom of association could quickly become unwieldy: “Any group that wants to discriminate may do so based on claims of freedom of association,” they wrote (2001; p. 596). In Boy Scouts of America v. Dale, the Supreme Court concluded that the Boy Scouts’ freedom of association prevented the government from forcing the Boy Scouts to accept James Dale, a homosexual and gay rights activist, as an adult leader. Chemerinsky and Fisk passionately disagreed with the decision:

Boy Scouts of America v. Dale is a ruling in favor of discrimination and intolerance that is wrapped in the rhetoric of freedom of association. Those who want to discriminate can always invoke freedom of association; all enforcement of anti-discrimination laws forces some degree of unwanted association. It was not surprising that the five most conservative Justices on the Court favored the Boy Scouts and its condemnation of homosexuality. This, though, does not make it any more right than other decisions throughout history that have upheld bigotry and discrimination. Someday, Boy Scouts of America v. Dale will be repudiated by the Court like other rulings that denied equality to victims of discrimination (2001; p. 597).

Experiences of discrimination and perceptions of homophobia can have a negative effect on LGBTQ+ student perceptions of campus climate, persistence in college, and likelihood to report sexual orientation-motivated violence (Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010; Blumenfeld, Weber, & Rankin, 2016). On the contrary, research suggests that when sexual orientation is added to anti-discrimination policies, it is accompanied by a rise in campus activism on behalf of sexual minorities, an increase in campus members who came out, an increase in LGBTQ+ centers, and an increase in reports of sexual orientation motivated hate crimes on campus (D’Augelli, 1989, Stotzer, 2010). Zemsky and Sanlo (2005) argued that the greatest contribution of policies supporting the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people is their symbolic value: they
serve to rekindle an institution’s commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and equity.

Given the quantifiable impact that anti-discrimination policies have on campus climate for sexual minorities, proponents feel that the benefit of enforcing these policies for LGBTQ+ people outweighs the burden that some groups must endure as a result of being derecognized under anti-discrimination policies. Woodford and Kulick (2014) emphasized, however, that institutional strategies to welcome and celebrate sexual minorities should not stop at an anti-discrimination policy: “These strategies need to go beyond enacting and enforcing anti-discrimination policies to develop programs that actively affirm sexual minority identities and encourage conversations across difference” (p. 22). For example, institutions could make a better effort to highlight LGBTQ+ campus members’ perspectives and contributions to campus, as well as providing opportunities for LGBTQ+ people to lead in positions with real decision-making power.

**Proposed Solutions to the Policy Debate**

Though instances of universities derecognizing student organizations make for provocative headlines, the reality is that viable ideas for solutions have been offered to satisfy the desires and goals of both parties. Affolter (2013) suggested allowing student organizations to request exceptions from anti-discrimination policies. Some might say that fielding exemption requests is too large a burden for universities to bear. However, Affolter argued that we “expect state institutions in the wider public sphere to temper their nondiscrimination policies in order to accommodate citizens’ First Amendment rights,” so it would not be outlandish to expect the same from public colleges and universities (p. 258). Furthermore, such a caveat would give student groups an opportunity to state their case for why the anti-discrimination policy would inhibit their ability to promote their particular ideology and maintain a unified group message. This process could work to expose groups who lack good reason for requesting an exception. It would also force groups seeking an exception to publicize their rationale for review by the university, while also pressing the university to provide legitimate reasons for not granting an exemption. Affolter argued that this process “would raise costs for both insincere student organizations and biased or insincere university officials,” and would be preferable to “giving a blank check to either side in these conflicts” (p. 259).

Knight (2008) argued that universities that derecognize exclusive student groups should also provide an “alternative forum with minimal university involvement and sufficient opportunity for First Amendment expression” (p. 271). Knight suggested that the Equal Access Act could serve as a model, a law that Congress passed in 1984 to ensure that all student groups and extracurricular activities have access to facilities at secondary schools that receive federal funding. By providing a “sub-level forum” where derecognized groups can exercise their First Amendment rights, universities would not be compelled to subsidize groups that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation (p. 274). On the other hand, exclusionary groups would not be compelled to include students who endorse homosexual practice, which could inhibit them from preserving or promoting their message (p. 274).

**Implications for Policy, Practice, and Future Research**

Reflecting on the current status of American higher education’s relationship with spirituality, Ringenberg (2016) made this striking observation:

The same environment that is producing a greater interest in spirituality in general and religious discourse in the secular universities in particular is also leading to a declining interest in
protecting religious freedom in general and religious privilege in particular—especially for the historically dominant Christian faith (p. 205).

This perspective is not uncommon for Christian conservatives, who worry that their worldview and perspectives will be preyed upon by public university officials in the name of “tolerance” and progressive ideals. Their fears are not totally unsupported; in some cases, universities conducted themselves in ways that appeared predatory, at least on the surface. This was the apex of Business Leaders in Christ’s complaint against the University of Iowa in 2017; that they were singled out by the university despite other student groups failing to abide fully by their anti-discrimination policy. However, exclusionary groups should be cautious about accusing universities of intentionally seeking to undermine their First Amendment rights. It is possible that their intentions are good, but they just fail to consider all of the ramifications of their actions. After all, “This concept of having an open melting pot of change and diversity has at times blurred the issues of whose values and rights a school should promote and protect” (Grubbs, 2006, p. 4).

Maintaining a commitment to equality and inclusion while seeking to preserve the freedoms of groups with exclusionary ideology is a difficult balance. Laurence Tribe has called it “the ancient paradox of liberalism” (as cited in Affolter, 2013). Therefore, one implication of this study is that one should not expect for this “ancient paradox” to be fully resolved in American higher education anytime soon, or perhaps to be resolved to everyone’s satisfaction at all. The philosopher John Rawls recognized that our society includes “a plurality of conflicting, and indeed incommensurable, conceptions of the meaning, value, and purpose of human life,” which he called “the fact of pluralism” (Rawls, 1987, p. 4). In his book Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference (2018), John Inazu wrote:

We should not underestimate the significance of [our] differences. We lack agreement about the purpose of our country, the nature of the common good, and the meaning of human flourishing. On these questions, Americans are—and perhaps always have been—a deeply divided people (p. 15).

Nevertheless, universities and their exclusive student groups should work to find common ground that serves to benefit them both.

There are several ways that universities can benefit from the sustained presence of student groups with exclusive ideology. First, these groups help to maintain the presence of viewpoint diversity on campus through the presence of differences that are real as opposed to superficial. In turn, the presence of viewpoint diversity ensures a true marketplace of ideas on campus, and gives universities the opportunity to show students how to address deep worldview differences in positive and productive ways.

Some might argue that real viewpoint diversity can do as much harm as it can good. Students could be exposed to discriminatory ideas and behaviors and choose to mimic them, which could potentially engender a polarized campus climate. Snider (2004), however, noted that for most public universities, left-leaning thought is pervasive while conservative-leaning groups with exclusive ideology are very small in comparison. As a result, proponents of these groups argue that their existence does little to engender discriminatory beliefs in the minds of students, and occasional exposure to these groups rarely results in a segregated campus community.

Still, opponents argue that universities have a responsibility to teach students that discriminatory behaviors and ideas, even if they
are necessary to preserve a group’s ideology, will only serve to exacerbate the societal inequalities that have plagued minority communities for generations. Therefore, anti-discrimination policies are needed to protect these historically marginalized groups from “the artificial division of people [that] fosters stereotypes about what goals, abilities, and interests’ certain types of people hold” (Snider, 2004, p. 876). Society suffers as a whole when certain populations are impeded from contributing their talents to groups that they are historically excluded from.

In some ways, this debate centers around what is best for the health of American democracy, which public universities are theoretically tasked to protect and celebrate. Though discriminatory groups themselves may not foster democratic ideals, their presence plays a role in furthering the spirit of democracy on their respective campuses. By their presence as a collective voice, other students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to be exposed to their ideology. In order for that ideology to be communicated with any integrity, however, it seems the group would need to be able to preserve a common message and determine who can or cannot speak on their behalf.

In their enactment of anti-discrimination measures, universities send a message that will have many intended and unintended consequences. They should exercise great caution in their decisions with respect to student groups with exclusive ideology. In an effort to constitute a welcome and inclusive campus environment, they could be undermining students’ constitutional provisions, which could invite costly lawsuits and disputes that threaten their public image. A university should make a decision with great consideration for what the policy will communicate about First Amendment rights, the aims and goals of democracy, the power of the government, the historical legacy of discrimination toward marginalized groups in American society, and the purpose of a public university.

Further research on this policy debate is needed to investigate the impact that anti-discrimination policies have on the colleges and universities that institute them. Scholarship on this intersection in higher education is slim to none. Vanderbilt recently revised the language of their all comer’s policy, after it was determined that not all students and student organizations fully understood it, especially as it related to sexual orientation (Nondiscrimination FAQ, n.d.). This raises the question of whether or not Vanderbilt’s policy (and others like it) realize their intended purposes, or if they simply create a headache for the universities attempting to monitor them and the student groups trying to honor them.

An additional limitation of this project is that a majority of the reflection and scholarship on these policies is confined to law briefs. Though law briefs serve as a critical guide to understanding the makeup and legal ramifications of these policies, they are not designed to measure the quantitative or qualitative effect of these policies on student experiences, outcomes, and perspectives. Additional research is needed to provide a clearer picture of how these policies are affecting students, educators, and their campuses.

Conclusion

Since the 1960s, Christian student organizations of a conservative persuasion have steadily increased in size and number in American higher education (Schmalzbauer, 2007, 2018). Today, these groups maintain a robust presence on many colleges and universities campuses, but their ideology has increasingly become unorthodox as Christian traditions and underpinnings faded from institutional legacies. They are running up against new anti-discrimination policies that
threaten their ability to self-constitute and self-govern, as they are being asked to open up their membership and leadership to students whose beliefs or behaviors do not align with their ideology. From the perspective of universities, these policies are enabling them to fight the good fight on behalf of historically marginalized groups in American society.

The debate is still going on today, and it incorporates questions that concern the heart of American democracy, constitutional rights, and our responsibility to right societal wrongs. As long as there are worldviews represented in higher education that involve ideological exclusion, one should not expect this debate to remain fully settled on any campus indefinitely. In all areas of social and political life, freedom and equality will always struggle to co-exist.

References


GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

The Journal of Student Affairs at New York University publishes articles that further develops the practice of student affairs and are of particular relevance to professionals throughout higher education. Examples of topics include: Student Development, Emerging Trends, Global Education, Innovative Models of student Affairs Practice, College Student Funding and Finance, and Campus Diversity.

Manuscripts should focus on original research; replication of research; reviews of research/literature; essays on theoretical, organizational, or professional issues; reviews of current literature relevant to the field; or practical reports of experiences from the field. All the original research articles that use human subjects must be approved by the NYU Institutional Review Board (nyu.edu/ucaihs) prior to submission.

Abstract Submission Guidelines

Abstracts must be submitted to the Content Editor and should be no longer than 250 words. Authors should provide the editorial team with an overview of the proposed article that demonstrates interest level in the proposed topic and the article’s relevance to higher education and student affairs. The following information must be included with the abstract: name, title, address, e-mail address, year of graduation from NYU’s Higher Education and Student Affairs program (if applicable). Authors of selected abstracts will be requested to submit a first draft in order to be considered for publication.

Style Guidelines

Manuscripts must be clear, concise, relevant to the field, and demonstrate a well-organized development of ideas. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition should be followed for reference style and general guidelines.

• Double-space all material, including references, quotations, tables, and figures. Leave extra space above and below subheadings and include generous margins.
• Because manuscripts are processed through an anonymous review system, they should contain no indication of the author’s identity or institutional affiliation (with the exception of a separate title page as outline in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition). Where appropriate, institutional identification will be inserted after acceptance of a manuscript.
• Original research (literary, qualitative, or quantitative) is encouraged. All such work should be applicable to the higher education and student affairs professions.
• Field reports should not exceed three pages (approximately 600 words in length). They should briefly report on or describe new practices, programs, or techniques.
• Dialogues and interviews should follow the manuscripts guidelines outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition. They should take the form of verbatim exchange, oral or written, between two or more people.
• Book reviews should not exceed five pages in length. Proposed title to be reviewed should be approved by the Executive Board. Authors are fully responsible for obtaining such texts. Additionally, it is the author’s responsibility to secure permission to quote or adapt text content. The publisher’s original written permission must be provided to the Executive Board before any manuscript can be published.
• Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all references, quotations, tables, and figures. Authors should make every effort to ensure that such items are complete and correct.

Submission Instructions

• Form and text content of manuscripts should comply with the above style guidelines and the general guidelines of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition. Manuscripts that do not conform to these guidelines cannot be considered.

• Manuscripts that have been previously published or are being considered for publication elsewhere should not be submitted. Authors will be asked to affirm non-duplication of submission before their manuscripts will be reviewed.

• Each submission should be submitted electronically in MS Word document format.

• It is imperative for all authors to adhere to all dates outlined in the Timeline. Failure to do so could result in omission from the Journal.

• The Executive Board will be responsible for all publication and editorial decisions. Submissions and other inquiries should be directed to the Executive Board of the Journal of Student Affairs at New York University. Please visit us online at http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/josa for updates regarding contact information for the current Executive Board and submission dates for future editions of the Journal.