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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Today
Tomorrow
Ethical
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Considerations
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Mission Statement

The mission of the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs* is to develop and produce a scholarly publication which reflects current national and international education issues and the professional interests of student affairs practitioners.

Contents

Acknowledgments

State of the Program

Dra. Carmen Rivera & Dr. David A. McKelfresh

This year marks the 56th anniversary of the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) Master's Program and it has been an active year with many accomplishments. We are very pleased to provide an update on the "State of the Program." The SAHE program has made significant strides this year with the addition of a new curriculum and a new Program Chair. Applications for the residential and online programs have increased and revenues are up.

Congratulations are due to the SAHE *Journal* editorial board members, and content and style readers responsible for continuing to produce a quality journal for the student affairs profession. We are also pleased to note the addition of doctoral students in the Higher Education Leadership program serving on the SAHE *Journal* editorial board.

Deep appreciation to Génesis Góngora Balam for her service as the faculty advisor to the SAHE *Journal* Board. Yarethzia Ponce Gallegos and Sarahy Quintana Trejo have provided strong leadership for the journal board. *Journal* board members continue to participate in annual professional development field experiences – this year Nallely Dominguez Holguin, Nick Fahnders, and Haley McAveney attended the annual conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in person.

SAHE Task Force: Following the "pause" of the residential SAHE program by the interim director of the School of Education, a SAHE Task Force was assembled and charged with determining the budget/business/strategic model for a vibrant SAHE program at CSU. After conducting a review of the current state of the field, analyzing application/enrollment trends, and financial trends, and engaging in dialogue with stakeholders, the task force developed a set of recommendations for the future of the Student Affairs in Higher Education Master's Program. Recommendations were in three major categories: 1) Revise the SAHE curriculum and program offerings, 2) Create a strategic approach to budgeting in the School of Education, and 3) Combine the Student Affairs in Higher Education and the Higher Education Leadership programs under one structure.

- The recommendation to revise the curriculum has officially taken place with the new 33 credit program officially starting fall 2023. The curriculum is aligned with the ACPA/NASPA competencies and complies with the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) for graduate preparation programs.
- The recommendation to combine the SAHE and HEL programs under one structure has been implemented with the announcement of Dr.

Alex Lange's appointment to the role of coordinator of both programs.

Alex Lange: We are thrilled that Dr. Alex C. Lange has assumed a new role as a Tenure-Track Assistant Professor and the Coordinator of the Higher Education Programs, starting this semester. Dr. Lange will be leading the Higher Education Leadership (HEL) PhD specialization, as well as the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) online and residential programs.

Specifically, Dr. Lange will take on the academic program coordination of the SAHE program in addition to their responsibilities with the HEL program. Alex will continue the strong partnership with the Division of Student Affairs, as they continue leading the co-curricular aspects of the program like coordinating assistantship processes and supporting graduate student organizations. Alex believes a robust SAHE program is one that works in strong partnership with the student affairs professionals and practitioners on campus.

The residential SAHE program experienced an increase in applications over the previous year. Our applicants were from a number of states, and four countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Ghana). The residential SAHE program continues to be one of the most diverse graduate programs at CSU, across all identities.

Our online SAHE Master's program continues to provide a strong academic experience for students all over the world. Additionally, this spring the online SAHE Certificate Program begins its 14th year serving approximately 15 students each year. We currently have 36 students enrolled in the online SAHE Master's program and continue to graduate approximately 10 online students each year.

We are pleased to report the eleventh Sherwood Scholarship was awarded to Michael Chapman (SAHE '24). The Sherwood Scholar Fund was established by Dr. Grant Sherwood who provided leadership for the SAHE program for 13 years. Applicants address the importance of integrity and character in the student affairs profession, and how they integrate their values into their work. Michael currently works as an Experiential Learning Graduate Assistant at CSU's Career Center.

This year the MAC Scholarship was endowed in honor of Dave McKelfresh. The first MAC Scholarship will be awarded to a SAHE student for the 2024-25 academic year. Dave has been a faculty member in the SAHE program for 40 years and was the Program Chair from 2008-2015.

The SAHE program maintains its long and strong relationship with the Division of Student Affairs, the School of Education, and the CSU Graduate School. The Student Affairs Division contributes hundreds of thousands of dollars through graduate assistantships available for SAHE students, and the Graduate School provides considerable support for the non-resident tuition premiums for students in their first year in the program. Assistantship supervisors continue to provide excellent experiences for students.

Additionally, Blanche Hughes, Vice President for Student Affairs and Mary Pedersen, Interim Director of the School of Education, have provided strong support for the SAHE Program this year.

The CSU SAHE program has evolved to meet the needs and challenges of our profession. The job placement rate for SAHE graduates continues to be very strong and our alumni consistently report that the program has prepared them very well for working in and contributing to the student affairs profession. We thank our faculty, staff, assistantship supervisors, and alumni who all combine to provide a high quality experience for students.

Articles

JOURNAL OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Reflections on Fostering Critical Hope in Student Affairs

Heather D. Shea, Ph.D.
Michigan State University

It is with immense gratitude that I offer this contribution to *The Journal of Student Affairs* as an alum of the Colorado State University (CSU) Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) Program. This essay, "Reflections on Fostering Critical Hope in Student Affairs" is both a collection of stories from my CSU SAHE journey and early career in student affairs as well my current reflections on our collective grappling with an unknown future in higher education. Drawing from my experiences and the current landscape of the field, I aim to weave a narrative of critical hope and resilience.

My writing context proves relevant for both scholarship in this *Journal* and my individual experience — regarding the latter, I have just concluded a year of service as an international student affairs association president. Serving ACPA-College Student Educators International this past year was (1) a career highlight and (2) provided me with a much more complex perspective on the field of student affairs and the growing challenges (and opportunities) facing our work. Collaborating with other volunteer leaders, attending state and regional conferences, and learning alongside members of the association with various backgrounds and perspectives has underscored the complexity of our work and the pressing issues we face. Additionally, my involve-

ment in a podcast dedicated to the advancement of student affairs has fostered ongoing dialogues on sustainability, inclusivity, and the evolving role of educators.

In addition to my recent leadership experience with ACPA and founding and hosting of the podcast Student Affairs Now, I bring a variety of relevant (and possibly familiar!) experiences and perspectives to this essay writing task. As a graduate of the CSU SAHE program (class of 2000) and a former "technical editor" of the *Journal*, my story also includes growing up in Parker, Colorado and my undergraduate college experience at CSU. My undergraduate journey, marked by a double major in graphic design and marketing at Colorado State University (class of 1998), led me to pursue graduate school at Colorado State University in the SAHE program. The relationships and connections I forged in Fort Collins laid the foundation for my multifaceted career in higher education.

This brings me to a bridge of this *Journal* content, where we explore pivotal topics that shape the educational experience of today's college students. From shedding light on the transformative role of ChatGPT in student affairs work to delving into the intricate dynamics of race, identity, and belonging

in higher education, each chapter offers lens-expanding insights. We navigate the complexities of supporting veterans transitioning to college. We also confront ethical dimensions of internships by advocating for equitable practices that prioritize both legal compliance and developmental growth. Laslty, we navigate the evolving landscape of college admissions with attention to resilience, particularly at the intersection/s of race and gender with the imperative to cultivate environments that support marginalized communities.

These concepts prompt us to look, reflect, and re-evaluate our approaches – and these lenses allow us to envision a more inclusive and empowering future for the higher education community.

PATHWAYS INTO THE PROFESSION

Like many, my entry into the field of student affairs followed a somewhat traditional path. Beginning as first the floor representative on hall government, then an "involvement coordinator" and later a resident assistant, I quickly discovered a passion for student engagement and community building—I was indeed that eager undergrad who wanted to do everything and thrived in involvement and leadership roles. I was also engaged in academics in the CSU Honors Program and pursued a double major in fine art (concentration in graphic design) and business (marketing). That same year, an opportunity arose for me (and several other undergrads) to transition from RA roles into an assistant hall director position. *Aside: I think there were fewer incoming SAHE students in assistantships than was typical?* I was immediately drawn to the prospect of making a meaningful impact on campus life and furthering my involvement in Residential Life. Serving first as an Assistant Hall Director in Allison Hall and then during my fifth and final year of undergrad as a Hall Director in Newsom Hall, I found fulfillment in empowering students and fostering an inclusive residential community.

MY SAHE EXPERIENCE

Upon entering graduate school, I found immediate community and connection with my classmates in my cohort. Today, as I reflect on those formative years, I am reminded of the profound impact of belonging. The bonds forged endure to this day, serving as a testament to the transformative power of community and connection that spans time, distance, and life circumstances. In SAHE, I not only found colleagues but lifelong friends, united by a shared passion for student advocacy and social justice. Together, we navigated the complexities of graduate education, collaborating on projects, attending training sessions, and supporting one another through triumphs and challenges. In essence, SAHE was more than just a program—it was a home where I first found my voice and purpose in student affairs. Seems like the ideal entry point into a career in student affairs, right? ...not exactly. My first semester in the SAHE program coincided with a troubling chapter in the history of Colorado State University, when CSU students became the focus of national attention. In October of 1998, the horrific hate crime involving the beating of gay University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard. As news of this hate crime reverberated across the nation, Fort Collins found itself thrust into the spotlight, with Matthew's nearly lifeless body discovered just outside Laramie, Wyoming and later brought to Fort Collins for medical treatment.

Amidst this somber backdrop, another disturbing event unfolded on CSU's campus. As Matthew fought for his life in the nearby hospital, students at CSU were engaged in homecoming festivities. The school spirit and celebratory atmosphere took a dark turn when a homecoming parade float, adorned with a scarecrow hanging from a fence post, evoked chilling echoes of the violence perpetrated against Matthew Shepard. It was not an innocent coincidence, as someone (members of the student organizations sponsoring the float?) had written "Kill me, I'm Gay" on the scarecrow's face. The float paraded all around campus that Saturday. Witnessing this display of hate and intolerance left me horrified, embarrassed

for my campus, and deeply unsettled as a new graduate student. In response to these troubling events, CSU administrators (many of whom were faculty in the SAHE program) took decisive steps to address the urgent need for change. A new student affairs office serving gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students (called GLBT Student Services at the time) had already been established the prior year, but with this institutional response to student protests speaking out against the hate-filled message displayed on the student float, it was given broader scope and resources, signaling a commitment to fostering a campus culture of inclusion and acceptance. This story from my time as a graduate student in SAHE further set the trajectory for my career in student affairs – and particularly my work in LGBTQIA+ advocacy and gender equity work. As a straight ally at the time still trying to figure out my own sexual identity, I felt compelled to play a role in this transformative process. I made the decision to undertake one of my SAHE practicum experiences in that office the subsequent spring, marking the beginning of my journey in advocating for the rights of LGBT students to feel safe, respected, and embraced on all campuses.

The key lesson: advocacy and allyship are not merely identities, but actions rooted in empathy, courage, and solidarity. This lesson reinforced the profound impact of showing up in spaces, even when it requires vulnerability, and the power of collective action in driving meaningful change. Lessons learned during this formative period served as foundations for my student affairs career while navigating a variety of role and institutions and embracing the values of advocacy, inclusion, and collective action for social change.

AFTER SAHE: FINDING MY PURPOSE

Since my SAHE graduation in 2000, my career trajectory has been anything but linear. I married another SAHE grad and together we navigated life through different roles and institutions from Indiana to Arizona to Idaho. While raising our two children, I took a series of lateral roles across a variety of func-

tional areas before landing in the student affairs and higher education space in which I have dedicated most of my career as it aligns my personal, political, and professional identities and roles. Prior to focusing on gender and sexual equity work in the broader area of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, each of these roles have contributed to my growth as a student affairs generalist. While my journey has been marked by uncertainty and occasional setbacks including some failure, divorce, and mental health challenges, it has also been defined by resilience and a commitment to a meaningful impact.

A pivotal moment in my career came with the opportunity to lead a women's and gender equity center in a challenging environment. Despite initial apprehensions, I embraced the role, drawing strength from mentorship and community support. This experience reinforced the transformative power of stepping outside one's comfort zone and confronting fears with courage. Working in women's and gender equity centers has provided me with a profound understanding of the intersectional nature of student affairs work, particularly within diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) spaces. These spaces, while essential, often contend with limited resources and operate within siloed institutional structures. Yet, the students our offices serve have identities which are multifaceted, extending beyond just their gender or sexuality. It is imperative to recognize and address the complexities of serving students across diverse identities and experiences in higher education. Embracing the concept of intersectionality, as coined by Crenshaw (1989), must be fundamental to our efforts to foster inclusivity and equity. One poignant example underscores this principle: while women's centers emerged from the predominantly white and cisgender second wave feminist movement, our interconnected work necessitates collaboration across differences. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of oppressions and interests, we unlock the potential to build coalitions that transcend singular identities. In my own practice, this often entails recognizing when I'm not the best

voice to speak and instead prioritizing the amplification and centering of marginalized voices.

Working in DEI also requires recognizing, with humility, that I am still learning growing and evolving both as a student affairs educator and as a person. Recently, I had the opportunity to support a student initiative to advocate for sexual health education, advocacy, and leadership in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision. Two students came to my current office with a vision to create a student conference focused on bringing together researchers, students, policy makers, and administrators to share resources and ideas. These students created and built a program that exceeded all expectations. For me, this caused me to reflect on the many ways that students are partners in shaping the student affairs landscape. Empowering students to take ownership of their educational experiences and contribute to campus culture, supporting their initiatives and agency is in essence the epitome of critical hope and social justice.

NAVIGATING HOPE AND FEAR

During my time in the CSU SAHE program, one of the first texts that I remember leaving a lasting impression on me was the book *When Hope and Fear Collide: A Portrait of Today's College Student* by Arthur Levine and Jeanette Cureton (1998). The book depicted college students in the 1990s as motivated by a conflicting sense of hope and fear. It emphasized the role of student affairs educators in nurturing students' hope while helping them confront and overcome their fears. The book was particularly relevant because, as a college student of the 1990s, it was the first time I saw myself reflected in the literature. It was also the first time I recognize the role that student affairs educators had played in my own learning and development through my time in college. As a product of the college environment in the 1990s, I still grapple with both hope and fear. Recognizing the fears inherent in our work is crucial, underscoring the importance of cultivating hope as a deliberate practice rather than a passive emotion.

This, for me, is the essence of resiliency. I am not suggesting we foster naïve hope or an optimistic belief in the future amidst so much profoundly conflicting evidence, but I do believe coming back to the idea of critical hope to the path forward in our new reality.

While Levine and Cureton's portrayal may have been somewhat simplistic, the juxtaposition of hope and fear remains a poignant theme in student affairs. I have thought deeply about this topic many times and it was the subject of my presidential address when I started my term in ACPA in late March 2023. I shared a perspective on fostering critical hope as a path forward during a time when we are up against profound injustice, attacks on the very work we do in DEI, and amidst campus crises. At the time that was working on my speech and preparing to become president, the campus of Michigan State University just faced an unspeakable trauma. As a front-line administrator and campus leader, I was called to campus to staff an emergency communication center for students and families impacted by the tragedy, and in supporting students and other staff members, I became overwhelmed with despair. This is when I turned to the concept of critical hope. Keith Edwards, my close friend, SAHE cohort mate, and podcast founder referred me to the work of Kari Grain and Jeffrey-Duncan Andrade. In her book *Critical Hope*, Kari Grain emphasizes that while hope can have a transformative effect, it is insufficient in moments of despair or when facing deep injustice. She argues that hope must be accompanied by action; otherwise, it is naive at best and can lead individuals to relinquish their power and agency to challenge and change oppressive systems (2022). Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade (2009) conveys that critical hope encompasses the ability to realistically assess one's environment through a lens of equity and justice while envisioning the possibility of a better future.

In the wake of recent tragedies at MSU and elsewhere, the outpouring of support from the larger higher education community and beyond underscores the resilience and solidarity of student affairs profession-

als. As we collectively confront burnout, fatigue, and questions about the sustainability of our careers, critical hope offers a guiding light. Now more than ever, we must mobilize collective action informed by trauma-informed approaches and grounded in racial justice and decolonization. By listening to student voices and embracing adaptability, we can chart a path forward that prioritizes the well-being of all members of our campus communities.

EMBRACING UNCERTAINTY WITH HOPE

Reflecting on the landscape of higher education, I am keenly aware of the pervasive tensions between hope and fear within our institutions. Critical hope offers a framework for navigating these complexities, urging us to confront inequities while striving towards a more just future. It is this delicate balance between acknowledging challenges and envisioning possibilities that sustains our collective efforts in student affairs, guiding us towards meaningful action and transformative change.

In nurturing critical hope, we must confront the harsh realities of our time while maintaining a steadfast belief in our capacity to effect change. Audre Lorde said, "When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid" (1984). This resonates deeply with my own experience in speaking truth to power in spaces and places in which my perspective isn't always welcome. And Lorde is reminding us that power lies in the alignment of our strengths with our aspirations. It is through this lens that we can cultivate hope as a deliberate practice, transcending mere optimism to become agents of transformation.

I continually need to check myself when my inner thoughts center on fear – fear of not being perfect, fear of saying the wrong thing or not saying anything, fear of not doing enough, or overstepping boundaries. These fears can immobilize me, leaving me gasping for breath. However, I've learned from a

lifetime of dealing with anxiety and depression that embracing uncertainty and acknowledging inevitable mistakes lead to greater productivity. It about recognizing fear without allowing it to define me.

To overcome fear and uncertainty, we must prioritize trust, accountability, and support, while maintaining a hopeful outlook for the future grounded in present realities. The current moment in higher education compels us, as a field to embrace our inadequacies, our imposter syndrome, and our weaknesses and DO IT ANYWAY. We find ourselves amidst politically polarized, financially precarious, and often violent national contexts, which can breed despair and cynicism. However, amidst the challenges, critical hope emerges.

As I look ahead, I remain inspired by the resilience of our higher education and student affairs community and the collective commitment to advancing equity and justice in higher education. Our journey may be fraught with challenges, but it is also brimming with opportunities for innovation and collaboration. Together, let us embrace the uncertainty of the future with unwavering hope and determination, knowing that our actions today shape the landscape of tomorrow. In conclusion, fostering critical hope in student affairs is not merely a lofty ideal but a pragmatic imperative. It is through this lens that we navigate the complexities of our field, forging a path towards a more inclusive and equitable future.

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Toxic Resilience: Tipping the Scales of Resilience Against Black Women in Higher Education

Jabreon Jackson
Florida State University

ABSTRACT

By framing the phenomenon of resilience around adverse, harmful experiences and drawing a direct relation to positive outcomes, society desensitizes Black Women to the scale of the adversities they face and ignores the magnitude of psychological stress they have had to endure as a means of survival. The praise and reinforcement associated with perceptions of resilience and situations where perseverance is sustained as a means of survival may further the illusion that Black Women adopt characteristics like emotional suppression, caregiving, and showcasing strength independently. This study asked Black Women student affairs professionals at a predominantly white institution about their perceptions of resilience. The data revealed three categories that formed participants' perceptions of resilience: observation of others' challenges, their personal experiences with adversity, and guiding others through adverse situations. Then, when faced with an adverse situation, the participants presented two philosophies: perseverance as survival and perseverance as a choice. Understanding the factors that influence the use of each ethos leads to a better grasp of how Black Women in student affairs experience resilience and should affect how universities mitigate psychological harm to Black Women.

Keywords: Black women, resilience, Black feminist thought, adversity, strong Black woman, superwoman, higher education

Black Women are considered one of the most resilient subsets of people in history and are simultaneously at a higher risk of stress-related health conditions (Woods-Giscombe, 2023). Repeatedly, Black Women's capacity for perseverance has been challenged, forcing our human need for mindfulness and rest to sequester. This is reflected heavily in TV and films like the historical drama *Woman King*, a movie about the strength and brutality of an all-female unit of African warriors (Prince-Bythewood, 2022). While positive depictions of Black Women are desperately needed, the

film sparked discussion surrounding resilience and the capacity individuals can or should bear before reaching their limit.

This article aims to explore the psychological phenomenon of resilience and Black Women. Resilience research is rooted in a person's ability to endure (Rutter, 2012). By continuing to frame resilience in this way, society is desensitizing Black Women to the scale of the adversities they face and ignoring the magnitude of psychological stress they have had to endure. This study is the building block of the researcher's argument that a desensitized mindset surrounding resilience comes from a place of intentional disregard for Black people's pain and trauma by non-Black people. Acknowledging the damage done by examining resilience using a critical race theory lens can help us form a more culturally relevant and socially just mindset surrounding the phenomenon.

Research questions were formed by acknowledging the deficit thinking used when addressing Black Women's relationship with overstress as an issue they have taken on, as opposed to societal desensitization that has been thrust upon them. The study sought to find the participants' perceptions of adversity and perseverance and how the participants manage and respond to adversity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research regarding the psychology of resilience exists; however, existing research states that the foundation of resilience solely rests within a person's ability. Rutter defined resilience as "an interactive concept that is concerned with the combination of serious risk experiences and a relatively positive psychological outcome despite those experiences" (Rutter, 2006, p. 336). This definition does not acknowledge the negative aspects that accompany exposure to stressful situations. Rutter's (2012) article similarly compares human experiences with adversity to exposure to infectious agents through immunization. When administered in controlled doses, improved coping mechanisms form, while inappropriate variations of administration result in further sensitization of the individuals (Rutter, 2012). Resilience, in this framework, is seen as something that can build your stress tolerance and is defined as having the capacity to endure pressure or uncertainty without negative (e.g., hopelessness, bitterness, or hostility) toward self or others. Where, then, do student affairs professionals draw the line? When pushed into a state of overstress and told to be resilient, Black Women are forced into a system that encourages them to reframe being mindful of overstress into a narrative that the stress will somehow make them stronger.

Cheryl Woods-Giscombé's (2010) *Superwoman Schema* acknowledges the health disparities that Black Women face and their correlation with stress to display the importance of this framework. The Superwoman Schema is framed around Black Women and is characterized by the obligation to manifest strength, suppress emotions, help others, resist vulnerability, and be determined to succeed (Woods-Giscombé, 2010). My research topic extends this schema to the areas of "concepts of strength, perseverance, and self-reliance" in Black Women (Woods-Giscombé, 2010, p. 679). This is an area that has not been directly addressed and intentionally studied other than generalized sections attached to larger studies mainly comprised of other psychological and health-related incidents.

Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2007) drew from the feminist framework and Black feminist critique, interviewed African American Women, and found several themes linking strength and depression. While this study addresses a portion of the phenomenon, it fails to question the active, historical, intentional, and external encouragements perpetuating the cognitive dissonance between adversity and mindfulness and repositioning it as a positive occurrence.

METHODOLOGY

This exploratory qualitative study sought to examine a culturally specific phenomenon with the analytical objective of describing the individual experiences of Black Women and resiliency. The data were collected using interviews to gather the perspectives and experiences of participants. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour each and took place in private conference rooms on campus.

Snowball sampling and university resources like department newsletters and listservs were utilized to identify participants. Recruitment successfully identified two self-identified cisgender Black Women who work in student affairs at a predominately white institution.

While developing the interview protocol, I was conscious of the traumas associated with Blackness and resiliency. I created holistic interview questions to target narratives that may not naturally surface in conversation. Interviews were held in person and consisted of 14 standardized questions. Each session was audio recorded. Interview data were coded and analyzed by grouping together common themes from the interview process and after reviewing the interview transcripts. Examples of code categories include instances of self-efficacy, self-definitions of key phrases such as perseverance and strength, and mentions of going "above and beyond" work expectations. Participants' names and distinguishable information have been replaced with pseudonyms or excluded to protect participants' identities.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE SUMMARY

QUESTION	MAYA	MICHELLE
Tell me about your journey into Higher Education.	• Employment as an undergraduate student at a University • Immersive experiences with different cultures as an undergraduate student • Ultimately pursued a career in higher ed as an income source	• Expected of her • Wanted more of the college experience • Needed to be set apart from others as a Black woman ultimately wanting to go into a white, male-dominated field
How would you define resiliency? *a. What does it mean to be resilient?*	• Being encountered with tough situations, struggles, or adversity, and choosing to press forward	• Having the courage to keep going once you've been "knocked down" • Having the faith that you will "bounce back" and learning how to keep going • Learning from your failures • "Sometimes we have to throw in the towel to fight another battle"
What makes a person resilient?	• Seeing a bigger picture or "light at the end of the tunnel" • Commitment to their actions • Strength	• Time • Experiences throughout your life journey
What are some ways that resiliency has appeared in your life?	• Observing others advocate for themselves • Compliance with regulations imposed by administration • Navigating spaces where their identities may not be reflected or respected	• Making time for therapy sessions • The stressors of graduate school • Asking for help when they needed it instead of giving up

Question	Maya	Michelle
When was the first time you felt resilient?	• Suffering a career-changing injury as an athlete	• Never • Reflecting on previous experiences during this research interview
When was the first time you observed resiliency in others?	• Childhood • In college students	• Their friends
Tell me about a positive experience you've had with resiliency.	• Independently seeking needed professional development opportunities	*[Skipped question/elective non-response]*
Tell me about a negative experience you've had with resiliency.	• Financial struggles • Controversies at work	• Suffering an injury as a starter position high school athlete and "giving up"/not putting more effort into other activities
When was the last time you felt resilient?	• Familial conflict	• Seeking therapy services
What role do you think resiliency plays in the lives of black women?	• Existence as a minoritized population • Things that disproportionately affect Black Women (health care, police violence...) • Processing and being present for family members • Finding joy and purpose • Seeking therapy services	• The confusion of strength and resilience • Believing we always have to assume extra responsibility and x ask for help • Generational changes to change the way we view strength and resilience • "...Black women are some of the most resilient individuals on the planet...at this point, it is in our DNA."
Do you see any conflict in the ways that we define resiliency?	• Labeling all students who come from "at risk" and historically marginalized backgrounds as resilient • Constant praise for being "so strong and persistent"	• Black women thinking that they do not have to ask for help and can get everything done by themselves • Subconsciously dehumanizing Black woman

FINDINGS

Both participants, Maya and Michelle, have been engaged with higher education as staff members and students. Maya has four years of experience, whereas Michelle has a few months. An examination of the data collected revealed that when examining Black Women's experiences with adversity and perseverance, three categories of perception emerged: observation of others' challenges, their personal experiences with adversity, and guiding others through adverse situations. Each participant illustrated these themes in accordance with how their experiences influenced their perceptions of resilience (see Figure 1).

Category One: Observation

Maya and Michelle mentioned examination of others' challenges with difficult situations. These stories preceded the articulation of the participants' relations to the mentioned individuals and retellings of circumstances that quantified the difficulty. References were made regarding familial (childhood), platonic, and work-related observations.

Category Two: Personal Experience

Memories of coping with strife pertaining to a previous piece of their core identity allowed the participants to articulate a period of life where they were

forced to shift their expectations of self and plans for their lives and develop self-efficacy. Maya spoke about a career-changing injury as an athlete shortly before entering college as an undergraduate. Similarly, Michelle reflected upon a high school athletic injury that completely reorganized which extracurricular activities they prioritized.

Category Three: Guiding Others

Guidance of other people through adverse situations varied in intensity. Michelle's interactions centered around encouraging friends throughout their experiences with strenuous life situations. Maya articulated a variety of incidents where they advised others in their adversities. Most incidents pertained to circumstances of student support in Maya's role as a student affairs professional.

Survival vs. Choice

Adverse situations met with perseverance are not always presented in a way that provides an alternative to the person enduring it. While resilience is frequently articulated as an active choice to endure adversity, there were multiple mentions of adverse situations that the participants endured where the problem did not afford them the luxury of choice:

> *"...had I felt like I had a choice of what it meant to be able to take a leave of absence from school and from work and still be able to survive, I would have done that. But I did not feel like I had a choice. And so often people were like, 'Oh my gosh, you're so resilient for pressing through such a really tough time.' And I didn't feel like I was being resilient. I felt like I was trying to survive."*
>
> *- Maya*

Figure 1

The narratives participants presented about their experiences with resiliency can be sorted into three categories:
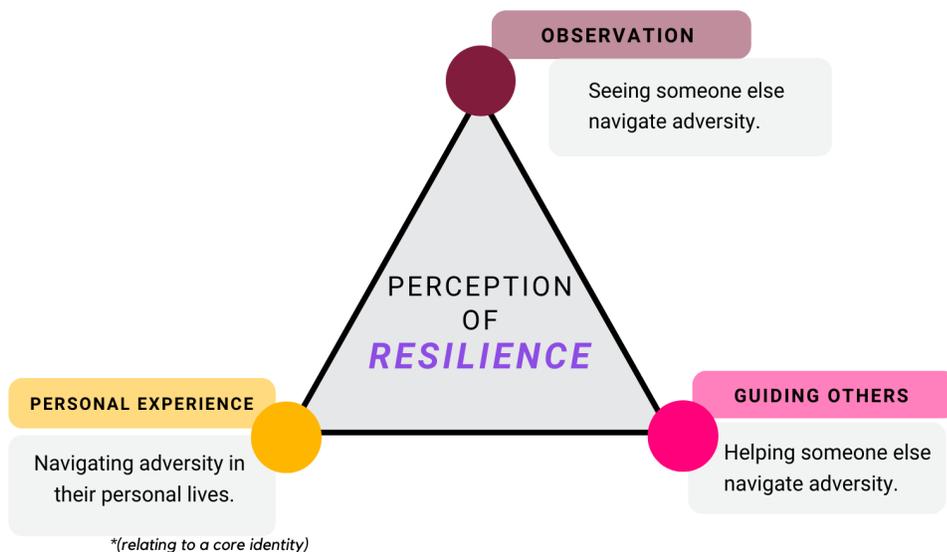
DISCUSSION

The participant's perceptions of resilience were formed through three unique themes: observation, personal experience, and guiding others. When faced with an adverse situation and deciding to endure it, the participants presented two philosophies: perseverance as survival and perseverance as a choice (see Figure 2).

Having to persevere as a means of survival leads to symptoms like nervousness, restlessness, and insomnia. Physical symptoms such as chest pain, palpitations, and other symptoms can cause individual distress (Wiegner, 2015). Interpreting these situations as the standard for resilience could mean that even situations that do not require a survival level of perseverance may be met as though they did. Nar-

ratives presented for perseverance as a means of surviving an adverse situation can be summarized by the following: not seeing quitting as an option, seeing no way out, thinking "there is no plan B," resistance to vulnerability, mentions of language like "have to" and "need to," and symptoms of stress-related exhaustion.

Perseverance as a choice, while acknowledging the strength it may take to navigate difficulty, values mindfulness as an essential part of the philosophy:

> *"I think we get it confused, with strength you know, cause we always gotta be strong we always gotta keep pushing and, we always gotta carry so much. And I think our generations are learning that that's not always the best way to think it is not always the best way to go…. let's say two people are in the same circumstance and [the first person] after one little hiccup give ups versus the other [who decides] 'No, I'm gonna keep going, and I'm gonna keep trying'. And some may consider that strength but I think there's also strength in walking away."*
> *- Michelle*

When contributing to an environment that encourages Black Women to step away from situations that harm them without penalty or repercussion, student affairs professionals are showing their support to mindfulness and, in turn, wellness, in their Black Women peers.

The Weight of Experience

Most of Michelle's experiences from the three categories that constructed her perception of resilience (see Figure 1) were narratives of perseverance as a means of survival. While she does acknowledge that there are situations where "walking away" from a problem would be representative of her perception of resilience when speaking about her past, present, and future interactions with adversity, perseverance as a means of survival was communicated.

Maya's perception of resilience changed over time. The early experiences remarked on observance and endurance of situations where perseverance was used as a means of survival. Difference positioned itself in her acknowledgment of the option of choice to persevere that was or was not available to her without situational or societal repercussions.

Figure 2

When encountering adverse situations, perseverance is utilized as a means of survival or a choice:
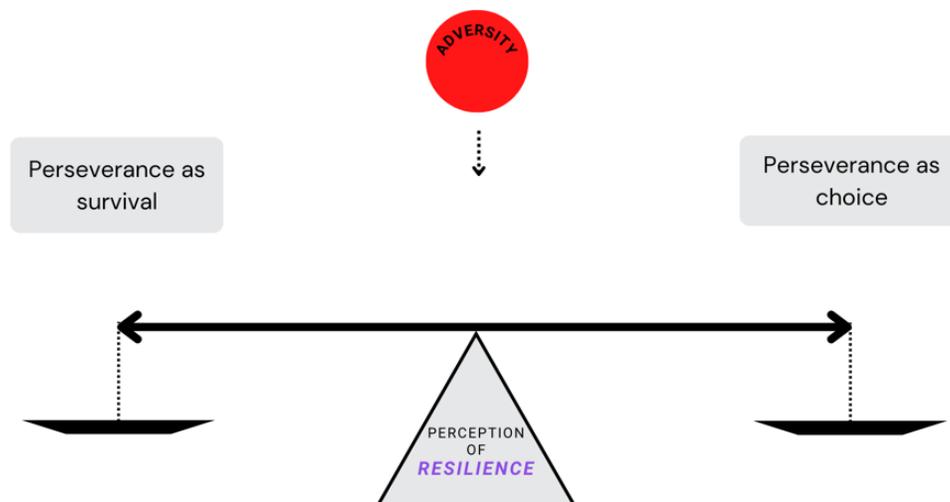
Experiences that the participants encountered shaped how they viewed and maneuvered adversity moving forward. The more experiences the participants had with perseverance as a means of survival, the more likely they are to view adversity through that lens moving forward, regardless of whether the situation necessitates it, and adopt the characteristics of that category (see Figure 3). If the majority of participants' encounters with adversity were met with perseverance as a choice, the likelihood that they view adversity that way and adopt the elements of that category increases (see Figure 4).

IMPLICATIONS

Student affairs professionals must address this deficit thinking so we can begin dismantling the systems in place. Socialization of the word resilience has been positioned as another dehumanization technique against Black Women, and this has significant implications in fields like education, research, and healthcare. No longer can resilience be used as a free pass for non-acknowledgment and continuation of centuries' worth of trauma, and the unwillingness to confront the problematic nature of the way overstress in Black Women is normalized and encouraged.

FIGURE 3

Multiple experiences with perseverance as survival tip the scale of the participant's perception of resilience:
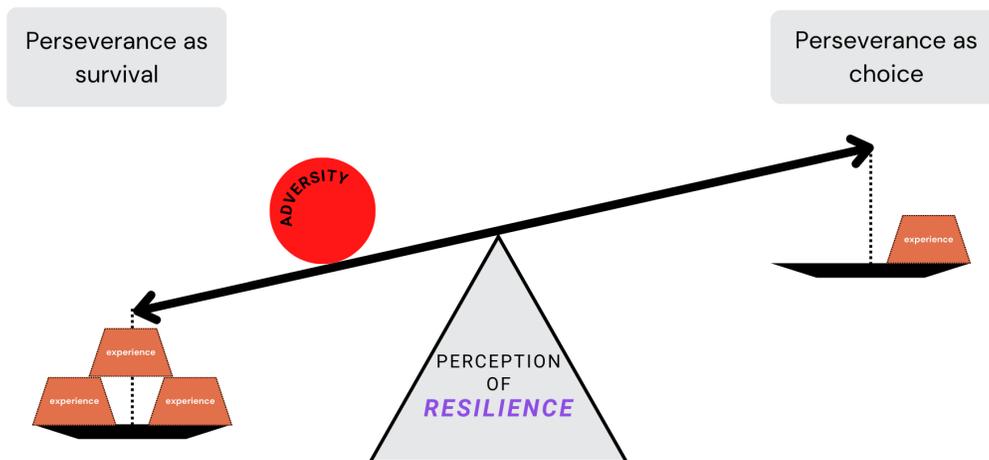
FIGURE 4

*Multiple experiences with perseverance as choice outweigh the participant's experiences
with perseverance as survival:*
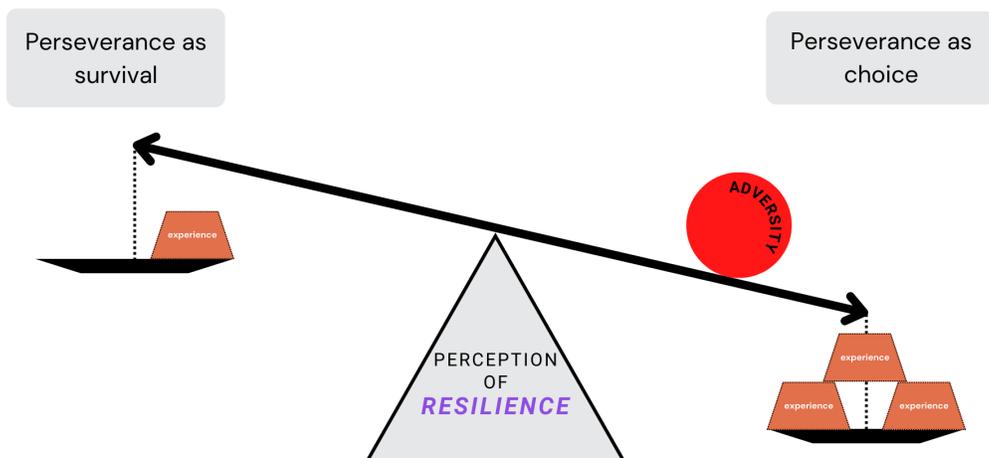
This information comes at a time of great distress to Black Women in higher education. Take for example the tragic death by suicide of Antoinette Canadia-Bailey, an accomplished, Black Woman faculty member whose death was precipitated by not only a lack of support in her role but alleged harassment and bullying by school administration that led to a steep decline in her mental health (Adams, 2024). Her attempt to attain a medical reprieve for severe depression and anxiety was rejected, and she was later fired (Adams, 2024). JoAnne Epps, a former Temple bookstore employee who later became the first Black Woman to serve as Temple University president, lost her life in her function at the university just a few months after her presidential appointment (Medina, 2023). Following her collapse and removal from the ceremony, the program continued. JoAnne Epps is renowned for stepping into her role with the expectation from leadership that she would "calm the waters" during a time of turbulence on Temple's campus (Medina, 2023).

For these Black Women, their dedication to their research and service to higher education institutions ended with the devastating loss of their lives. The detrimental impact of the socialization of resilience threatens to reframe devastations such as these deaths as celebrations of their overwhelming tenacity throughout their journey into the roles where they concluded rather than an effort to dismantle the atrocities of racism, sexism, discrimination, stereotypes, and microaggressions that they were forced to endure.

CONCLUSION

My study aims to pinpoint and analyze key subsections of rhetoric and locate the beliefs that Black Women have surrounding resiliency so the history and construction of resilience can be reframed and reconfigured through a critical race theory lens. Historically, Black Women have faced enormous amounts of adversity that they have had to endure to survive. While we have thrived despite the seemingly

perpetuated tribulations placed upon us by generational and intersecting systems of oppression, the word resilience has been employed as a badge of honor awarded by the perpetrators and perpetrators of the acculturation of the term. Rather than address interlocking systems of oppression that continue to create adverse situations that force Black Women to experience perseverance as a means of survival, society has attempted to recondition Black Women to view adversity differently, affixing a deficit to Black Women.

Attempts to prioritize mindfulness and self-care in Black Women are greeted with resistance and negative consequences. Take, for example, athletes like Venus and Serena Williams, who have been hailed as exemplifications of resilience. Venus Williams, who struggled with health issues for a large portion of her career, frequently faced jeers and harassment when withdrawing from tournaments or taking leaves of absence to prioritize her health. Serena Williams remarked in an interview that she is still traumatized more than a decade after being booed by 16,000 match attendees due to accusations that her sister, Venus Williams, had withdrawn from the tournament only to give her sister a chance at the final. For Williams and many other Black Women, setting a boundary to protect her physical health came at a heavy repercussion. As student affairs professionals, it is vital that we reflect upon our own definitions and experiences of resilience and the ways in which the concept and socialization of resilience had, and continues to have, severe, detrimental effects on Black Women in higher education.

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Disrupting Monoracism, Racism, and White Supremacy: A Systematic Literature Review on Multiraciality in Higher Education

Rebecca Cepeda and Lisa Delacruz Combs
The Ohio University

ABSTRACT

With the growing population of Multiracial individuals in the United States, it is critical to gain deeper knowledge of multiraciality in higher education. However, within the field of higher education, there has not been explicit attention on mixed race people in higher education journals. The purpose of this systematic literature review is to understand how higher education scholars studying multiraciality explicitly bridge this subject matter toward simultaneously disrupting monoracism, racism, and white supremacy. In this systematic literature review, we analyzed 14 journal articles focused on multiraciality from the seven prominent higher education journals. Our findings suggest limited engagement with racism, monoracism, colorism, and disrupting white supremacy. We propose future areas of practice and research for higher education scholars who want to advance multiracial scholarship or include Multiracial communities within scholarship centering race.

Keywords: multiraciality, monoracism, racism, white supremacy, systematic literature review

BACKGROUND

According to the U.S. Census, approximately eleven million individuals identify as Multiracial[1], encompassing approximately three percent of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). 2020 U.S. Census data show that the Multiracial population has increased by 275% (Jones et al., 2021). With the growing population of Multiracial individuals in the United States, it is critical to gain deeper knowledge of multiraciality in higher education. Foundational scholarship on multiraciality transpired in the 1990s when scholars established identity development models (Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990) and ecological models (Renn, 2000; Root, 1999; Wijeyesinghe, 2001). While identity development focuses on how a person changes over time, ecological models emphasize different environments and contexts that shape one's development. Since, scholarship on multiraciality has expanded to examine the experiences of Multiracial populations within higher education settings related to racial microaggressions, normalized actions or behaviors related to racial discrimination (Harris, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Museus et al., 2016) and monoracism, a form of

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1   We capitalize the term Multiracial as a grammatical act of resistance towards racial justice (Combs & Cepeda, 2023; Pérez Huber, 2010).

oppression based on not fitting into one racial category (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Scholars have also demonstrated that Multiracial students may experience a denial of their multiracial identity (Harris, 2016b), the need to defend their membership of a racial group (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012) from monoracial members of their racial groups, or those outside of their racial groups (Museus et al., 2016). Overall, mixed race studies researchers employ multiple terms and concepts relevant to the Multiracial experience in higher education. Combs (2022) traced the trajectories of these terms, constructs, and theories related to mixed race scholarship and praxis and how the paradigmatic underpinnings of these concepts shape the relationship among the terms. In the evolution of multiracial scholarship, scholars shifted their focus from individual interactions and microaggression to more systemic frames and explicit attention to monoracism.

Inspired by Harper's (2012) and Harris and Patton's (2019) systematic analysis of higher education scholarship related to racism and intersectionality, respectively, we found it appropriate to delve deeper into multiracial literature in higher education. In this paper, we operationalize the term "multiracial" to describe, "anyone who claims heritage and membership in two of more (mono)racial groups and/or identifies with Multiracial identity terms, such as the broader *biracial, multiethnic*, and *mixed*, or more specific terms, like *Blasian* and *Mexipino*" (Wijeyesinghe & Johnston-Guerrero, 2020, p. 11). It is important to note that there are critiques on multiraciality in educational discourse to reify race or to serve as an antidote to racism (Osei-Kofi, 2012). However, the inclusivity of Multiracial populations is crucial to understand the varied and convoluted experiences within higher education environments in order to better understand monoracism's (the unique system of power that privileges monoracial identities) role in upholding white supremacy. Moreover, it is even more critical for Multiracial scholars, researchers studying race, and practitioners to unify, expose,

and disrupt white supremacy that perpetually produces systems of oppression that displace and marginalize People of Color. Our understanding of white supremacy is shaped by Okun 's (2021) definition that describes multiple characteristics that uphold a culture that is linked to other systems of oppression that target Communities of Color and are harmful to all of humanity. As Multiracial Women of Color in higher education who study the experiences of Multiracial people, we seek to analyze mixed race literature precisely because of our experience and deep engagement with the extant literature. In addition, there is a need for a systematic literature review on multiraciality in higher education to inform the future of Critical Mixed Race Studies as a discipline (Daniel et al., 2014) and its relationship to higher education research. Critical Mixed Race Studies is a discipline and community that seeks to center mixed race storytelling and act as a counterspace for critically examining race through a multiracial lens (Critical Mixed Race Studies, n.d.). However, within the field of higher education, "five of the most widely read peer-reviewed academic journals in the fields of higher education and student affairs…fewer than 1% of articles published over the past decade included an explicit focus on mixed-race people" (Museus et al., 2016, p. 680). Similar to Harper's (2012) discretion in his systematic review on race and racism, this systematic literature review is not an approach to solely critique the work of our colleagues and scholars we deeply respect, but rather a way to seek ways to improve future scholarship. Therefore, the purpose of this systematic literature review is to understand how higher education scholars studying multiraciality explicitly bridge this subject matter toward simultaneously disrupting monoracism, racism, and white supremacy. We engage in this systematic literature review to propose future areas of practice and research for higher education scholars who want to advance multiracial scholarship or include Multiracial communities within broader conversations about race.

HISTORY OF MULTIRACIALITY WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Before delving into scholarship on multiraciality in higher education, we historically contextualize our literature review to situate our arguments within the historical and social contexts that influence Multiracial people. Understanding how larger sociopolitical structures influence the lives of Multiracial people can offer context into how these structures operate within higher education institutions (Harris, 2016a). The history of multiraciality within the United States is tied to racism and white supremacy. For example, white settlers not only stole land from Native communities, but they also murdered and imposed themselves on the bodies of Native women (Smith, 2003). In addition, white slave owners exploited enslaved peoples' bodies and labor. Neglect towards Women of Color and their bodily autonomy and consent are several reasons for the forced results of mixed race children.

Furthermore, during the Jim Crow era, the "one drop rule" was established, and it was determined that if individuals had "one drop" of Black ancestry, they were considered Black (Jordan, 2014). This rule was a form of oppression to uphold racism, white supremacy, and anti-Blackness against Black communities and is directly connected to the perpetuation of slavery in colonial America. Individuals who were Black and Multiracial were deemed inferior to white people. While white slave owners exploited enslaved people's bodies to further own economic interests, interracial marriage was illegal throughout the U.S. It was not until 1967 when a Supreme Court Case, *Loving v. Virginia*, decided that Virginia's miscegenation law was unconstitutional and ended laws that prohibited interracial marriage (Cornell Law Legal Information Institute, n.d.). Another turning point in Multiracial history was in 2000 when the Census changed its question on race for the first time and allowed individuals to self-identify with more than one race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). These are critical and historical examples that demonstrate some of the United States' discriminatory actions towards

People of Color, including Multiracial people, to construct the perceptions of racial superiority and uphold white supremacy. In addition, these examples illustrate how multiraciality is uniquely positioned to inform policies and procedures related to the rigidity of race, in turn upholding monoracism. This context of multiraciality within United States history is influential in understanding how race functions within the United States. And even more specifically, within higher education institutions. Racism, monoracism, and white supremacy are inextricably linked to construct the perception of Multiracial communities in higher education.

Within higher education research, scholars engaged in multiracial topics focused on identity development, microaggressions, and environments (Harris, 2017b; Museus et al., 2016; Renn, 2008; Wijeyesinghe, 2012). Wijeyesinghe (2001) introduced the factor model of multiracial identity and argued that multiple factors such as racial ancestry, physical appearance, social and historical context, other social identities, political awareness and orientation, early experience and socialization, and cultural attachment inform a Multiracial person's choice of racial identity. Building upon this identity development model, Renn (2000) presented patterns of multiracial identity to expand beyond rigid stages of multiracial identity development and acknowledge different contexts that shape one's identity. In a paradigmatic shift, Wiejeyesinghe (2012) expanded upon her previous work by utilizing a critical perspective and applied intersectionality as a frame in her model of multiracial identity and portrayed this model with a galaxy image to illuminate how interlocking systems of oppression move in orbit and affect choices related to Multiracial identity. Scholars have continued to name the discrimination and microaggressions that Multiracial students experience in higher education environments, including essentializing, questioning, invalidation, and exotification (Harris, 2016b; Museus et al., 2015). As the scholarship on multiraciality in higher education has evolved, researchers paid more explicit attention to monoracism and

systems of power by focusing on access to privilege and oppression (Johnston-Guerrero & Tran, 2018) and lack of awareness about monoracism in postsecondary spaces (Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020). Osei-Kofi (2012) critiques multiracial scholarship as a way to connect "a vision of racial harmony wherein 'race' represents positive difference...multiraciality in education reinforces racial categorization, and generally ignores structural realities" (p. 247). Therefore, we find it essential to examine the scholarship on multiraciality in higher education by employing a critical lens that acknowledges interlocking systems of oppression *while* honoring the multitude of Multiracial experiences that exist. Most importantly, we do not focus our multiracial scholarship to solve racism and racial inequities. Instead, we connect multiraciality, monoracism, and racism to larger conversations related to white supremacy.

AUTHOR POSITIONALITIES

According to Jones et al. (2014), "positionality describes the relationship between the researcher and his or her participants and the researcher and his or her topic" (p. 26). As co-authors, our collective experiences as Multiracial women and our yearning to contribute to the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies have brought us together to engage in this work. Though we both identify as Multiracial women, we hold varying social identities that influence the ways we engage in multiracial scholarship. We offer a glimpse into our individual positionalities to share our relationships to this topic. More importantly, we emphasize how our social location shapes our understanding of Multiracial research in higher education and this systematic literature review.

Rebecca

As someone who identifies as a Multiracial woman, specifically Mexipina (Mexican and Filipina), I deeply resonated with multiracial scholarship I came across during my graduate program. Before these readings, I was unable to name these feelings or experiences. Still, because of these readings, I was inspired

to engage in conversations and contribute to multiracial research in higher education. As an early Multiracial scholar, I want to have other Multiracial people feel seen and validated through my scholarship. Overall, my research centers on the experiences of People of Color in higher education to expose white supremacy that is deeply ingrained within the academy. More specifically, I contribute and intend to continue my scholarship on multiraciality to demonstrate how racism and monoracism differ and impact the experiences of Multiracial communities in higher education. My social locations as a nonwhite, Multiracial, bisexual, able-bodied, and cis-gendered woman compelled me to engage in critical reflection throughout the research process. For example, my social identities allowed me to recognize the dearth of scholarship related to Multiracial people who are not mixed with white or Multiracial people's experiences with multiple and compounding systems of oppression during the analysis process. However, I acknowledge the ways in which my dominant identities as an able-bodied and cis-gendered woman influenced the way I made meaning of the data or overlooked systems of oppression that do not impact my individual life. Through engaging in critical and reflexive dialogue with my co-author, we conceptualized how our dominant or marginalized identities influenced the overall research process.

Lisa

As an emerging Multiracial scholar and mixed Filipina/white Woman of Color, I am inspired by the emerging field of Critical Mixed Race studies. I believe in the future of Multiracial scholarship and its potential to inform how educators disrupt racism and monoracism in current higher education structures. As a Multiracial person, I am exhausted by choices and, at times, what feels like an impossible choice. My positionality and social location provide me with a connected perspective when engaging in this systematic literature review. However, it is important to acknowledge where I hold power in the current systems. For example, because I am mixed with whiteness, I have proximity to white supremacy, which

may shape how I analyze the data. A specific example of how this showed up in the analysis process is when engaging in the review of the literature. I did not always observe whether scholars included non-white Multiracial perspectives in their papers. Furthermore, certain observations did not always stand out to me in the scholarship because I viewed them as "standard," which is emblematic of white supremacy and dominant epistemologies. I also identify as heterosexual and able-bodied, which impacted how I engaged in the literature review because holding dominant identities can cause a researcher to miss experiences that fall outside dominant narratives. Throughout the research process, I engage in intentional reflection both individually and with my co-author to unearth biases that may impact data analysis. We share these statements to convey the importance of this topic and explore the role of multiraciality within larger discussions about white supremacy in higher education.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this systematic literature review, we employed critical multiracial theory (MultiCrit) as the theoretical framework. As an extension of critical race theory (CRT), Harris (2016a) developed MultiCrit as a theory designed for Multiracial communities and their unique racialized experiences. There are eight tenets within MultiCrit: (1) challenge to ahistoricism, (2) interest convergence, (3) experiential knowledge, (4) challenge to dominant ideology, (5) racism, monoracism, and colorism, (6) a monoracial paradigm of race, (7) differential micro- racialization, and (8) intersections of multiple racial identities. To align with our research questions, our review deliberately applies two specific tenets of MultiCrit, a monoracial paradigm of race, and racism, monoracism, and colorism, because of our explicit focus on multiraciality in higher education in connection to systems of oppression. We outline these two tenets below.

A monoracial paradigm of race critiques the construction of race in which Multiracial people are meant to choose one racial identity (Harris, 2016a). For example, when higher education institutions classify Multiracial individuals as one race or only allow Multiracial individuals to check off one racial category on an application, they are upholding the idea of a monoracial paradigm or reality. Through this monoracial assumption, higher education institutions deny the recognition of a Multiracial identity The perpetuation of monoracial assumptions and norms denies multiracial realities and is connected to systems of oppression Multiracial people may experience, in which we describe below.

The second tenet we utilized comprises three separate yet interlocking systems of oppression (racism, monoracism, and colorism) that operate simultaneously and influence Multiracial communities' experiences (Harris, 2016a). Racism is a system of oppression that shapes the everyday encounters for People of Color within the United States; the structure of racism is permanently embedded within U.S. society (Bell, 1992; Harris, 2016a; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Multiracial people, like monoracial People of Color, do experience racism (Harris, 2016a). However, it is necessary to understand that Multiracial people may also experience monoracism. Monoracism is a system of oppression "where individuals who do not fit monoracial categories may be oppressed on systemic and interpersonal levels because of underlying assumptions and beliefs in singular, discrete racial categories" (Johnston & Nadal, 2010, p. 125). Monoracism can be perpetuated horizontally by Communities of Color, vertically by white communities, or internalized by Multiracial individuals (Guillermo-Wann & Johnston, 2012; Harris, 2016a). Hamako (2014) expanded the definition of monoracism beyond interpersonal interactions and theorized monoracism on a systemic level. For example, he named federal policies that inherently exclude multiracial people by using blood quantum as a "condition for participation" (Hamako, 2014, p. 93). Furthermore, he differentiated racism from monoracism by asserting that other People of Color may perpetuate monoracism because of monoracial privilege and the assumption that people only hold

one singular and discrete racial category. Relatedly, colorism is the system of oppression that perpetuates dominance and hierarchies based on skin color (Harris, 2016a). This system of oppression may also manifest *within* Communities of Color but is directly related to skin color. A Multiracial person might also have a lighter skin tone and privilege within the system of colorism. However, this does not negate their marginalization within the system of monoracism. These three systems of oppression are separate yet interconnected.

Previously, MultiCrit has been applied to explore the experiences of Multiracial undergraduate students (Harris, 2017a, 2017b; Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020; Malaney- Brown, 2022) and Multiracial campus professionals and faculty (Harris, 2017c, 2019, 2020; Harris et al., 2021; Jackson et al., 2021). MultiCrit is a theory intended to destabilize monoracial paradigms and account for the experiences of Multiracial students, which is also designed to continue to critique white supremacy (Harris, 2016a). Therefore, we found MultiCrit an appropriate theoretical framework for this systematic literature review. The research question guiding our review is: how do higher education researchers studying Multiracial communities conceptualize multiraciality as a means of disrupting white supremacy?

METHODS

In this section, we detail the methods of our systematic literature review, delve into literature selection for our analysis, and describe our analytical approach. Researchers define a systematic literature review as "a review of existing research using explicit, accountable rigorous research methods" (Gough et al., 2017, p. 2). The purpose of reviewing literature systematically is to engage with the current literature to answer research questions rather than address specific topic areas. Additionally, to conduct a systematic literature review, dialectic conversations must occur to deliberately discuss and agree on all aspects of the research design and methods, such as finding studies to

examine, deciding on the inclusion and exclusion of criteria, analyzing the relevant literature, employing the conceptual framework, and interpreting the evidence found (Gough et al., 2017).

Literature Selection

In order to select the literature in this review, we used the EBSCOhost database to search for scholarship from 2000 to 2021 and used the terms "Multiracial," "Mixed-race," or "Biracial," and "Higher education," "College or university," or "Postsecondary" as the search parameters. We specifically chose the words Multiracial, mixed-race, and biracial because many critical mixed race scholars use these terms interchangeably to describe the mixed race experience. Other scholars have used the contested nature of the evolving language to delineate multiraciality (Johnston-Guerrero & Wijeyesinghe, 2021). Because we are not necessarily concerned with what term a scholar used and are more interested in how they conceptualized the language they have chosen, we intentionally included multiple terms within our criteria to remain expansive and broaden the scope of our dataset. Initially, our search yielded a total of 621 results that included academic journal articles (N = 238), magazines (N = 225), reports (N = 137), reviews (N = 17), and electronic resources (N = 4). Another criterion resulted in our decision to look only at scholarly peer-reviewed journals to narrow our focus on the ways in which higher education researchers drew connections across multiraciality and white supremacy. We removed any duplicates listed, resulting in 173 articles

.

Furthermore, we read through each abstract to consider whether the articles were explicitly on Multiracial populations in higher education, leaving us with 69 articles identified. However, we noticed that groups of articles within one specific journal, *New Directions of Student Services*, were published within special issues related to multiraciality, or that there were journals that discussed multiraciality in disciplines outside of higher education (i.e., *Critical Mixed Race Studies Journal*). Because these jour-

nals seek out manuscripts specifically related to multiraciality, we shifted our focus to higher education journals that do not have an explicit focus on mixed race. Therefore, we borrowed from Harper's (2012) and Harris and Patton's (2019) articles as precedents for deciding which higher education journals to apply to our analysis. We focus on seven specific peer-reviewed journals (Table 1) because of their "prominent" empirical research in the field of postsecondary education (Harper, 2012; Harris & Davis, 2019), resulting in 14 articles for analysis (Figure 1). These seven peer-reviewed academic jour-

nals "routinely publish research on students, faculty, and other postsecondary actors (e.g., administrators and trustees) at four-year institutions and community colleges" (Harper, 2012, p. 13). We distinctly focus on "eminent" journals in higher education to highlight the lack of attention to multiraciality in outlets deemed more rigorous and thus more widespread and accepted in the scholarship.

Moreover, we call attention to the venues where multiracial scholarship is published. A limitation of our study is that it solely focuses on academic journals. Still, Multiracial scholarship may be more represented in book chapters, narrative-based pieces, journals that explicitly center on race, or special issues related to multiraciality. Conducting a systematic literature review to include multiracial scholarship across academic fields, book chapters, or special issue manuscripts is a compelling future research project. We specifically chose journals that are often deemed prominent in the field of higher education to examine the inclusion (or exclusion) of multiracial scholarship in higher education.

Analytic Approach

After our initial screening, our sample included 14 peer-reviewed journal articles that conducted research on multiraciality within higher education research and practice. To build consensus on our analysis of the literature, we read, reviewed, and developed initial codes for the 14 journal articles (Charmaz, 2014). After developing our initial codes, we convened to engage in dialogue and develop

TABLE 1

Journal articles analyzed, 2000-2021.

Journal	N
Journal of College Student Development	10
Journal of Diversity in Higher Education	2
The Review of Higher Education	1
Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice	1
The Journal of Higher Education	0
Community College Journal of Research and Practice	0
Community College Review	0
Total Articles in Analysis	**14**

FIGURE 1

Search results.
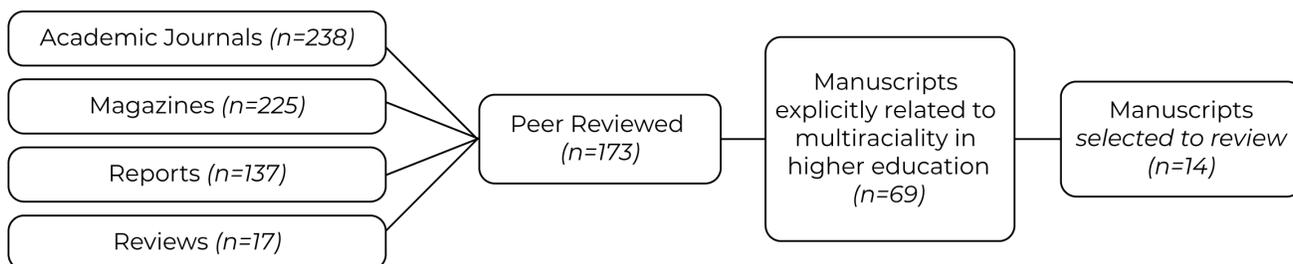
theoretical codes based on our theoretical framework and research question (Charmaz, 2014). To ensure intercoder reliability, we continued to engage in discussion in which we reviewed our notes and analysis.

FINDINGS

Overall, our analysis revealed that the 14 articles disrupted the idea of a monoracial paradigm of race that denies the recognition of a Multiracial identity (Harris, 2016a). Through our analysis of 14 peer-reviewed articles researching multiraciality within higher education contexts, we identified two major themes. The overarching themes generated from our analysis include: (a) Exposing racism, monoracism, and colorism and (b) challenging (or the lack of challenging) white supremacy.

Exposing Racism, Monoracism, and Colorism

In alignment with the tenet of MultiCrit, we examined how often the terms monoracism, racism, and colorism were used within each article. Of the 14 articles, approximately 71.4% (N = 10), used the term racism, 28.5% (N = 4) used the term monoracism, and 7.1% (N = 1) used the term colorism. We reviewed the terms separately to differentiate between the three. We call attention to these data, not to suggest a prescriptive way in researching race or multiraciality.

However, it is vital to acknowledge all three systems of oppression when engaging in discourse about multiraciality to acquire context and reiterate the urgency for social change related to the deeply ingrained whiteness in higher education.

Although not deliberately stated, 10 of the 14 articles indicated that Multiracial communities experience forms of oppression based on not fitting into one monoracial category, otherwise known as monoracism (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Among these 10 articles, only four explicitly recognized and employed the term monoracism. However, throughout these 10 articles, there was a clear objective to

note that Multiracial people exist within college campuses and that Multiracial peoples' racialized experiences were valid through data sources deriving from student experiences, faculty experiences, and institutional data.

Multiracial Student Experiences

Of the 14 articles we analyzed, 10 explicitly focused on Multiracial students. We found a pattern in which scholars explored multiracial student identity development, experiences navigating colleges and universities, and conceptualizations about race and systems of oppression. Renn (2003) applied Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology model to analyze multiracial college student identity development and observed five identity patterns: (1) monoracial identity, (2) multiple monoracial identities, (3) multiracial identity, (4) situational identity, and (5) extraracial identity. This study demonstrated that Multiracial students' identities develop based on person, process, context, and time. Moreover, this study validated how college environments can support multiracial identity development through inclusive environments or hinder multiracial identity development through exclusive environments. Students commonly discussed "their experiences of feeling 'singled out,' often telling stories about times when they had entered a meeting of a group of monoracial students and people had looked at them questioningly" (Renn, 2003, p. 394). The questioning of racial authenticity from monoracial peers illustrated the concept of monoracism before the inception of the term.

Additionally, seven of the 10 articles centering Multiracial students examined their experiences with critical incidents of discrimination (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Museus et al., 2015; Museus et al., 2016), intersectionality within Multiracial populations (Harris, 2017b; Harris, 2019; King, 2011), and conceptualizations of oppression (Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020). Overall, these seven articles emphasized the ways in which Multiracial college students move through a world that implements monoracial values. For instance, Harris (2016b) analyzed Multiracial women college

students and their experiences with microaggressions at a historically white institution. She found three main categories of microaggressions from the sample of students interviewed, including multiracial stereotypes, monoracial stereotypes, and the threat of monoracial stereotypes. Multiracial women "perceived that their peers stereotyped them as women who thought they were better than others on campus...[because] 'mixed people think they are better and more superior than...actual Black people" (Harris, 2016b, p. 482). Multiracial women were also denied their multiracial identity and assumed to be monoracial; therefore, monoracial stereotypes were forced on them. Finally, the impact of these stereotypes influenced their feelings of stereotype threat. Most importantly, Harris (2016b; 2017a) noted that stereotypes toward Multiracial and monoracial individuals are harmful and a result of white supremacy. Of all the articles, only one focused on colorism. Harris (2016b) found that colorism manifested within participant experiences as it related to an internalization of beauty hierarchy or the proximity or assertion of Whiteness. Multiracial women participants shared typical encounters with stereotypes about light-skin and dark-skin women that perpetuate a normalization of colorism, which is a manifestation of racism. For this reason, it is pertinent to expose monoracism and its relationship to racism, colorism, and white supremacy.

Multiracial Faculty Experiences

Only one of the 14 articles investigated the experiences of Multiracial faculty members within colleges and universities (Harris, 2020). Harris posited that there is a lack of discourse on Multiracial faculty within scholarship centered on the experiences of Faculty of Color. Therefore, the dearth of discourse and literature on this subject upholds a monoracial paradigm. Through this study, Harris explored Multiracial tenure-track faculty in research, teaching, and service. Like experiences with Multiracial students, Multiracial faculty experienced monoracism from their respective institutions, peers, and students. For example, Harris (2020) found that Multiracial

faculty expressed positive feelings about their research on multiracial. However, their peers were "suspicious of mixed-race projects," thereby invalidating the importance of multiracial research (Harris, 2020, p. 233). Multiracial faculty members with lighter phenotypical features acknowledged that their physical appearance was perceived as less threatening to students, resulting in less pushback, or questioning within the classroom. Similarly, some Multiracial faculty members experienced being the non-white token because they were perceived as less threatening to the institution. However, the Multiracial faculty members recognized this privilege and used it to disrupt dominant norms to bring about change within their institutions. In addition to learning about the individual experiences of Multiracial communities within higher education institutions, research has also explored institutional data to delve deeper into how institutions consider Multiracial communities.

Institutional Data

Of the 14 articles analyzed, three employed methods using publicly available institutional data to examine biracial student engagement (Harris & BrckaLorenz, 2017; Harris et al., 2018) and classifications of Multiracial students through university websites (Ford et al., 2021). Ford et al. (2021) explicitly investigated university websites to identify how Multiracial students are racially classified. Through an examination of 271 university websites, Ford et al. (2021) found that approximately 52% of institutional websites did not reflect the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) standards that allow Multiracial students to self-identify with one or more races. Therefore, Multiracial students were not represented in institutional student body demographics on college websites. In addition, university websites presented charts and tables with racial categories that sum to 100%, however, there was a lack of a category for students who identify with two or more races (Ford et al., 2021). Lastly, when students

self-identified as two or more races, institutions "reassigned Multiracial students to a monoracial category or categories" (Ford et al., 2021, p. 257). The erasure of Multiracial students on university websites conveys how monoracism is deeply embedded within colleges and universities.

Challenging (or the lack of challenging) White Supremacy

In connection with our guiding question related to the disruption of white supremacy, we analyzed the literature to examine how often the term white supremacy was used in each article. Of the 14 articles, approximately 28.5% (N = 4) used the term white supremacy. As mentioned previously, the articles illuminated the ways in which Multiracial communities experience forms of oppression within higher education. However, the lack of acknowledgement toward recognizing how these systems of oppression work in tandem suggests separation amongst them and a disconnect toward how they simultaneously relate to upholding whiteness.

Within the four articles that utilized the term, we found that only three articles examined how the racialized experiences of Multiracial communities are connected to whiteness and the systems of power and structure maintained within higher education institutions (Harris, 2017a, 2019, 2020). For example, Harris (2019) called attention to the critiques of multiracial scholarship as being disconnected from the larger history of race and structural realities (Osei-Kofi, 2012). Therefore, this study critically examined the experiences of Multiracial women college students to "(re)center Multiracial women students, disrupt the normalization of whiteness, and complicate a body of higher education literature..." (Harris, 2019, p. 1025). Employing whiteness as property (Harris, 1993) and intersec-

tionality (Collins, 2000; Combahee River Collective, 1977; Crenshaw, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Thornton-Dill & Zambrana, 2009)[2] as conceptual frameworks in this study, Harris (2019) analyzed how Multiracial women make meaning of their intersectional identities, such as race, class, and gender, within the white structures of higher education systems.

Harris (2019) identified three main findings: interacting with white womanhood, whiteness in the classroom, and (not) fitting in with monoracial communities. Specifically, participants in this study perceived white womanhood to entail engagement in Greek life, wearing Hunter rain boots, owning expensive purses, and always having or talking about Starbucks; so, for Multiracial women who did not resonate or align with owning these items or engaging in these activities, it was clear that they were not white women or considered to be the social norm (Harris, 2019). Additionally, Multiracial women revealed how whiteness showed up in the classroom such as white students having easier access to conversations with white professors, feeling pressure to go above and beyond in the classroom, and speaking on behalf of their assumed race (Harris, 2019). Lastly, Harris (2019) built the connection to whiteness and monoracism by sharing how Multiracial women expressed not fitting in with monoracial communities. Multiracial women did not fit into the parameters of what they perceived as white womanhood, nor did they fit into the parameters of being a monoracial Woman of Color.

Multiracial women conveyed feelings of not fitting into any community. Moreover, it is notable that Harris (2019) declared that a limitation of the study being that most participants identified as having white heritage and a lighter complexion. Therefore, the narratives of Multiracial women with double minoritized racial identities and deeper complexions are absent from this study and need to enhance schol-

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2   Whiteness as property and intersectionality are both terms that were constructed to shed light on systems of oppression within the U.S. society. Harris (1993) argues that whiteness functions as a form of property in order to maintain white supremacy. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to demonstrate the multiple systems of oppression Black women experience simultaneously.

arship on multiraciality. Overall, Harris' (2019) study exemplified how white supremacy and monoracism can work in tandem to uphold dominant values within higher education environments.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Our findings contribute to the conversations among Multiracial scholars who argue that there is a need to name and understand multiple systems of oppression to disrupt white supremacy (Harris et al., 2021). For example, systems of power such as racism, colorism, and monoracism are often conflated. It is critical to differentiate these systems while also naming their interconnected nature. We use our findings to provide recommendations for the future of Critical Mixed Race Studies as a discipline and expanding frame in higher education. Through our systematic review of the literature, we found that multiracial scholarship does not explicitly focus on non-white multiracial experiences. The focus on multiracial students with white identities is a product of racism and colorism because of the preference for those with lighter skin tones and proximity to whiteness. While scholars have focused on the experience of mixed people with multiple minorized racial identities, within higher education (Misa-Escalante et al., 2022; Talbot, 2008), more attention is needed to focus on Multiracial people from multiple marginalized identities to contribute different voices separate from white supremacy to the multiracial scholarship repertoire within "prominent" journals. According to MultiCrit, the intersections of social identities or racial makeups of Multiracial individuals influence their lives differently based on different systems of oppression they may experience (Harris, 2016a). In other words, "the mix matters" (Harris, 2016a, p. 809). As authors, we focus on the relationship between increased awareness and proximity to whiteness. The Multiracial white experience has more "airtime" in the literature because of power, privilege, and racism. A multiplicity of minoritized Multiracial

voices from students, faculty, and staff is needed to contribute to the future of multiracial scholarship. In addition, practitioners should not assume that all Multiracial students have a white identity and should acknowledge the unique experiences based on the intersections of social identities and racial makeups. Practitioners can offer inter- and intragroup dialogues to help students make sense of race across and within racial categories (Ford & Malaney, 2012). Moreover, they can provide leadership opportunities to Multiracial students who are interested in organizing on campus within Multiracial student organizations (Malaney & Danowski, 2015).

In alignment with Harris et al. (2021), we urge Multiracial scholars and practitioners to bridge the connections between monoracism, racism, white supremacy, and colorism, a tenet of MultiCrit (Harris, 2016a). In our findings, only four of the articles explicitly name monoracism as a system of power and only three name challenges to white supremacy. However, multiracial scholarship has demonstrated that Multiracial people experience monoracism and its strong ties to white supremacy. For example, Harris (2020) stated that "while white colleagues and Colleagues of Color may perpetrate (mono)racism, all racisms re/produce hegemonic whiteness" (p. 235). In other words, disrupting white supremacy cannot happen without also uprooting monoracism. Thus, we utilize our findings to call Multiracial scholars to consider advancing their scholarship to critique the systems that uphold whiteness in academia. We call on more Multiracial scholars to focus on explicitly naming and challenging, monoracism, racism, colorism, and white supremacy to further examine the nuance between these systems of power and how they operate in tandem to uphold whiteness. Similarly, we call on Multiracial practitioners to shed light on these systems of oppression through conversations in student programming or departmental and university committees focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (Harris, 2019).

Examining the connections between race and monoracism should not only fall on the shoulders of Multiracial scholars and practitioners. Race scholars and student affairs professionals more broadly should validate Multiracial people and their experiences to progress and join a collective toward racial liberation and solidarity. Multiracial voices must be included in studies and conversations focused on race. Johnston-Guerrero (2015) argued that "the power of language and scholars' language choices can change how their findings are interpreted" (p. 29). When researchers include Multiracial people within their research related to race and racism, they are intentionally challenging monoracial categories as the norm. Specifically, we notice that only one article in our dataset focused on Multiracial faculty. Like Multiracial students, Multiracial faculty and staff experienced monoracism on college campuses (Harris, 2019; Harris, 2020). Institutional types such as predominantly white institutions (PWIs) or minority-serving institutions (MSIs), can also influence the racialized experiences of multiracial people (Cristobal et al., 2021; Olivo & Cepeda, 2021). Therefore, we agree with Johnston-Guerrero and Combs (2022) and recommend scholars focus on the Multiracial staff and faculty experience to contribute to the multiplicity of perspectives because Multiracial staff and faculty are often on the frontline supporting our Multiracial students.

Through the review of the literature, only one article analyzed the classifications of Multiracial students through university websites, which may influence connections to higher education institutions and policies (Ford et al., 2021). To go into detail, the disregard for how Multiracial students may identify and selective reclassification of race can have implications for institutional demographics. Institutional demographics be employed for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) that receive federal grants under Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 based on enrollment criteria for specific minoritized groups (Conrad & Gasman, 2015; Gasman et al., 2008). Future research can examine the ways in which Multiracial

students and their racial identities are considered or disregarded within MSIs that receive federal funding.

Overall, our findings demonstrate a lack of published multiracial scholarship in these notable academic journals, thereby adhering to MultiCrit is tenet of a monoracial paradigm of race that disregards a multiracial reality (Harris, 2016a). From our own experiences, we have also noticed that most of the multiracial research is published in edited volumes or books. This calls into question the legitimacy of multiracial scholarship in the academy and how monoracism may be deeply embedded in higher education. More research is needed to examine this claim. Johnston-Guerrero & Combs (2022) corroborated this claim when they introduced a model that focuses on the different trajectories of becoming a Multiracial scholar and how at each step of the process, aspiring scholars must contend with monoracist practices in the academy. In their analysis of Multiracial-focused dissertations, Combs et al. (2023) find that 39% of these dissertation authors did not go on to publish their scholarship focused on Multiracial topics. In alignment with previous scholarship that monoracism is often ignored in the academy (Johnston-Guerrero et al., 2020), more work is needed in these "prominent" journals. It is not solely the dearth of Multiracial scholarship that makes this assertion critical. Previous scholarship demonstrates that students are not aware of monoracism as system of power, and more work in prominent journals may give other educators the tools to include monoracism in social justice curriculum. Furthermore, disrupting monoracism can contribute to unsettling the characteristics of white supremacy, and more research may reveal studying multiraciality is positioned to contribute to larger conversations about the rigidity of race. While we recommend more research on the multiracial experience, this is not meant to negate or take up space from monoracial People of Color in the academy. Studying the relationship among colorism, monoracism, and racism may provide opportunities to reimagine the rigidity of race. Anti-Blackness, racism, monoracism, and colorism all work in

tandem to uphold white supremacy. We advocate for more nuanced analyses of this relationship to inform best practices, policies, and procedures to disrupt whiteness as a system of power.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CONCLUSION

This study is significant because it analyzes the extant literature related to multiraciality to examine how higher education scholars conceptualize multiraciality and attempt to expose and disrupt white supremacy. We push scholars conducting work on race to understand that it is essential not to be complicit in the erasure of Multiracial people in higher education research. The dearth of literature within the leading journals within higher education is disappointing, thus neglecting the lived experiences of Multiracial people. Additionally, it is critical to understand that Multiracial people are not a monolith because of the diverse racial makeups that can influence how they exist in society. Most importantly, we advise scholars to consider validating the experiences of People of Color, including Multiracial people, to disrupt white supremacy. In turn, we call on higher education scholars to consider the urgency of challenging white supremacy and advocating for social change.

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JOURNAL OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Does Dropping Test Scores for College Admissions Have a Significant Impact? Admissions to Teacher Education Programs at Midwest University With and Without SAT/ACT Requirements

Courtney Orr, Blaine Garman-McClaine, and Jeff Anderson
Indiana University-Bloomington

ABSTRACT

A Midwest university's teacher education programs (TEP) are committed to ensuring growth, quality, and equity for long-term student and program success. Adhering to policy changes, in 2020, the TEP removed the requirement for applicants to submit test scores as a part of their application. This change was made because the admission council at the university agreed that the scholastic aptitude test (SAT) and the American college test (ACT) scores do not adequately forecast the potential success of students. The removal of the SAT/ACT requirements came at the same time the other BIG 10 universities (BIG 10 universities are made up of 14 universities that have strong academic, research and financial status) were implementing similar policies. While test score elimination was a university policy change, the TEP has been investigating the impact that this policy change has had on its diversity and admission numbers. Specifically, this study examined the extent of the impact that testing requirements had on 2020 admissions compared to the previous year's admissions. The following research questions were explored: a) does removal of SAT requirements change admission demographics; b) does dropping SAT requirements have an impact on candidate diversity; and c) do students in the new cohort perform at the same level of proficiency as the previous cohort? Findings indicate that changes associated with the removal of testing requirements were not significant and continued efforts should be considered. Recommendations are offered to the field of teacher preparation.

Keywords: SAT/ACT, school of undergraduate education, diversity, admission

College admissions tests, such as the scholastic aptitude test (SAT) and the American college test (ACT) were initially developed to support the high selectivity of institutions of higher education (IHE) and provide students with academic potential access to universities (Clauser & Bunch, 2021). In 1926, a psychologist created the SAT to predict which students would succeed in higher education based on performance on the test (Barnes, 2002). Since then, the SAT has gone through many revisions aimed at ensuring that the exam assesses academic readiness as opposed to instead of intelligence (Barnes, 2002). Similarly, the ACT was created more than three decades after the SAT to predict student success during the first year of college (Allen & Radunel, 2017). Both exams provide colleges and universities with a method to use test scores as gatekeeping for college admission (Zwick, 2019).

Many universities have shifted from requiring test scores to making testing optional, noting that test scores can create barriers to cultural and socioeconomic diversity (Zwick, 2019). Part of this movement was towards considering adopting more holistic approaches to assessing student readiness for college (Bennett, 2021). Since 2020 and because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, more universities eliminated SAT/ACT requirements for admissions (Durwin, 2020). As the threat of COVID-19 was reduced and more individuals were vaccinated, universities returned to primarily in-person learning, and higher education is now grappling with whether to reinstate the use of SAT and ACT requirements. Some IHEs admissions personal, like those from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Tennessee programs, are returning to the policy of requiring the SAT and ACT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, n.d.). Other IHEs admission personal are remaining "test-optional", while many will no longer require testing for admissions (Morona, 2022). Universities not requiring testing are shifting admission requirements to approaches considered more holistic, focused on the evaluation of knowledge, skills, and competencies (Liu, 2022). These changing landscapes in higher education admissions have created a research gap in what we know about admission requirements without test scores. Since admission testing requirements have been a highlighted barrier to many students for years, there is also a need to review how admission and diversity have changed at predominantly white institutions (PWI). In *SAT WARS: The Case for Test-Optional College Admissions*, Joseph Soares (2011) referred to college admission workers as "gatekeepers" with the potential of preventing students from entering higher education. Soares (2011) also pointed out that before completely eliminating test scores for admissions, some universities were experimenting with "test-optional," meaning that test scores were not required for admission, but 'highly' suggested. In 2008, Wake Forest University made headlines when it became one of the first

top US universities to embrace test-optional, resulting in an increase in black students by 70% the following year (Soares, 2012).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature about campus admission requirements has provided a plethora of data about testing and its link to the (lack of) diversity of student populations. Indeed, SAT/ACT research data show the continual widening of racial and socioeconomic gaps associated with inequitable access to higher education (Seckan, 2012). For example, the SAT scoring gap in the 1980s indicated that black students scored 200 points lower than white students, and little positive change was observed during the 1990s (Autumn, 2000). Scholars and practitioners speculated that eliminating admission testing requirements might lead to the creation of more holistic admission processes (Bohanon, 2022); that would focus on qualitative data to access fit including the difficulty of courses taken, interests, or extracurricular activities (Lynch, 2022). Bohanon (2022) also recently reported that despite an overall decline in admissions at many schools, the Common App[1] admissions application indicates more students are interested in attending college since the elimination of SAT/ACT. Moreover, much of the increased interest in college admissions come from underrepresented groups, including race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Hamlet, 2017).

In the 2019 *College Equality Report*, it mentioned that more students are graduating from high school in the State of Indiana. The data showed that 70% of graduating white students took the SAT exam, with 84% meeting the benchmarks. Conversely, 61% of black students took the SAT, with just 49% of students meeting benchmarks (Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2019). Moreover, the 2019 report noted that as compared with other racial groups, more black students in Indiana were slated

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1   The Common App is an online application that allows applicants to apply to over 900 colleges and universities by submitting one application (Princeton Review, n.d.)

to attend a two-year or out-of-state university. Student socioeconomic status was found to be associated with the percentage of students who attend 4-year universities (Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2019). In 2017, 38% of Indiana high school graduates were considered low- income. Both students from low-income backgrounds and students from rural areas were less likely to attend universities, compared to students in non-rural areas who were 5% more likely to attend (Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2019). The same report also highlighted that early success in college, which was measured by earning all attempted credits without remediation and entering year two of college, indicated that low-income black students did not meet the national average (Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2019). Families in rural areas also face disparities, such as quality educational opportunities, health and economic barriers to learning, and food insecurity (James, 2017). On the other hand, although rural families encounter these difficulties, grade-level test scores show that they are on par with other populations of students (James, 2017), suggesting that it is not a lack of potential but a lack of access and opportunities.

Given these challenges and the knowledge gap created by the elimination of SAT/ACT scores as part of admission criteria, the purpose of this study was to examine changes in enrollment patterns at a Midwest university. Specifically, the research examined an undergraduate teacher education program (TEP) to compare the first cohort of undergraduate teacher education candidates admitted without test scores to previous years' cohorts who were required to take the SAT/ACT. Specifically, this study examined the following research questions: a) Does the removal of SAT requirements lead to changes in admission numbers? b) Did eliminating the SAT requirement lead to an increase in the diversity of teacher education candidates? and c) Do candidates in the post-test cohort perform at the same level of proficiency as the previous cohort of students?

METHODS
Study Analysis
In 2020, a Midwestern university implemented a policy change to remove the SAT/ACT admission requirement. Since its creation, one of the stated missions of this university has been to advance the achievements of African American students (Indiana University Bloomington, n.d.). Although this is embedded into the university's history by a pioneer in education, Herman B. Wells, data have not shown an increase in diversity or overall admissions of black students. For example, similar to overall university admission patterns, the number of black students at this university's TEP program has historically stayed below 5% of the student body population. As the university confronts this trend, the TEP has also focused on increasing the diversity of its students. The need to increase and diversify TEP admissions recognizes also that field of education is in desperate need of more diverse teachers (Bowen, 2021). Specifically, White women continue to make up at least 80% of the teaching population, despite an increasingly diverse k-12 student population (Bowen, 2021). To confront these challenges, TEP is taking an investigative approach to see how and where changes it can make to increase the diversity of its teacher education candidates.

Data Collection
To explore the research questions, data from 2018-2022 TEP admissions and applications were gathered from the university's database and analyzed. Researchers utilized information both from students already in TEP and those who applied only. Data collection included online resources, including student applications and pre-collected data by the university. All the records were extracted and housed within the university's existing electronic database with confidentiality protection. Student information used for this study was not shared beyond the research team and the IRB approved the study. Students were not affected by the data collection in this study. Classroom and individual assignment grades were assessed by a professor independent of the

research team. If a student participant transfers to a different program or university, their data were excluded from this study. The cohorts in this study included students who transferred into the program from different universities or programs within this university. The only requirement for participation in this study was being a degree-seeking student within the TEP, or an applicant to the program. Student achievement was collected quarterly as grades become available.

Participants

Data for this study included records from 1,277 students (see Table 1). In 2020, TEP accepted 236 students without ACT/SAT scores, per the new admission policy. For this study, admitted students were divided into 3 categories: transition to pre-education, direct admission, and pre- education. Pre-education refers to students who are enrolled at the university and show interest in education but have not yet committed to the School of Education. Transition to pre-education includes students supported by an advisor to identify degree options that make the most sense based on the student's goals. Direct admission students are certified directly to the school of education upon admission to the university.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the data. Ordinal data included high school grade point averages (GPA), first-term university GPAs, number of admitted students, number of applicants, and diversity of candidates. To identify trends, researchers compared percentages from each year.

RESULTS

Admissions data from 2018-2021 shows that about 95% of students are either pre- education or direct admission students. In 2020, there was a significant decrease in pre-education students and a slight increase in Direct Admission students (See Table 1).

Note. Policy change took effect during the 2020 application cycle

TABLE 1

Admission Type

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Transition	2	2	11	7	
Pre-Education	131	127	86	120	125
Direct Admit	130	137	139	108	152

Despite the removal of the SAT/ACT scores in 2020, diversity remains below 6% of the overall population. Comparing the raw data with the percentages (see Table 2) indicated no positive impacts post-policy. Moreover, the number of male and female students also has not changed since the admissions policy was changed (see Table 2).

Does the Removal of SAT Requirements Cause a Change in Admission Numbers?

Results indicate that the removal of SAT/ACT testing requirements in 2020 did not impact the number of students admitted into the school of education. Adversely, 2020 and 2021 data show a decrease in admission, though when considering these results, the influence of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic must be considered. On the other hand, 2022 admissions numbers are growing compared to previous years, potentially due to the easing of the pandemic. Such possible implications cannot be ruled out as a reason for the changes, and therefore further data will be needed to adequately analyze the impact the 2020 policy change has had on student admissions to the TEP.

Will Students Perform at the Same Level of Proficiency as the Previous Cohort of Students?

Student data does not show any decreases in academic performance since the policy change in 2020. HS and first-term GPA data show to be consistent or higher than the previous year as seen in Figure 1. This indicates that students have performed at the same level or higher than the previous year's cohorts.

Table 2

Specific Diversity Data

	Pre-Policy				Post-Policy					
Years	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Black Students	7	2.66%	2	4.13%	10	4.23%	8	3.40%	7	2.25%
Female	217	82%	127	74%	190	80%	194	82%	238	85%
Male	46	17%	137	25%	46	19%	41	17%	39	14%

DISCUSSION

As of March 2022, over 300,000 teaching jobs are open in the field of education nationally with the potential for even more openings in the years to come (Riser-Kositsky, 2022). It is partially incumbent on universities to make necessary changes to increase the production of teachers to overcome the shortage. To this end, this study did not show a positive increase in admissions or diversity related to eliminating test scores from admissions. No students with incoming high school GPAs and/or first-term college GPAs were observed after the removal of the SAT and ACT.

While the challenges that the university faces to increase both the number of teacher candidates and candidate diversity may reach far beyond removing testing requirements for incoming students, it is nonetheless vital that these efforts be implemented. In a 2018 article in the International Journal of Higher Education, the authors examined why students choose certain universities over others based on three factors: a) quality of education, b) cost, and c) cultural values (Mustafa. et. al., 2018). If we were to use these factors to examine the likelihood of students from marginalized groups coming to this mid-west university school of education the results would most likely not be in favor of the school. According to the study, the quality of education was not a contributing factor for students. The

level of parental education, however, indicated how much students cared about the quality of education (Mustafa et. al, 2018).

The national average of Black youth obtaining high school diplomas has increased but remains slightly below the national average (U.S. Census Bureau Releases New Educational Attainment Data, 2019). At the same time, 26.1% of Blacks have higher college degrees compared with over 40% of Whites (U.S. Census Bureau Releases New Educational Attainment Data, 2020). Moreover, only about 9% of black students who choose to obtain higher education attend top research institutions (Baylor, 2019). We speculate that other factors beyond admission criteria may be at play, such as a universities' elite status and prestige. For example, what if applications from marginalized students are lower due to intimidation?

This leads to the third research question posed, Will dropping SAT/ACT requirements have an impact on the diversity of candidates? Despite what historical evidence has suggested about diverse students being excluded by the SAT/ACT testing requirements, post-policy change has not had an impact on the number of diverse candidates that have entered TEP., Thus, we wonder if SAT/ACT testing is not the only hindrance that keeps students from diverse backgrounds from attending PWIs. Other Big Ten

universities that have also removed testing as an admission requirement, also have not seen increases in diversity. also indicating that other barriers may be limiting diversity in higher education. However, the field of education, which has a high percentage of female teachers, has highlighted the need to bring more male teachers into the classroom (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). This study likewise found that removing testing requirements did not significantly increase the number of male students entering the TEP.

Cost is also a factor when students decide where to pursue higher education. Big Ten universities, on average, cost $12,764 for in-state students and $37,592 for out-of-state students per year. The U.S. News reports that, on average, public universities cost $10,338 for in-state students (Powell et. al., 2021). Big Ten schools, therefore, cost several thousand dollars more for in-state tuition when comparing BIG 10 universities to public universities. Trade schools' costs start at $3000-$4000 and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) can be as low as $2000.

Pell grants are given to students whose families make below $20,000 dollars a year (Hanson, 2021). In 2019, the highest Pell grants awarded were about $6,495, with an average award of $4,491 (Hanson, 2021). The State of Indiana distributed about 150,000 Pell grants with an average award of $3,842 (Hanson, 2021). An average of 58% of Black students, the highest group of individuals to receive Pell grants, compares to 32% of white students (Hanson, 2021). Thus, the cost of attending what might be considered to be more prestigious universities might be more than can be afforded by at least some black families.

To account for the wealth gap, the Midwest university in this study has prided itself on providing scholarships and financial packages to students of diverse backgrounds. The TEP has programs that award money in scholarships yearly to students of all backgrounds. While these programs are helpful

and a step in the right direction, it is important to note that students may not even look for chances to attend top universities if the opportunity seems too far out of reach.

Last, the importance of cultural values for students cannot be overstated. Culture is defined as customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of racial, religious, or social groups. In the State of Indiana, the Black population makes up about 9.6% with the total diversity in the State being 41% (Censes, 2020). The overall national average for diversity is 61% (Censes, 2020). In other words, diversity is lower in Indiana. With much of the undergraduate population from in-state students, Black students will be attending a university with lower and sometimes far lower diversity as compared to universities in California and New York, with higher percentages of folks from diverse backgrounds (Censes, 2020). The lack of culture in Indiana can be directly linked to the lack of diversity that is seen in the state and school of TEP. Because most applicants are in-state students, it is even harder to increase the diversity of the university and the diversity of the TEP. The TEP and the university recruitment teams endeavor to change the diversity but often this requires more recruitment of out-of-state students which in turn creates costs and cultural challenges (e.g., moving to a new place that has lower levels of diversity).

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations must be considered when considering the findings of this report. One of the largest is the potential impact that COVID-19 had on admission numbers. Results show a significant decrease in overall admissions numbers in 2020 and 2021, and 2020 was also the first year that students were admitted without the requirement of the SAT/ACT. COVID-19 likely impacted the data and may have led to results that do not reflect the potential impact of the new admission policy. As such, we call for data over a longer period to be collected and assessed to adequately examine the research questions. Sec-

ond, given the timing and the pandemic, it is not clear that potential candidates even knew about this policy change. We do not know if high school students are aware of this change and if such knowledge would have changed applications. The school of education did not publicize the change and hoped to benefit from the university-level policy change.

Recommendations for Future Research

To fully grasp the scope of any possible changes that could come from the 2020 policy change at the mid-west university, the TEP would need to continue this research. Such a longitudinal study could help inform the methods used to recruit high school students and diversify the candidate pool. It would also be helpful to examine the new admission processes that universities can use Instead. For undergraduate admissions, the Midwest University school now uses the high school performance measure (HSPM) to evaluate students' applications. The HSPM is a collective and intuitive way that the university's admission committee uses students' performance in high school to examine potential achievement at the university. The HSPM is based on three factors 1) high school grade point average (GPA); 2) advanced level course work taken at the high school; and 3) grades received in advanced level courses. Unlike SAT/ACT scores, there is no cut score being used for the HSPM. Instead of rejecting the student without a chance for remediation, the goal is to offer support by providing adequate recommendations to meet the minimum requirements for admissions.

Second, if the goal of TEP is to increase the numbers and the diversity of candidates, researchers should conduct qualitative studies as well. Survey data can be used to understand why students choose this university over others, or vice versa, as well as why candidates chose the field of teaching. If students leave the school or education, empirical evidence could be collected to pro-

vide information about candidates leaving which could in turn have a large impact on how the TEP recruits and retains students. Last, to assess the long-term trends, we suggest following the 2018-2022 cohort of students to see how long it takes to graduate, overall TEP experiences, and when and how long they stay in the teaching profession post-graduation. Similar to other teacher education programs nationwide, the number of candidates who enter the TEP at this university has dropped 31% over the past 15 years. Findings from this study by and large indicate that more research is needed for an increase in diversity and admissions. We need more information because we need more teachers.

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From Service to School: Strategic Design Considerations to Effectively Support Student Veterans Transitioning to College

Robert Chambers
Regent University

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the rapid surge of veterans leaving the military to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs has brought economic stimulus to college campuses across the United States. However, higher education institutions may not be fully aware of this unique population's challenges as they transition into civilian and academic life. To investigate this topic, this study conducted a general literature review to establish a baseline of existing research on student veterans in college. This study also includes results from a non-scientific survey that was used to collect primary data from student veterans attending Regent University. The results from both of these efforts indicate that student veterans face unique challenges as they transition to academics. However, postsecondary institutions can take concrete steps to support student veterans on their academic journey. Recommendations include offering tailored student veteran orientation, accessible disability services, and student counseling psychological services. Additionally, institutions should consider promoting student veteran peer organizations, hiring dedicated military support teams, and ensuring administrators, staff, and faculty receive recurring student veteran awareness training.Keywords: SAT/ACT, School of undergraduate education, diversity, admission.

Keywords: Student veteran, military, higher education, GI Bill, career, transition

Over the past decade, scholars observed a rise in student veterans opting for postsecondary education as part of their social reintegration plan back to civilian life. This timing was coincident with the aftermath of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and a subsequent expansion of Veteran's Administration educational benefits (e.g., Post-9/11 GI Bill) (Fernandez et al., 2019; Lim et al., 2018; Medley et al., 2017; Southwell et al., 2016; Rattray et al., 2019; see Figure 1 on the following page). Transitioning from military service to civilian academic life poses challenges for this complex and unique population (Deshpande, 2021; Kirchner,

2015). Student veterans carry extra considerations as compared to their civilian counterparts, and institutions of higher learning have a role in facilitating a smooth and successful transition into academic life (Lim et al., 2018). Research shows that student veterans tend to experience a lower sense of belonging, feel more isolated or alienated, or even feel the campus atmosphere is overly adverse and clashing with their preferred culture (Buckley et al., 2023; Howe & Shpeer, 2019; Stevenson & Le Buhn, 2020). However, with proper support from family and veteran peers and a well-designed institution-wide approach that

Figure 1

Number of veterans in the United States in 2021 by educational attainment

Number of veterans in the United States in 2021, by educational attainment

[Bar chart showing:
- Less than high school graduate: 773,422
- High school graduate (includes equivalency): 4,407,624
- Some college or associate's degree: 6,014,568
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 5,096,303

Y-axis labeled "Number of veterans" from 0 to 7,000,000]

Source
US Census Bureau
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Additional Information:
United States; US Census Bureau; 2021; veterans

Source: Statista (https://www.statista.com/statistics/250294/us-veterans-by-education/)

complements faculty and staff support, student veterans can enjoy better mental health and a supportive academic environment, which may lead to improved academic results. (Riggs et al., 2019). In this article, the research shows how student veterans differ from traditional college students. Based on this understanding, the author recommends how staff and faculty at colleges and universities can appropriately support student veterans in navigating their unique challenges.

UNDERSTANDING THE STUDENT VETERAN

Throughout this article, the term "student veteran" refers to anyone who has served at least one day in any branch of military service, including the Guard or Reserve; it does not include the broader category of "military-affiliated students," which includes widows, spouses or military dependents who are studying in college. Compared to typical college students entering their first year straight from high school, the population of student veterans transitioning to college carries distinct differences and unique challenges as they navigate their educational journey, including lingering physical and emotional trauma stemming from their time in uniform. Higher education institutions should ensure that this distinct student population is adequately supported so they can successfully matriculate through their programs.

One core distinction is that student veterans may carry visible or invisible disabilities that could impair their ability to succeed in college (Rattray et al., 2019). Beyond physical prosthetics, potential limiting factors such as psychiatric disabilities resulting from depression, anxiety or mood disorders, military sexual trauma, mild brain trauma (MBT), or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can negatively affect student veterans' cognitive functions and further hinder the learning process during their lifetime (Falkey, 2016; Higgins et al., 2014; Medley et al., 2017; Rattray et al., 2019). Student veterans may also suffer from chronic pain and struggle with the abuse of prescription opioids (Higgins et al., 2014). Universities lack the facilities and policies needed to support students with invisible disabilities, which could further hinder student veterans' academic success in college (e.g., premature dropout, poor academic performance, etc.) (Kadison & Digeronimo, 2004; Kranke et al., 2013; McDonald, 2023).

Furthermore, student veterans may also be unwilling to ask for assistance, accommodations, or disclose the nature of their disability, which may lead to their underrepresentation at campus counseling centers (Locke et al., 2012). Research by Kranke et al. (2013, 2017) showed that student veterans fear that their mental health disability will significantly impact functioning critical to academic achievement. In one case, several student veterans disclosed their disability right at the beginning of the term out of fear that their disability and symptoms would exacerbate as the class progressed. In other examples, student veterans disclosed only when their disability impacted their ability to function in the classroom. Additionally, other student veterans did not believe their disability would interfere with their ability to focus on their academics and chose not to disclose it whatsoever. However, student veterans across the board indicated they wanted a safety net available only if necessary. Kranke et al. (2013, 2017) also found that certain student veterans did not disclose for fear of negative perception from their professor(s) and held concerns about being treated differently than their peers. Finally, some student veterans did not seek assistance or want to disclose their disability for self-autonomous reasons.

Compounding the lingering mental aspects that may impede their learning, student veterans may also have sociological hindrances. Once they leave the often rigid and disciplined military culture, student veterans describe struggles as they adjust back to civilian life. This may manifest at home during family reintegration or in the classroom, as younger students may view them as the "old guy" in the classroom. They are also juggling new demands (e.g., parent, marriage, employment, education), and seemingly innocuous events might trigger a memory from their combat experience (Fredman et al., 2019; Medley et al., 2017). Despite these challenges, the benefits of a college education remain one of the top reasons people join the military, and student veterans overwhelmingly believe that education plays a pivotal role in post-service transition (DiRamio, 2017, p.7). Based on data from the Student Veterans of America (SVA), student veterans tend to outperform their peers regarding overall GPA and retention rates (Sullivan & Yoon, 2020). This may be partly due to "self-discipline, heightened global awareness, and enriched understanding of the world" (Sullivan & Yoon, 2020, p. 167).

SUPPORTING THE STUDENT VETERAN

With an understanding of the challenges that student veterans bring to the table during the transition into college, there are several ways that institutions can smartly design supporting structures to assist student veterans in earning their degrees. First, student veterans transitioning to college for the first time may be unaware of all available services. For this reason, having accessible resources in mind when entering college will help adapt to the higher education mindset and thrive in the academic setting. For example, writing labs, life and success coaching, and webinars on style guides for essays are beneficial in covering core academic skills that often

need updating since student veterans experience a significant break in their academics (Falkey, 2016). Tailored, in-person orientations also allow student veterans to meet other student veterans experiencing similar struggles with the transition to college and related challenges (Molina & Ang, 2017). While solving all student veteran challenges during their transition into higher education may seem daunting, most can be resolved through a well-designed student veteran-focused orientation program. This program may encompass an overview of on-campus disability services, including counseling and psychological support services. It should also highlight any active student veteran peer organizations and dedicated military support teams that can help student veterans with admissions, academic advising, and financial aid. Institutions may also consider providing opportunities for student veteran employment and ensuring staff and faculty receive awareness training (Ackerman et al., 2009; Barry et al., 2017; Lang & O'Donnell, 2017). Each of these areas will be discussed in more detail below.

Disability Services

Two legal provisions address students with disabilities at the postsecondary level: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, n.d.)) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, as Amended, n.d.)). Section 504 stipulates that "no otherwise qualified person may be denied participation in, the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (29 U.S.C. § 794(a)), which covers most institutions of higher learning that accept federal loans or Veterans' Administration education benefit payments.

Since student veterans represent a portion of the growing number of people with disabilities deciding to go to college, it is imperative to address any disabilities to ensure student veterans can receive reasonable accommodations. Most institutions have an office dedicated to supporting students with a myr-

iad of physical or mental disabilities to facilitate their success in academia. Unfortunately, while some students are simply unaware of these services, student veterans may feel stigmatized if they request disability services, likened to the embarrassment of going to the Mental Health clinic while on active duty (Barnard-Brak et al., 2009; Kranke et al., 2013).

This problem can be remedied by emphasizing accommodation availability through disability services during new student orientation or semester check-in. Clear language highlighting the risk-free nature of the request process will help student veterans overcome any fear of stigmatization for asking for help. When student veterans reach a "turning point" and feel safe enough to disclose their disability and request assistance, they will accept accommodations that will positively impact the rest of their college studies (Kranke et al., 2013, p. 48). Disability services staff should also be aware of local Veterans Administration (VA) resources to refer student veterans for support as needed (Medley et al., 2017).

Student Counseling / Psychological Services

Student veterans should also know what counseling support is available to them. Institutions with a doctoral psychology program may host a psychological services center where doctoral students can provide supervised counseling to students at little to no cost. Moreover, those institutions lacking on-campus resources may be able to connect with a local VA medical clinic, State Veteran Services office, local Veteran Center, or other Veteran Service Organizations that can provide professional support as required. Linking student veterans to mental health resources supports reintegration and can directly improve the likelihood of their future academic success (Medley et al., 2017). Recently, the National Center for PTSD and the VA teamed with the Center for Deployment Psychology to provide training on specific topics for Counseling and Health Center staff to educate them on military culture, as well as recurring online training events as they seek to support student veterans better. As the number of student veterans continues

to climb, institutions need to increase mental health support so that student veterans can complete their educational journeys (Fredman, 2019).

Peer Organizations

Peer support among student veterans is another crucial driver for their success, especially if student veterans are traditional on-campus students and can have face-to-face opportunities for networking and fellowship. Student veterans cite age, experience, and maturity differences that keep them from connecting with traditional students (Whiteman et al., 2013). Peer engagement can help them overcome these barriers and foster a sense of camaraderie and belonging, facilitating overcoming obstacles to seeking additional assistance if appropriate (Kranke et al., 2017). Additionally, institutions that host peer-led supportive services foster a sense of community, which increases retention rates and successful academic outcomes for student veterans due to the improved mental health and social support they enjoy (Medley et al., 2017; Whiteman et al., 2013). Since social peer support plays a protective role in the mental well-being of student veterans, campuses should prioritize this area and afford more opportunities for this kind of engagement (Barry et al., 2017).

One example of a popular veteran-led organization on college campuses is the SVA. SVA Chapters can facilitate interpersonal relationships and foster a more profound sense of belonging by connecting student veterans through on-campus meetings and hosting special events. The University of Michigan SVA Chapter recently launched the Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE) program, which helps match incoming student veterans with those already attending a given institution (Kees et al., 2017). Through PAVE's Campus Team, they conduct one-on-one outreach, tailored follow-up support, and provide a link to vital resources, which "creates the structure and space so that every student veteran can access a community of support to help maximize their success on campus" (Kees et al., 2017, p.99).

Dedicated Military Support Teams

Many campuses have established a dedicated office to support student veterans transitioning to college. For example, specially trained counselors help student veterans complete initial enrollment paperwork, VA benefits processing, and class registration, which constitute the top issues of concern for student veterans shifting into academia (Molina & Ang, 2017). This is especially critical regarding VA education benefits since VA processes are not intuitive and often require proper assistance to understand and comply with (Ackerman et al., 2009). A recent survey of 8,500 student veterans indicated that "navigating VA administration and benefits" was the top "key challenge in transition," outranking finding employment or coping with financial difficulties (DiRamio, 2017, p.11).

Veteran Employment

While the GI Bill and other VA educational programs are generous in their coverage of tuition and book stipends, they typically are not sufficient to allow the student veteran to meet their entire budget without supplemental employment. Student veterans with families often face additional financial pressure while trying to complete their academic work (Durosko, 2017; Falkey, 2016). As part of the solution, hiring veterans for administration positions, such as academic advisors and admission counselors, can better support student veterans by bridging the transition gap between leaving the service and entering academia sziron(Durosko, 2017, p. 43).

Secondly, student veterans often cite a lack of awareness of staff or administrative positions that their military background and experience easily qualify them to pursue (Spriggs, 2022). Since most campuses are not too different from a military base (e.g., police force, logistics operations, facilities management, maintenance, financial offices, human resource functions, etc.), student veterans may be able to find on-campus employment opportunities that closely aligns with their previous military specialty (Spriggs, 2022). Student veterans with specialized military training

may find suitable employment in "IT, finance, security, marketing, athletics, graphic design, or advising" (Sziron, 2023). Student veterans may need to overcome the myth that working in higher education is only for faculty-teaching positions (Spriggs, 2023). Advertisements through targeted hiring e-mail campaigns, social media, and the local SVA Chapter can highlight these opportunities.

Even after their education, student veterans may pursue a post-military career as faculty or administrator in higher education (Cumpston, 2023). McCoy (2023) opined that institutions that bring veterans on board for these positions would be pleased to find a natural fit since veterans "are accustomed to operating in fast-paced, high-stress environments and making good decisions in short periods." Additionally, McCoy (2023) noted that veterans bring organizational experience working in teams and are familiar with problem-solving and achieving organizational goals.

Veterans and military-affiliated professionals who choose to work in higher education instead of going to industry can access multiple benefits. Sziron (2023) noted that there are plenty of jobs in higher education, such as athletics director or coach, instructor or adjunct faculty, as well as clerical and support (facilities, custodial, foundation/alumni relations, career and professional development, law enforcement, etc.). Additionally, Sziron (2023) highlighted that most higher education positions are steady, have good benefits and retirement plans, and can often include tuition reimbursement and other education benefits for the individual and their family members.

Administrators, Staff and Faculty Awareness and Training

Beyond the campus-level support that student veterans need, all college administrators, staff, and faculty should receive recurring training on student veteran issues as part of their ongoing professional development. Based on a survey of 723 institutions on their preparation to support student veterans, the top response was to provide professional development and training for faculty and staff in how to work with veterans (Cook & Kim, 2009). Since faculty perceptions of student veterans may vary, faculty empathy for requests for accommodations or policy exceptions from student veterans may also differ. In one egregious example, a sociology professor referenced the American soldier as a "terrorist" during his lecture (Ackerman et al., 2009). One of the students in the same class, a combat veteran, refused to take the final exam as a sign of protest and failed the course (Ackerman et al., 2009).

Standard procedures and training on the scope of suitable accommodation and best pedagogical practices should be in place to afford students an effective learning environment (Coll & Weiss, 2015; Lombardi & Murray, 2011). As the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators recommended, institutions should adopt a "Green Zone" curriculum that focuses on unique aspects of student veterans and how best to support them without stigmatizing them (Sweeney, 2023). This should include familiarization with appropriate procedures for facilitating requests from disability services for reasonable accommodations, especially for psychiatric disabilities, so that student veterans avoid embarrassment (Kranke et al., 2013).

Administrators and faculty can foster a positive and veteran-friendly environment by following guidelines outlined in the VA Campus Toolkit Handout created by the National Center for PTSD and the VA (VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, n.d.). With a solid understanding of student veterans' various strengths and challenges, faculty can adjust their classrooms to help accommodate them. On the VA website, specifically designed for faculty and staff (VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, 2023), they also offer essential tips for supporting student veterans. For example, they recommend that faculty know that a student veteran may be a nontraditional student with multiple roles, such as a

parent, spouse, employee, or Reservist/Guardsman. Student veterans should have flexible academic options to help them cope with these competing demands (VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, 2023). The VA also recommends forging a relationship with student veterans to help them feel more connected to the campus, navigate academic life, and feel supported by an authority figure (VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, 2023). Faculty and staff should also know that student veterans may still be on active duty or serving in the Reserve or National Guard. Since these service commitments usually require ongoing training that could fall anywhere in a given semester, the student veteran's ability to complete an assignment or study for an exam may be diminished, which could be offset through added flexibility with assignments, tests, or attendance policies based on a particular situation (VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, 2023).

Institutions that hire faculty with prior military experience set themselves up for long-term success in supporting student veterans as they have in-house expertise that can readily empathize with and support them (Falkey, 2016). Institutions that actively host a Reserve Officer Training Corps unit are considered military-friendly since they help foster a visible military culture (Buckley et al., 2023; Falkey, 2016).

TABLE 1

Top Value-Weighted Questions from Regent Student Veterans

SURVEY QUESTION #	QUESTION DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
31	Dedicated military FA/benefits team	8.85
30	Dedicated military advisors for current students	8.43
29	Dedicated military A/C for prospective students	8.29
27	Understanding off-campus support for vets	8.02
32	Walk-in office for face-to-face meetings	7.81
25	Career Services information	7.78
24	Professional development tailored for vets	7.43
28	Tailored orientation for military students	7.4
26	Military Resource Center Newsletter	7.23
23	Military Resource Center Newsletter	5.97

Note: Survey data is based on 559 responses. Each respondent gave a numerical value between zero (0) for "not at all important" and ten (10) for "extremely important" to rank the importance of each item listed. In addition, most Regent University student veterans are online, so a designated area was not as critical (question 23). This may not be relevant to other institutions with a larger on-campus student veteran population.

During the end of the Fall Semester of 2023, Regent University's Military Resource Center (MRC) sent an informal, non-scientific online survey to its 2,700 military students and received 556 responses (Military Resource Center, 2023; Wynn, 2022). Although the data is raw, Table 1 above shows student veterans' top ten concerns. The top three items (questions 29-31) center on having a dedicated military team for financial aid (FA) and benefits, advising, and admission counselors (A/C). This comports with a similar study for student veterans attending Southern California community colleges, where practitioners and student veterans also ranked a "dedicated, adequately sized veteran resource center" as the highest-rated essential practice (Miller, 2017, pp. 165-166).

One solution to this problem is centralizing core academic and FA functions under a unified and dedicated MRC. The MRC can better support student veterans by assisting in the admission process, academic advising, and financial aid. Since student veterans and other military-affiliated students (e.g., military spouses and dependents) are using a variety of VA educational benefits, it necessitates having a team of trained financial aid specialists who can navigate the various VA programs, eligibility requirements, forms, paperwork process/timelines, etc.

Cook and Kim's (2009) survey demonstrated that establishing a dedicated support center with increased staff training on serving the student veteran community was among the top four priorities for universities wanting to attract student veterans. Student veterans prefer a clear point of contact they can reach out to and help them understand enrollment procedures, submitting paperwork, etc., especially since the VA has been prone to delays in educational payments (Ackerman et al., 2009; Durosko, 2017). In a perfect world, the designated point of contact should have:

> 1) Deep understanding of the military culture and the transition issues military-connected students face; 2) [Deep understanding of] the institution's admissions and application processes, financial aid policies, and campus support services focused on retaining the student veteran until graduation; 3) A strong working relationship with other offices to provide a warm hand-off no matter where the military-connected student goes. (Molina & Ang, 2017, p. 83)

CONCLUSION

While student veterans certainly are responsible for their own academic success, higher education institutions also play a significant role in supporting student veterans throughout their academic journey. Piecemeal or token efforts will fall short. Instead, the recommended way forward is a:

> "holistic approach by the institution is needed to address the needs of the student/veterans… [M]eeting these needs is not limited to one department but is a college-wide challenge and requires the coordinated efforts of all campus departments to support and serve this population." (Falkey, 2016, p. 36)

Through proper organizational design, however, institutions can successfully build a support structure that not only attracts transferring veterans to their campus. More importantly, they can provide the necessary social and emotional support so student veterans smoothly transition back into civilian life and excel in academia. Although not inclusive, we recommend that all student veterans receive a tailored orientation as they first arrive on campus. This orientation should cover disability services, mental health support, and other appropriate counseling and psychological services. Additionally, institutions can actively promote peer organizations and employ dedicated military support teams. Finally, institutions should ensure administrators, staff, and faculty receive routine training so they are sensitized and empowered to address student veteran issues that they may encounter. A robust, multi-faceted approach that addresses these areas will help student veterans efficiently transition from service to school and maximize their chances at academic excellence.

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**JOURNAL OF
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Higher Education Technology of Today and Tomorrow: Ethical Considerations of ChatGPT in Student Affairs Work

Evan W. Faidley

University of Central Arkansas

AUTHOR NOTE

Evan W. Faidley   http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0097-023X

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Evan W. Faidley, University of Central Arkansas, Department of Leadership Studies (235 Mashburn Hall), 201 Donaghey Avenue, Conway, Arkansas 72035. Email: efaidley@uca.edu

ABSTRACT

Technological developments continue to find their way into higher education, thus necessitating the willingness and preparedness of the workforce to adopt new methods to perform job duties. As artificial intelligence (AI) remains at the forefront of academic integrity, original thoughts, and critical thinking among actors of academic affairs (students and faculty), student affairs and higher education administrators require the same attention. Focusing on AI as an essential workplace innovation, this literature review examines the current and potential use of ChatGPT as a supplemental tool in student affairs work. I offer anecdotal insight to gauge the importance of recognizing the positive and negative experiences and outcomes related to student affairs professionals' ethical use of ChatGPT. Considerations for individual users (i.e., higher education and student affairs graduate students and student-facing staff) and institutional leaders on how to move forward with ChatGPT utilization are provided.

Keywords: technology, ethics, ChatGPT, student affairs work, professional competencies

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO, 2023) quick start guide, *ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education*, contains the following prompt for users to enter into ChatGPT: "Behave as/Act as a higher education manager. [Add query]" (p. 6). Having followed this recommendation, I asked ChatGPT to behave as a career services advisor and faculty advi-

sor to guide me through student situations that I had experienced in both roles over the last several years. While still useful in having ChatGPT assume these roles and being asked unsolicited follow-up, open-ended, and auto-generated questions, its responses and tone left me wondering how I had guided and handled the same real-life scenarios. I found ChatGPT's responses informative and gen-

eral, leading me to think of additional questions to arrive at a clear answer I would have received from a higher education professional. My "conversations" with ChatGPT echoed scholars' findings that ChatGPT fails to mimic the situational tone and techniques traditionally used in human communication (Bearman et al., 2023; Sun & Hoelscher, 2023). Before the existence of ChatGPT, I would have turned to my life experiences, training from my graduate preparation program, and exploration of published research. In today's world, the higher education workforce can resort to pre-ChatGPT approaches to solving problems (i.e., consult physical or virtual texts or audio-visual artifacts), pose all inquiries directly to ChatGPT, or do both.

Advancements in technology have become a normal phenomenon in today's world, particularly "brilliant technologies" such as robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence (AI) in the world of work (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2016; Lent, 2018). Recent literature has focused on the speculation, rejection, and acceptance of AI in various fields like engineering (e.g., Shukla et al., 2019), healthcare (e.g., Kahn et al., 2023; Shinners et al., 2022), hospitality (e.g., Ivanov & Soliman, 2023), and higher education, particularly teaching and learning (e.g., Crompton & Burke, 2023; Moya et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2020; Zawicki-Richter et al., 2019). While there are investigations on the attitudes toward, usage of, and concerns with AI in the realm of students and faculty, equal importance must be applied to higher education administrators. Institutional leaders and AI designers have assessed the current state of higher education with the need to embrace AI in work for the sake of the student and staff experience (Dennis, 2018; Kitcher, 2023; Selingo, 2023). Accordingly, this review of the literature focuses on this need by offering recommendations on how to build technological competencies (American College Personnel Association: College Student Educators International [ACPA] & NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education [NASPA], 2015) in student affairs work, particularly the widely known, accessible, and popular program, ChatGPT,

used by students and faculty alike to hold human-like conversations (Rudolph et al., 2023a).

EDUCATION'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AND RESPONSE TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The birth of the term *artificial intelligence* dates back to the 1950s–coined by John McCarthy and affiliated to the total Turing test–framed by "the philosophical vagueness of the question 'Can a machine think?'" (Russell & Norvig, 2022, p. 20). Such a question has placed chatbots into two categories of AI: weak (or narrow) and strong (or general) (Russell & Norvig, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). Current chatbots function within the realm of weak AI since they can only focus on completing narrow tasks rather than having full human capability to apply intelligence to more than one problem at a time (Ma & Siau, 2018). Examples of online applications that operate as weak AI consist of grammar correction tools, image generators, text-to-voice readers or dictation software, text summarizer, language translators. Yang and Evans (2019) supported this concept in their explanation of how they have used a chatbot to introduce a new educational application with algorithmically generated responses to specific queries about the product. As a weak AI tool, chatbot algorithms answer a range of questions, depending on how programmers write the algorithm to generate or draw information from online sources. This form of AI lacks knowledge of current events and guaranteed reliable sources (Rudolph et al., 2023b).

Strong or general AI is the concept to which many refer regarding existential threats to a complete takeover of jobs and the human race, notably due to science-fiction media and futuristic, technology-dependent realities (Ma & Siau, 2018). Researchers synonymize this form of AI as self-aware and the replacement of human intelligence (Ocaña-Fernández et al., 2019) while postulating that such a form of AI will unlikely exist in the near future to replace human workers like teachers and administrators (Atlas, 2023; Zawcki-Richter et al., 2019). Scholars

have highlighted the critical need to train professionals to have a better understanding and active participation in developing technological environments for themselves and their stakeholders (Hightower, 2023; Ocaña-Fernández et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2023). In the context of higher education, AI has streamlined campus functions like student support services (tutoring and academic coaching); interactions between admissions officers and prospective students; exploring financial aid opportunities; and developing marketing and outreach materials (Bodine Al-Sharif, 2024; Hightower, 2023; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2023).

Political, educational, scientific, and humanitarian leaders essentialize technical assistance from AI-enabled systems moving forward to provide an array of services and support across the globe. UNESCO (2019) explored country profiles, politics, and practices to showcase the various partnerships and emerging approaches to foster lifelong learning (e.g., ministries of education in the United Arab Emirates, China, and Argentina deploying competency development in AI for learners, educators, and administrators). Québec's Ministry of Education has prioritized education personnel (pedagogical and administrative) to rightfully learn and implement AI technologies to ameliorate the quality of student services (Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, 2018). While governing bodies and organizations are developing policies and practices for higher education professionals at the institutional, regional, and federal levels, recognition of and response to responsibly using ChatGPT in student affairs work must take place immediately.

ESTABLISHING THE "COMPETENT CHATGPT USER" IN STUDENT AFFAIRS WORK

Student affairs professionals and students enrolled in higher education graduate preparation programs must be prepared to effectively utilize a variety of technologies in their work (Eckert, 2020; Faidley, 2021). ACPA/NASPA (2015) recommended

that emerging and seasoned student affairs professionals should at least be able to "[d]emonstrate adaptability in the face of fast-paced technological change" and "[m]odel and promote the legal, ethical, and transparent collection, use, and securing of electronic data" (p. 33). In the case of using generative AI chatbots to perform work tasks or answer situational or stakeholders' questions (e.g., during an advising appointment, meeting, or training session), these competencies are more important than ever for the student affairs workforce. At the time of writing this article, "[ChatGPT-3.5's] last knowledge update was in January 2022" (OpenAI, 2024), thus online data and information for the following 22 months was not readily integrated into one's queries. To test this theory, I posed several questions about changes in higher education, such as "What is the current Title IX policy?"; "What is educational affirmative action?"; and "What are the updates on the test-optional or test-blind college admissions trend across higher education institutions in a post-COVID-19 pandemic?" ChatGPT produced detailed yet dated output that provided an overview of each policy or phenomenon in question; however, the need to look elsewhere for up-to-date information remains to be an essential skill. As such, student affairs professionals must develop competencies using AI as a tool, specifically around ethical and strategic usage of ChatGPT as an assistant and not a replacement to fulfill their job duties.

The student affairs profession requires its workforce to remain current on and familiarize oneself with the purpose and functionality of new technologies (ACPA/NASPA, 2015). Simultaneously, these professionals must be able to think and act humanly and rationally while developing the whole student (Burke et al., 2017; Long, 2012), similar to the aspiration of achieving strong AI that would be able to do the same work at the same speed of a human, if not quicker (Rudolph et al., 2023a, 2023b; Tan, 2023). Current student affairs professionals from the entry to senior level must then learn how to strategically utilize ChatGPT. Users who over-rely on ChatGPT to

respond to an instant copy/paste to fulfill job responsibilities see a decline in critical thinking skills, originality, and novelty of their work (Iskender, 2023), otherwise defeating the ideal purpose of higher education for students, faculty, and staff alike (Walker & Finney, 1999). While there may be some truth and benefits to ChatGPT results, the tool exists with limitations, including incomplete, inaccurate, and unattributed information gleaned from the Internet (Atlas, 2023; Bates et al., 2020; Schön et al., 2023); too generalized computed responses (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023); and a lack of emotional awareness, motivation, and facilitation skills (Elyoseph et al., 2023; Pavlik, 2023). Additionally, like other generative AI tools, ChatGPT is susceptible to biases based on its language model and the sources from which it draws its information. Ray (2023) clearly explicates common biases that users must consider when interacting with ChatGPT, such as cultural, linguistic, racial, gender, ideological, groupthink, and exclusionary bias. Upon having recognized these gaps in ChatGPT, student affairs professionals may judiciously and ethically use the tool as a means to transform the quality of their work.

CHATGPT USAGE: INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The evolution of instant responses around complex topics from ChatGPT serves as a starting point for student affairs professionals who must turn to their training. Administrators' usage of AI is not meant to replace the human ability to think critically and logically, but rather to make life easier and more efficient (Bates et al., 2020; Imran & Almusharraf, 2023; Selingo, 2023). In tandem with improving areas such as writing and editing (Rudolph et al., 2023a, 2023b) and generating advice for courses of study (Schön et al., 2023), student affairs professionals may positively appraise ChatGPT as a means of workload relief and burnout prevention (Hashem et al., 2023), as well as "revitalize education by replacing unsatisfying work with meaningful labor" (Kitcher, 2023, p. 9). ChatGPT serves as a quick and easy-to-use tool to brainstorm

ideas or offer clearer definitions of complex concepts (Atlas, 2023; Supiano, 2023) upon which the human can build a personalized and contextually appropriate response to enhance the student and administrator experience (Hightower, 2023).

The question remains as to when it is safe to act solely on ChatGPT results, targeting whether or not (a) the output is true, (b) the professional has the expertise to verify output accuracy, and (c) the professional is willing to take full responsibility for using the output in their work (UNESCO, 2023). At an institutional level, higher education administrators may invest time in developing training and policies grounded in ethical use and maintenance of AI tools like ChatGPT. Bodine Al-Sharif's (2024) conceptual framework for ethical technological decision making in higher education serves as a contemporary approach to the relationship between strategic planning, institutional identity (mission, goals, and resources), and the three key actors in the process (leadership, end users, and technology). As a starting point for student affairs professionals to understand and ethically use ChatGPT in their individual or group work, Atlas' (2023) ChatGPT for Higher Education and Professional Development: A Guide to Conversational AI offers prompts and techniques covering a variety of functional areas and responsibilities, such as constructing business communications, accommodating learning needs of students with disabilities, and gaining a different perspective while developing a student-centered campus experience.

CONCLUSION

With the ongoing innovations to chatbots, student affairs professionals are exposed to infinite answers by ChatGPT to queries surrounding their administrative and student-facing work. Student affairs professionals' acknowledgement, willingness, and ethical integration of ChatGPT in their work intersects with the direction of higher education technology and the development of generating digital citizenship, digital literacy, and a healthy disposition toward the

tool (ACPA/NASPA, 2015). Moving forward, senior-level higher education administrators and trainers will need to approach student affairs workers' preparedness for becoming acquainted and collaborative with ChatGPT. Following up on an interview with Southern New Hampshire University's President Paul LeBlanc, student affairs professionals must ask themselves the following questions about their thoughts on, the impact of, and potential relationship with ChatGPT in their line of work: "How does it change how you source learning materials? How do you integrate ChatAI into student assignments? Can it help students navigate FAFSA? What counts for knowledge now?" (D'Orio, 2023, p. 12). Answers to these questions and more depend on our ability to learn about and responsibility lean on ChatGPT.

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**JOURNAL OF
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The Need for an Internshift: Implications, Legal Considerations, and Recommendations of Unpaid Internships for Academic Credit

Michael E. Chapman
Colorado State University

ABSTRACT

Internships have become a cornerstone of experiential learning, offering invaluable opportunities for skill development and professional growth. Nonetheless, the widespread participation in unpaid internships, especially those linked to academic credit, gives rise to significant implications and legal complexities that warrant exploration. This systematic literature review delves into the multifaceted landscape of unpaid internships, examining professional development and equity implications, legal frameworks, and recommendations for fostering equitable and empowering internship experiences.

Keywords: experiential learning, internship programs, unpaid internships, career resilience, racial gaslighting

Carrie Bradshaw, Elle Woods, and Meredith Grey are three iconic characters who share one similar experience: participating in an academic internship (Davidson, 2019). Internship programs are one of the most impactful experiential learning experiences college students can participate in (Kolb, 1984; Simmons et al., 2012; Moran, 2013; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). From an employer's perspective, internships have been ranked as the top decision-making factor in hiring a recent college or University graduate (The Role of Higher Ed, 2012). Data showed that over 80% of employers indicated internship programs provided their companies with the greatest return on investment (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2023). Of those employers, 50-60% of interns continue with the company in a full-time position (NACE, 2017).

Internships provide immense experiential value for rising professionals as a high impact practice (Crain, 2016; Farthing-Nichol, 2014; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020; NACE, 2017). Universities nationwide are inputting internship programs into their curriculum because they believe in the benefit of participating in an experiential learning experience. However, when students engage in unpaid internship experiences in which they pay for academic credit, they pay for their internship experience rather than getting compensated for their time and energy. While there is immense research on the holistic benefits of internships, research specifically on the impacts of unpaid internships has been underrepresented (Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). This systematic literature review will fill the gap and dive deeper into the implications, legal considerations, and recom-

mendations necessary to shift the culture of unpaid internships for academic credit.

IMPLICATIONS

Scholars have suggested that internships have a significant positive impact. Examining the true impacts of unpaid internships is crucial. Employers have acknowledged that individuals who have completed unpaid internships are highly sought-after because it shows their willingness to adapt and exceed workplace expectations despite the cost (Saltikoff et al., 2018; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). At first glance, being desirable to employers is a significant advantage of unpaid internships. However, desirability can flourish when students are able to have their needs met through fair compensation for their time and energy. Therefore, it is essential for employers to delve deeper and ask a critical question about this desirability—what is the cost for students? Understanding professional development and equity gaps between unpaid and paid interns is vital in framing possible solutions to shift the culture around internships.

Professional Development

Internships provide valuable opportunities for students to develop skills within a workplace. These skills include information processing, teamwork, planning, prioritization, and problem-solving (NACE, 2017). However, it is crucial to recognize that not compensating interns can send the message that their contributions and skill development are less valuable than those of paid interns (NACE, 2023). Scholars showed that paid interns at for-profit companies spend a significant portion of their time on professional, skill-building duties, while unpaid interns spend more time on clerical tasks (Farthing-Nichol, 2014; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020).

Disparities in skill development can hinder unpaid interns in pursuing post-graduation opportunities. Paid internships are associated with a higher likelihood of post-graduate job offers by over 50% (Crain, 2016; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020; NACE,

2019; NACE, 2023). Scholars have found that unpaid interns earn a starting salary approximately $20,000 less in their first-year post-graduate employment than their paid counterparts (Pisko, 2015; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020; NACE, 2023). This disparity in pay and post-graduate employment opportunities can create a gap that unpaid interns will have to fight against throughout their career (Reid, 2015; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). For example, in a department-wide 3% salary increase, the disparity between an employee who experienced a paid internship earning $20,000 more than an employee who was an unpaid intern results in significantly different percentage increments. This divergence exacerbates salary gaps over time.

Equity Gaps

Unpaid interns often have limited access to professional development opportunities. Consequentially, specific majors are more likely to engage in unpaid internship experiences than others. Researchers have indicated liberal arts and helping professions are experiencing unpaid internships at higher rates than science, technology, engineering, and math related fields. The American Psychological Association (2015) defines helping professions as individuals providing occupational health and educational services. For instance, 91% of engineering students participate in paid internships compared to only 3% of education majors (Zilvinskis et al., 2020; Carle, 2023). A student's socioeconomic status is another factor associated with internship opportunities (Eisenbrey, 2012; Fink, 2013). Students from more affluent backgrounds tend to secure internships at for-profit companies while students coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to intern at companies who are unable to provide compensation for interns (Fink, 2013; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). Lower-income students often require additional sources of income, such as employment, to support themselves while in school which can limit their ability to partake in formal unpaid internships or unpaid work (Zilvinskis, Gillis, & Smith, 2020). Balancing an internship on top of school, jobs, familial

commitments, and social obligations can be a lot for a student to hold in a period of immense transition. Furthermore, for-profit companies extend full-time employment offers to a much higher percentage of their interns (55%) than non-profits (5%) (Brooks & Greene, 1998), further exacerbating the advantage that more affluent students have in securing higher paying jobs after graduation. First-generation college students are more likely to participate in unpaid internships than their non-first-generation peers (Salvadge, 2019). Prevalence of unpaid experiences among first-generation students prompts an examination of whether universities are adequately facilitating access to paid opportunities through the provision of navigational capital.

Researchers of unpaid internships have collected binary examinations of gender and the relation to unpaid internships. While there is a need to investigate non-binary gender information around unpaid internships disparities between men and women participating in paid internships show inequity. Men are 58% more likely to participate in paid internships than women who currently encompass 35% of paid internship experiences (Crain, 2016; Women's Bureau, 2017; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). LGBTQIA+ students make up close to 20% of the college student population in the United States (Gray, 2022). While LGBTQIA+ students take up internships at similar rates to their counterparts, they are less likely to obtain paid internships (NACE, 2022). As a result, LGBTQ+ students receive fewer job offers post-graduation, creating a gap in economic security (Gray, 2022).

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) students face a 50% lower likelihood of securing paid internship experiences (Zilvinskis, Gillis, & Smith, 2020; NACE, 2023). Acknowledging the strength and capabilities inherent within these communities, imperative interventions are crucial to promote equity in professional development opportunities. Providing equitable access to paid internships not only fosters diverse ideas and perspectives in the workplace but also catalyzes innovation. By actively addressing systemic barriers through the provision of paid internship experiences for BIPOC students, they unlock their full potential, empowering them to thrive in their future careers.

Career Resilience and Racial Gaslighting

One 2018 study revealed no significant difference in long-term harm between those who participated in paid and unpaid internships in college (Saltikoff et al., 2018; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). The lack of a gap in long-term effects can be tied to how unpaid interns are expected to catch up and become resilient (Vazquez, 2022). Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back from adversity (Luthans et al., 2006). In a career context, career resiliency was defined as an individual's ability to withstand career disruptions in suboptimal environments, with self-efficacy, risk-taking, and dependency being the three subdomains (London, 1983).

Mishra and McDonald (2017) conducted an extensive literature review of 114 peer-reviewed journal articles from seven databases aiming to synthesize research on career resilience, analyze it, and apply it to human resources development. The research resulted in the author's definition of *career resilience*, as "a developmental process of persisting, adapting, and flourishing in one's career despite challenges, changing events, and disruptions over time" (Mishra & McDonald, 2017). When considering Mishra and McDonald's combined definition, there are critical aspects to uncover. Historically, students and professionals from underrepresented communities are typically expected to adapt and be resilient. Resilience places the burden of adaptation squarely on the individual, deflecting accountability away from the systemic frameworks and structures that sustain the conditions necessitating such adaptation (Vasquez, 2022).

Resilience has been misused by white professionals to disguise white supremacy culture, leading to racial gaslighting (Patron & Garcia, 2016; Tuck & Yang,

2012; Vasquez, 2022). When the focus is on the need for BIPOC students engaging in unpaid internships to be resilient and catch up with their counterparts, oppressive systems continue to perpetuate harm (Daniels, 2021, Reveley, 2016; Vasquez, 2022). Unpaid internships disproportionately negatively impact students with historically underrepresented identities in higher education. Employers believe student development is valuable enough to warrant the absence of pay (Pasternack, 2015). Unfortunately, the law enables the absence of pay. Understanding the law around unpaid internships can provide knowledge and hope in transformative protections.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fair Labor Standards Act

When first introduced, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) clarified what guaranteed rights or protections workers would have as a recognized employee. Protections given to employees included minimum wage, parameters of work hours, and the ultimate recognition of their work (Fair Labor Standards Act, 1938). *Walling v. Terminal Co.* set the precedent for volunteer and unpaid positions within companies. The case set distinct boundaries between railroad trainees who were training for their benefit and employees who were official railroad workers. The effects of the distinction led to the opportunity for unpaid interns not to be classified as employees. Therefore, the trainees were not able to receive compensation for their work as the benefit of gaining experience was warranted compensation in the eyes of the law (Walling v. Portland Terminal Co., 1947).

In 2010, the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor created Fact Sheet #71 to make volunteer distinctions more explicit. At the time, the sheet comprised a six-prong test. If the worker did not meet all six prongs of the test, the worker would need to be considered an employee and receive compensation according to the FLSA. (U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division, 2010; Roth-

schild & Rothschild, 2020). Fact Sheet #71 had an essential interpretation as non-profit and governmental agencies did not have to abide by the six-prong test, only for-profit companies (Bacon, 2011).

Glatt v. Fox Searchlight Pictures and the Primary Beneficiaries Test

The most famous case that tested the Six Prongs outlined in Fact Sheet #71 is Glatt v. Fox. In 2013, three interns took legal action against Fox Searchlight Pictures for violating labor laws by not providing them pay during their internship experience. Under the Six Prong Test, the judge of the case found the interns qualified as employees and, therefore, Fox Searchlight Pictures should have been paying the interns as employees (Glatt v. Fox, 2013; Sterbenz, 2013; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020).

However, through the case the presiding Judge realized the difficulty of holding any internship experience to the Six Prong Test (Glatt v. Fox, 2013). Therefore, the courts reversed the trial court's judgment during the appeals process (Glatt v. Fox, 2013). The judge ruled on whether the interns or the company were the primary beneficiaries of the work produced by the internship. The ruling ultimately paved the way for the Primary Beneficiaries test to be put into law by the Trump Administration, replacing the Six-Prong test (Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020). The decision by the Trump Administration enables a lack of protection for unpaid interns across the country.

Gross v. Family Services Agency Inc. (1998)

A serious question regarding liability for unpaid internships was raised in a case out of the Florida Fourth District Court of Appeals. Bethany Gross was a student at Nova Southeastern University, where she participated in a required academic internship experience for her psychology program. While at her off-campus internship site, which the University assigned, Gross was brutally assaulted. The Appeals Court found Gross had a valuable argument against the University as Nova Southeastern should have

prepared Gross by disclosing what potential injuries could occur during her internship experience. In conclusion, the court held liability for Gross's harm at the hands of Nova Southeastern.

The case shows that a university can be held legally responsible if they assign a student to an internship site where they know there is an unreasonable risk and do not provide information to the student. When students get harmed during the unpaid internship, the University can be held accountable for not fulfilling its duty of care toward its students. The court decision highlights the importance of universities taking responsibility for their student's safety, even when a third party causes the primary harm (Gross v. Family Services Agency Inc., 1998). Explicitly, students participating in unpaid internships increases the burden of liability on institutions whereas those students in paid internships increase the responsibility on the employers making it more favorable to institutions.

Wang v. Phoenix. Satellite Television United States, Inc. (2013)

Lihung Wang served as an unpaid intern for Phoenix. Satellite Television United States Inc. under the leadership of Zhengsen Liu in December 2009. While Wang's work was making a significant impact on the company, Mr. Liu began to discuss potential full-time opportunities with Wang. However, as Mr. Liu requested to spend more one-on-one time with Wang to discuss the possibility of full-time opportunities, Wang was exposed to quid pro quo sexual harassment and ultimate retaliation after rejecting Mr. Liu's advances. When Wang decided to present an employment discrimination action under the New York Human Rights Law, Wang was unable to move forward with claims of sexual assault as unpaid interns are not recognized as employees under federal law. Therefore, Wang was only able to move forward with her fail-to-hire claims as she was not selected for a full-time position after her internship experience, as discussed with Wang's case, as well as other similar cases (O'Connor v. Davis, 1997;

Smith v. Berks Community Television, 1987), show a startling reality in which unpaid interns, otherwise known as nonemployees, are not granted protections under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (29 U.S.C. §§ 621-634), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12214; Rothschild & Rothschild, 2020).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Considering legal implications, finding recommendations to support students participating in internship experiences for academic credit is imperative. Using the Colorado State University (CSU) Career Center as a guide, these recommendations for navigating the internship search process are provided in five distinct categories.

Ecosystems Coaching

Employer Relations Coordinators play a key role in hosting orientation sessions with employers to help them understand the benefits of compensating interns. It is important to provide employers with information about the negative impact of unpaid internships and to engage them in conversations about diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. For instance, some employers express a desire for diverse candidate pools to bring in varied perspectives, but offering unpaid internships can contradict these goals and harm underrepresented communities. In addition, faculty and staff need intentional coaching on how they market internship opportunities to students. A good starting point would be to have intentional conversations with internship coordinators in academic colleges to pave the way for mutual understanding of the professional development and equity gaps of unpaid internships.

The CSU Career Center has implemented technology, particularly Handshake, to help students find paid and unpaid opportunities in their desired fields. All experiences listed on Handshake are subject to a review process. The Unpaid is Unfair Task Force is

responsible for approving unpaid experiences and has made the decision those opportunities should be placed at the bottom of the list for student appearances. This ensures that students are more likely to find paid internships at the top of the list. Furthermore, Parker Dewey micro-internships are also available for students to gain experience in their chosen fields. These short-term, compensated professional internships allow students to showcase their skills, explore career options, and expand their networks. They can occur any time during the academic year or summer and usually require 10 to 40 work hours. The assignments typically have a timeline of a few days to a few weeks (Aronson, 2023).

Informing Students of Their Rights

The C.S.U. Career Center has created a newsletter for internships. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide students with a centralized way to access paid internship opportunities and dispel common myths about the rules regarding paid internships for academic credit. For example, many students believe they cannot be paid for an academic internship if they are receiving credit. There are only a handful of programs where this statement is true. The newsletter also serves as an educational guide for ways to filter through unpaid and paid experiences on Handshake. Unpaid interns are not guaranteed protections under Worker's Compensation, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To help promote knowledge about student rights, the Career Center is working to partner with Title IX services and the Women and Gender Advocacy Center to provide resources for interns to know their rights if they were to endure interpersonal violence during their internship experience.

Legal Advocacy

The Federal Internship Protection Act (FIPA) is a proposed amendment to federal law that would protect unpaid government interns from workplace harassment and discrimination. While laws, rules, and agency policies already forbid workplace dis-crimination and harassment, unpaid interns are not explicitly covered. FIPA was introduced in 2017 but has yet to be passed into law. Advocating for bills like FIPA ensures that unpaid interns are protected. Several states, such as Connecticut, Maryland, Oregon, and New York, have already adopted their versions of FIPA. When considering the case of Wang v. Pheonix. Satellite Television United States, Inc. (2013), Wang would have been able to obtain justice for her experiences through New York's Internship Protection Act if the act was established. Higher education professionals should actively engage in legal or legislative lobbying efforts to advocate for the passage of bills like FIPA in order to increase the number of states with robust protections for unpaid government interns against workplace harassment and discrimination.

Funding Sources

Grant writing assistance for employers to self-fund internships is a recommendation to address the issue of unpaid internships. While grant writing is not an unknown practice in the Non-Profit sector, assisting in proactive planning and mentioning internship programs in grant proposals and overall program development can be foundational in securing internship funding. Grant writing assistance can also shift the culture around unpaid internships by encouraging employers to invest in their interns and recognize the value of their contributions.

The CSU Career Center has also developed a program called SPARK, funded through Student Success Initiative money from the Board of Governors. While participating in the Summer Internship program, students earn compensation and on-campus housing to participate in multidisciplinary internship experiences with campus partners to enhance their career readiness. The program has a central aim to increase retention rates for first-year, first-time students and eliminate equity gaps for first-generation, limited-income, rural, and/or racially minoritized students through participation in the SPARK program. Lastly, Colorado adopted the Work-Based Learning

Incentive Program (WBLIP) to enhance experiential learning opportunities for nonprofits and small businesses. WBLIP is an incentive program for businesses and organizations in Colorado to invest in different forms of work-based learning, including internships. Employers can apply for up to $10,000 in reimbursement to enhance and create workplace learning opportunities. The program is currently only a year-long one. However, further conversations are in the making in Colorado to turn the program into a tax incentive in the future, which will have to go through another Senate bill; therefore, this meets both a funding source and a legal advocacy recommendation for now and the future. Advocating for similar permanent programs in Colorado and other states can create avenues for paid internship experiences at companies who may not have the resources to supply paid internships currently.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, unpaid internships reveal significant professional development and equity gaps, particularly disadvantaging students from historically underrepresented identities in higher education. Understanding legal considerations inform avenues for ecosystems coaching, informing students of their rights, legal advocacy, and funding sources. Further research recommendations are essential to gain a deeper understanding of the widespread impact on students. Examining career resilience in the face of racial gaslighting within the context of unpaid internships can reshape discussions and confront white supremacy culture. More research is needed to assess the long-term effects of unpaid internships comprehensively.

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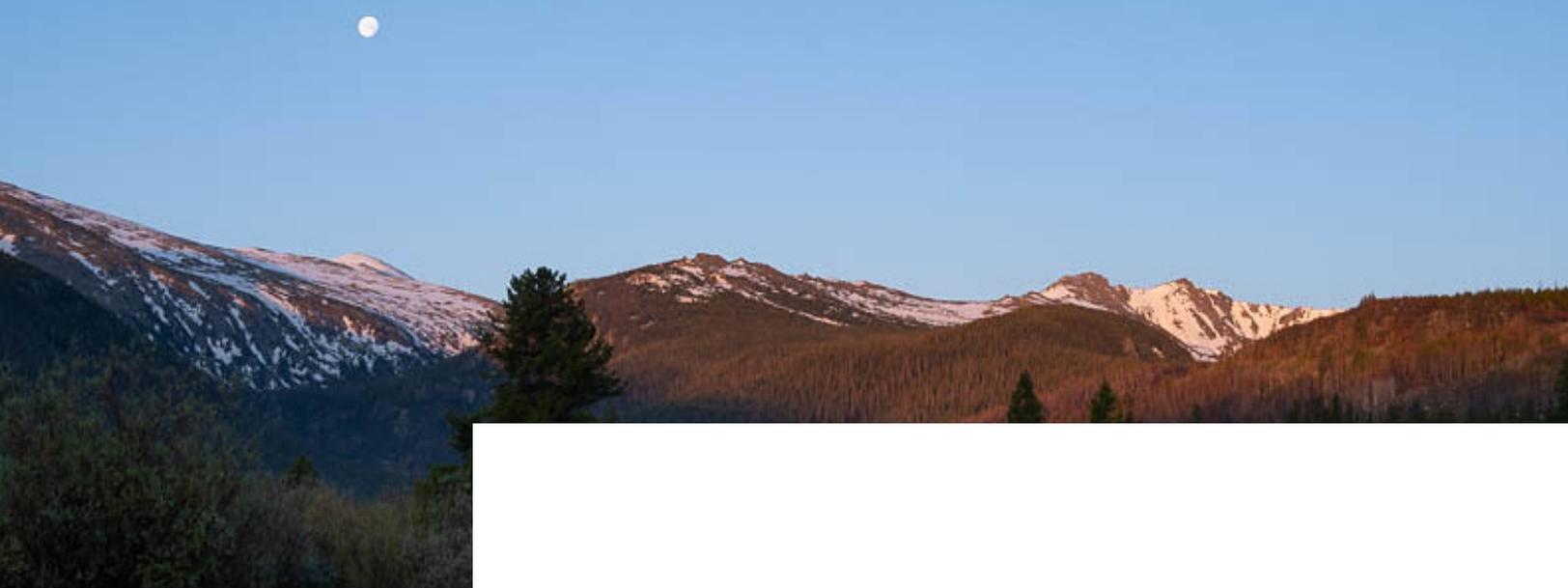
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