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commitment : a chronology and reflections on the years
1993-1998**

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Joanna Vaughn
The Smith College School for
Social Work Anti-Racism
Commitment: A Chronology
and Reflections on the Years
1993 – 1998

ABSTRACT

This research study was undertaken to examine the organizational changes involved in the establishment of the Smith College School for Social Work's commitment to anti-racism during the years 1993 – 1998 in order to establish a chronology of the changes and to collect community members' reflections on the process.

The retrospective case study involved interviews with 12 community members – faculty, staff, and alumni – who were present at the School between the years 1993 – 1998 and who were involved in some aspect of the changes. The members were interviewed about their involvement in the changes, their recollections of the changes, and their reflections on the changes. In addition to interviews, School documents were reviewed, including the Meeting Minutes of the Anti-Racism Task Force, in order to establish the chronology of the changes.

The findings are presented in two parts. Firstly, the data are organized into a chronology of the major events, interspersed with commentary from participant interviews regarding these events. Secondly, participant recollections are organized into five major themes regarding the processes of change that occurred. This study contributes to the literature regarding multicultural organizational development and methods of addressing institutional racism in higher education, and is hoped to be a contribution to

the Smith College School for Social Work, as it provides an additional study of the changes that are inextricable from the School's current mission.

THE SMITH COLLEGE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK ANTI-RACISM
COMMITMENT: A CHRONOLOGY AND REFLECTIONS
ON THE YEARS 1993 – 1998

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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2008

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It's through poetry that I first became interested in documenting.
Charles Simic best exemplifies the ethnographer's stance:

Secret History

Of the light in my room:
Its mood swings,
Dark-morning glooms,
Summer ecstasies.

Spider on the wall,
Lamp burning late,
Shoes left by the bed,
I'm your humble scribe.

Dust balls, simple souls
Conferring in the corner.
The pearl earring she lost,
Still to be found.

Silence of falling snow,
Night vanishing without trace,
Only to return.
I'm your humble scribe.

- Charles Simic

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Institutional racism is a pervasive factor in the distribution of resources in all types of organizations, including institutions of higher education (Figueroa & García, 2006). Addressing institutional racism and the disparity in the distribution of resources in higher education settings is an ever-present issue for colleges and universities. Graduate schools of social work are not exempt from these difficulties, and perhaps carry an even greater burden in their efforts towards equity, given their mission of preparing professionals for equivalent issues in the real world. Various strategies of addressing racism at the university level have been proposed (Figueroa & García, 2006; Minors, 1996), but there exist few examples of the documented changes of any organization, let alone a graduate school of social work, adopting a commitment to anti-racism.

The purpose of this study is to examine one graduate institution of social work, the Smith College School for Social Work, and the organizational changes involved in the establishment of the School's commitment to anti-racism. This retrospective case study examines the changes at the School between the years of 1993 – 1998. Interviews were completed with members of the Smith College School for Social Work community, including faculty, staff, alumni, and administration; in addition, School documents were analyzed to present the context of the changes and to further delineate the chronology. The study establishes a detailed chronology of the changes and

provides an examination of the participants' reflections and recollections of the changes at the School during the years 1993 – 1998.

The results of this study are relevant to higher education institutions, particularly schools of social work, and other organizations that are looking to address institutional racism, as this study presents one example of a school that has approached institutionalized racism through adopting an anti-racism commitment. The results are also relevant to the community of the Smith College School for Social Work, as it provides the community with an additional written narrative of the changes, the results of which are inextricable from the current mission and work of the School.

The Smith College School for Social Work's commitment to anti-racism appears in the School's literature as the Anti-Racism Statement (Appendix F). The statement was originally composed and adopted in 1994, and the most recent version was revised and voted into use in December, 2004:

Anti-Racism Statement

Racism is a system of privilege, inequality, and oppression based on perceived categorical differences, value assigned to those differences, and a system of oppression that rewards and punishes people based on the assigned differences. It is manifested politically, socially, economically, culturally, interpersonally, and intrapersonally, and grounded in the unique history of racism in the United States.

Smith College School for Social Work is committed to addressing the pernicious and enduring multilayered effects of racism. Anti-racism initiatives promote respect for and interest in multiple world views, values, and cultures. The School for Social Work develops and teaches knowledge, skills and values that enhance the ability to mutually affirm each other's equal place in the world. In addition, self-reflection and deepening conversations about race shape the School's anti-racism mission and promote culturally responsive practice, research and scholarship, and other anti-racism activities.

Additionally, the School's explanation of its Mission Statement (Appendix F) includes reference to its anti-racism efforts:

The School and Smith College are committed to promote social justice, service to society, and appreciation of individual and cultural diversity in a multicultural community. The School recognizes the pernicious consequences of racism and works to identify and diminish the overt and covert aspects of racism. Smith College School for Social Work is committed to work toward becoming an anti-racism institution.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review will include a discussion of literature relevant to the definition of and models for addressing institutional racism. In addition, literature regarding how organizations make structural changes and the historical context of the changes that took place at the Smith College School for Social Work will be reviewed.

The first section will focus on definitions and expressions of racism at the institutional level, with an emphasis on higher-education settings, schools of social work, and the Smith College School for Social Work. Section two of the review will examine models of addressing racism within organizations, with a focus on multicultural organizational development and anti-racism commitments. The third section will focus on literature about processes of organizational change. The fourth and final section will be devoted to establishing the historical context of the changes at the Smith College School for Social Work.

Institutional Racism

This section of the literature review will focus on discussions of the definition of institutional racism, the various forms of expression of institutional racism, with particular attention given to the arena of higher education, and a review of the literature

documenting institutional racism at graduate schools of social work and the Smith College School for Social Work.

Definition of Institutional Racism

The term *institutional racism* was first used by Stokely Carmichael, also known as Kwame Ture, a leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and later a member of the Black Panther Party who was active in the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Carmichael (1967) first used the term to differentiate between overt, "individual" racism and a "less overt" form of racism that "originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society," resulting in oppressive situations for Black people because of societal structures: "...it is institutional racism that keeps black people locked in dilapidated slum tenements, subject to the daily prey of exploitative slumlords, merchants, loan sharks and discriminatory real estate agents" (p. 4). Knowles and Prewitt (1969) defined institutional racism as a form of discrimination that denies access to resources for people of color in a systematic way. Pincus (2000) probed further into the matter, differentiating between *institutional racism* and *structural discrimination*, the latter of which is the unintended result of contemporary race-neutral guidelines that dictate policies. And, perhaps most importantly, Essed (1991) highlights how institutional racism goes undetected, as it places blame on *institutions* rather than *individuals*, "thereby severing rules, regulations and procedures from the people who make and enact them, as if it concerned qualitatively different racism rather than different positions and relations through which racism operates" (p. 36).

Perhaps it is the invisible nature of racism (Sue, 2005) that has contributed to the ever-evolving definition of institutional racism. The above definitions suggest an evolution of the definition to include covert effects of the structures of organizations and their cultures that inherently produce and reproduce privilege, and therefore, racism.

Figueroa and García (2006) draw on a number of authors to illustrate the intricacies of the nature and functioning of institutional racism:

Sue (2004) explains that what is taken for granted as normal routine actually veils racism and, therefore, becomes an unquestioned practice. Institutional racism relies on the contribution of unexamined attitudes and practices to remain undetectable, transformative in nature, and resilient (Knowles & Prewitt, 1969; Miles, 1989; Pincus, 2000). In other words, “We unintentionally enable and empower racism by making it invisible” (Sue, 2005, p. 106). Concepts like internalized oppression (Tatum, 2003), racial identity formation (Omi & Winant, 1994), racial microaggression (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and White privilege (McIntosh, 1989) reveal how unexamined ideology and practice work together to formulate varied iterations of institutional racism. (p. 195)

It is clear from the above definitions that institutional racism has two unique characteristics: it is insidious and it is indiscernible. It is these two characteristics, the insidious nature and the indiscernible nature of racism, that allow for racism’s pervasive perpetuation while posing the greatest challenge in forming solutions to address the problem. For a problem that tends to be pervasive yet, for the most part, invisible, what solutions can follow?

The Smith College School for Social Work’s Statement of Anti-Racism does not specifically use the word institutional racism in its declaration of what it attempts to address. However, since this research regards anti-racism efforts in a higher education setting and the organizational changes that contributed to and resulted from the adoption

of the anti-racism commitment, institutional racism is the defined arena of this literature review. The School's Statement of Anti-Racism (2004), as published on the website, includes a definition of racism, but does not specifically use the term *institutional racism*.

Racism is a system of privilege, inequality, and oppression based on perceived categorical differences, value assigned to those differences, and a system of oppression that rewards and punishes people based on the assigned differences. It is manifested politically, socially, economically, culturally, interpersonally, and intrapersonally, and grounded in the unique history of racism in the United States. (§ 1)

Expression of Institutional Racism

Miller and Garran (2008) outlined the comprehensive expression of institutionalized racism within agencies, much of which is relevant to institutional racism in higher education settings. Policies regarding staff hiring and retention and client eligibility (which correlate with admissions policies in universities) often covertly (and sometimes overtly) are expressed in racist ways, tilting opportunity and privilege to members of the dominant culture. Organizational culture may be affected by institutional racism, as expressed in the interpersonal relationships of the employees and the clients (students) they are serving. A third major expression of racism can be found in the organization of power within the agency: the locus of decision making and the determination of access all have implications for the distribution of resources.

The expression of institutional racism within institutions of higher education is well-documented (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1990; Chesler, Lewis & Crowfoot, 2005; Figueroa & García, 2006; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976). Chesler and Crowfoot (1990) provide a comprehensive list of the expression of institutional racism on campus, documenting forty ways that institutional racism affects the areas of a school's mission,

culture, power positions, membership, social relations and climate, technology, resources, and boundary management. This list is extensive, but certainly not exhaustive, and includes conditions such as “commitment is to the status quo of the society and the institution;” “stance toward racial incidents is reactive;” “rituals, technology, and standards of competence reflect white and Eurocentric dominance/exclusivity;” and “climate is not socially or academically supportive of faculty, staff, or students of color” (p. 75). These conditions are heaped upon various other conditions evolving from the absence of attention, services and resources for community members of color coupled with the unwavering adherence and dedication to the structures of the white¹, dominant culture.

Figueroa and García (2006) assert that institutional racism in higher education causes “the practice of gatekeeping and brokering resources and opportunities for some students and not for others” (p. 197). Additionally, they cite that the presence of diversity on college campuses both within the student body and within the faculty does not indicate campus-wide acceptance of that diversity. Specifically within the faculty realm, “White liberal faculty expressed resistance ‘to structural and curricular changes aimed at reducing racial tensions on campus’ because it appeared to water down scholarship” (Figueroa & García, citing Altbach, 1991, p. 198). Diversity does not necessarily translate into the reduction of racism, and Figueroa and García assert that “inviting

¹ APA guidelines dictate the capitalization of proper nouns, which includes the names of specific cultural, racial and ethnic groups (APA, 2001). I would like to borrow from Kimberle Crenshaw’s straightforward explanation of not capitalizing “white,” “which is not a proper noun, since whites do not constitute a specific cultural group” (Crenshaw, 1995).

diversity to exist loosely on a campus reflects a lack of responsibility and preparedness by administrators, faculty, and staff to understand the significant impact and meaning of a growing diverse student body” (p. 198). And within the student body, diversity certainly does not mean increased intergroup contact (Figueroa & García, citing Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002, p. 199). Loo and Rolison’s (1986) assertion that “in the absence of deliberate measures to integrate diversity, a diverse presence on campus becomes vulnerable to marginalization and being excluded from being equal participants in higher education” (as cited in Figueroa & García, p. 199).

Similarly, Rowley, Hurtado and Ponjuan (2002) used *institutionalism theory*, which posits that “institutionalized arrangements are reproduced because individuals often cannot even conceive of appropriate alternatives (or because they regard as unrealistic the alternatives they can imagine),” in their research on the effectiveness of higher-education institutions’ efforts towards diversity (p.14). Their research, entitled *Organizational Rhetoric or Reality? The Disparities Between Avowed Commitment to Diversity and Formal Programs and Initiatives in Higher Education Institutions*, found the operationalization of institutionalism theory through an examination of a U.S. Department of Education survey of 744 chief academic officers at four-year institutions. They report that their findings

strongly support our theoretical assertion that institutional rhetoric (e.g., mission statements, policies, and related actions) regarding diversity can function as myth or ceremony to the extent that this rhetoric provides institutions legitimacy in the broader contexts that embrace access to higher education and diversity as desirable goals...In other words, these institutions appear to be ‘talking the talk,’ but not ‘walking the walk’ as it relates to student diversity....(p. 18).

Further review of the literature documenting the expression of institutional racism on campuses risks reducing this somewhat invisible yet pervasive and destructive force to a mere list of occurrences that ought to be addressed. The study or documentation of a systemic problem such as racism poses challenges for the researcher, as concerns about insufficiency and accuracy arise, as it is impossible to paint a picture of the situation that approximates the reality of the expression of institutional racism.

Institutional Racism and Graduate Schools for Social Work

Graduate schools of social work are equally subject to the larger cultural dynamics that create institutional racism, despite the discipline's commitment to issues of social justice and social justice education. Miller and Garran (2008) make a clear case that issues of race and racism are relevant to schools of social work:

Social work is a multiracial profession, serving a multiracial clientele. The United States has been a racialized society since its inception. Thus it is not possible to practice social work in the United States without being profoundly influenced by the consequences of racism. (p. 34)

The expression of institutional racism at graduate schools for social work is no different than it is for other institutions of higher education. It is a systemic problem, with very deep historical, political, and societal roots. It is manifested in all areas of school functioning, including Chesler and Crowfoot's (1990) list: mission, culture, power positions, membership, social relations and climate, technology, resources, and boundary management. One prevalent area of the expression of institutional racism in schools of social work appears in the curriculum, as these schools must train social workers to work within the "racialized society" of the United States (Miller & Garran, 2008). The

perspectives, language, methodology, theories of pedagogy, and various other tools used to “train” social workers certainly all fall under the influence of adherence to the structures of the dominant culture. Further research regarding the prevalence of institutional racism and the methods used to address the problem among the country’s graduate schools of social work would be a valuable contribution to the field.

It is relevant within this subject to review the literature regarding the profession’s stance towards anti-racism efforts. The social work profession has claimed historical roots in anti-oppression work, but this could be seen as the result of revisionist history. The exclusion of people of color from settlements leading to the founding of Black settlements and the imposition of white middle class norms in the work of the Charity Organization Societies are examples in the early stages of social work’s history that suggest the story is more complex. More recently, the issues that led to the founding of ABSW in the 1960’s and the racialized debate about licensing subsequently confirm the complexity of this claim. Today, the National Association of Social Work maintains an anti-oppression stance as one of its defining characteristics (NASW, 2006, p.1). Both the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) outline commitments to anti-racism principles and work. As these two organizations provide guidelines and standards for schools of social work, anti-oppression principles and work translate to not only the profession but also the curricula and program structures of social work schools.

The NASW Code of Ethics (2006) makes clear the social work profession’s dedication to issues of oppression. Social justice is one of the six core values outlined by the professional organization. Additionally, Sections 1.05, 4.02, and 6.04 of the Code of

Ethics highlight the ethical standards, more specifically social workers' ethical responsibilities to their clients, their responsibilities as professionals, and their responsibilities to the broader society in developing cultural competency skills, not engaging in discrimination, and working to eliminate discrimination (NASW, 2006). The NASW Code of Ethics certainly calls for socially engaged action, but its enforcement stops at sexual and otherwise improper behavior with clients. Social workers are not held accountable for, for example, not working to eliminate discrimination. NASW's ethical injunction seems to fall short of a commitment to end racism.

The Council on Social Work Education maintains Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for schools of social work, and acts as the accrediting body for baccalaureate and graduate schools of social work. Within the EPAS, there are numerous references to the profession's commitment to anti-oppression and anti-discrimination, and the role of social work programs in promoting these principles. References to anti-oppression work in social work programs can be found in the EPAS (Appendix G) regarding the role of social workers, program objectives, curriculum content, as well as in the accreditation standards that are used for evaluating programs.

Neither the NASW nor the CSWE makes any recommendation or requirement as to how social service organizations or schools of social work might address their own issues of discrimination or institutional racism. The CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2004) dictate establishing a program in which "non-discrimination" and "respect for diversity" are part of the learning context (p. 16-17). Does adherence to the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards imply that a social work program is addressing the inherent racism within its own institution? The

EPAS, in its language and stance, most resembles race-neutral guidelines; Figueroa and García (2006) highlight the deficiency of such guidelines in addressing the real issues of institutional racism: "...race-neutral guidelines are meant to deny the social reality that race does matter, thereby leaving it up to the individual to bring resolution to racial injustice at a micro level" (p. 196).

Given the above guidelines, further research into how graduate schools of social work align their programs with these goals, and whether or not these goals and programs are indeed effective methods of dismantling racism, could be valuable. In other words, how do schools of social work reconcile the mandates of the EPAS, the Code of Ethics of the NASW, and the pervasive force of institutional racism?

Institutional Racism at the Smith College School for Social Work

There is a scarcity of literature documenting the existence of institutional racism at the Smith College School for Social Work. This paucity of writing may be due to the subject matter itself, as racism is granted space to function in silence and invisibility (Sue, 2005).

In one article regarding the School's commitment to anti-racism, Basham, Donner, Killough and Werkmeister Rozas (1997) present details regarding the situation at Smith College School for Social Work prior to 1996. Basham et al. reported that in 1986, three of 286 students were of color, and in 1996, 61 of 286 students were of color. The authors view this jump from 1% to 21% students of color as an improvement in the School's efforts to recruit and retain students of color. A 1987 Minority Alumni Conference, funded and hosted by the School under the direction of Dean Ann Hartman, generated a

number of proposals for change within the School, changes which can be assumed to address the alumni of color experiences of racism at the School. Basham et al. summarize the major themes of the proposals that emerged from the conference:

Specifically, the alumni recommended that the [1.] curriculum reflect a diversity of cultures and course content, [2.] that every bibliography contain published works by people of color, and [3.] that the faculty bring sensitivity to and experience working with people of color to their teachings. They proposed [4.] that a recruiter, experienced in enlisting students of color, be hired, and [5.] further delineated several methods by which we could recruit and retain students of color. They also recommended [6.] that the Sophia Smith Archives be expanded to include documentation of the School's efforts to recruit students of color, [7.] provide multicultural content within the curriculum, and [8.] chronicle the experiences of alumni of color at the School. Additionally, [9.] they asked the School to make its commitment to the alumni of color more visible [numbers added]. (p. 567)

From these suggestions it can be inferred that, in the areas of curriculum, recruitment, retention and documentation of the contributions and experiences of people of color at the School, the School was not providing for the needs of these students. This conference and the results of it will be further explored in the section of the literature review regarding the changes at the School.

Basham et al. (1997) cited the increase in the voice of students of color during the years of Dean Ann Hartman's tenure (1986 – 1994), as their isolation decreased and the support they received increased, and the authors documented some of the themes that emerged from these student voices. What resulted is an important, albeit insufficient in depth and detail, representation of the expression of institutional racism during the tenure of Dean Hartman. In an attempt to retain the gravity of the students' voices, the following is taken directly from Basham et al. without summarizing or paraphrasing, although Basham et al. do not document the source of this information.

- Students of color are marginalized at Smith while at the same time they are asked to be the primary messengers and experts on race.
- Issues relevant to race in the classroom are too often ignored, handled badly and/or processed so that too much or too little conflict is generated.
- The overall cultural milieu is White and students of color are expected to adjust to that milieu, or be excluded.
- Too frequently, content in the curriculum is inadequate, incorrect or inappropriate for understanding and working with people of color.
- There is insufficient support for students of color at Smith.
- There are not enough faculty of color, resident or adjunct.
- Field placements too often either exploit students of color in assigning them all clients of color, or do not use practice models which reflect cultural competence.
- The Racism Course serves the needs of White students better than the needs of students of color. (p. 568-569)

The documentation of institutional racism at Smith College School for Social Work is best exemplified through Basham et al.'s article. The School's alumni organization has established a fund for students who are interested in writing research theses regarding the experiences of students of color at the School. Perhaps through this effort as well as others, the expression of institutional racism at the Smith College School for Social Work will become a more visible and documented phenomenon.

Addressing Institutional Racism in Organizations:

Multicultural Organizational Development and Anti-racism Commitments

The literature in the fields of organizational management, organizational change, and organizational psychology is ever-expanding on the topics of *managing diversity*, *addressing racism*, and *creating an inclusive culture*. These are just some of the terms that have emerged on the subject of diversity in the workplace. The wide variety of language that has emerged to describe the field is evidence of the many angles that are taken by different researchers and writers of the subject. It is certain that organizations

and individuals within these organizations have different perspectives on the need and the methods of addressing racism within organizations. Here, various models of Multicultural Organizational Development are examined, with an examination of the deficits and pitfalls of some of the models.

Multicultural Organizational Development

Much of the literature regarding the development of cultural competency of organizations focuses on attending to the *multicultural development* of the organization (Cox, 1993; Golembiewski, 1995; Jackson & Hardiman, 1994; Jackson & Holvino, 1988; Minors, 1996; Sue, Carter, Casa, Fouad, Ivey et al., 1998; Valverde, 1998). The field of multicultural organizational development has certainly developed in the world of business and industry in response to the requirements of various state and federal programs, such as Equal Opportunity Employment and affirmative action policies. Additionally, the changing demographic of the United States workforce has caused an increase of focus on “managing diversity.”

Multicultural organizational development (MCO) is a term first used by Jackson and Holvino (1988), and was further developed by Jackson and Hardiman (1994). Jackson and Hardiman explain the four major tenets of MCO. Firstly, MCO takes the view that oppression is “systemic” and “entrenched” in organizations. Secondly, MCO is not successful simply by changing the individuals in an organization; this is only part of the work. Thirdly, MCO must involve both efforts to value diversity and to eliminate social injustices within the workplace. And lastly, MCO must address issues of oppression. It is in the last assumption that Jackson and Hardiman clarify that

“organizational development, which was initially intended to attend to various forms of inequity in organizational settings, appears to have moved away from this agenda” (p. 232), thus calling for development of multicultural organizational development.

The implementation of multicultural organizational development is less studied than the theory of MCOB. Various models of MCOB have been proposed, many of them utilizing a continuum and constructed around the developmental metaphor of an organization making progress towards the goals of inclusion. Minors (1996) provides one version of a continuum model, and asserts that organizations can identify themselves along a “continuum of growth” that encompasses three categories. *Discriminatory organizations* promote the dominant groups that hold power within the larger society. *Non-discriminatory organizations* deny difference and power relations and believe that all members are the same and should be treated the same. *Anti-discriminatory organizations* are “anti-racist” in Minors’ words, and “seek to redress the power inequities among individuals and groups” and “work actively to eliminate all forms of oppression” (p. 202). Minors suggests the following strategies in order to move along the continuum:

- Identify behaviors, practices, or structures that need to, and can realistically, be changed;
- Determine necessary sanctions and supports, including training and education;
- Plan for and implement changes appropriate to each stage; and
- Review, monitor, and institutionalize the changes. (p.208)

Sue, Carter, Casa, Fouad, Ivey et al. (1998) write extensively on the implementation of MCOB within mental health settings, focusing on the stage models of Adler (1986); Foster, Jackson, Cross, Jackson, and Hardiman (1988); Barr and Strong

(1987); and Cross, Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs (1989). Sue et al. assert that in order to move along the continuum, a process involving the following should be undertaken by organizations: an initial assessment, cultivating support for change, developing leadership for change, developing multicultural policies, and implementing change. Although these continuum models use varying terminology and have slightly different foci, they all outline a process that calls for an end to oppression within organizations, processes which involve a cultural assessment of the organization along a continuum of development, planning for change in order to move along the continuum, and implementation of change.

The reliance on a continuum for assessment and planning demands a focus on an end-goal. However, reliance solely on a continuum and planning for change is not sufficient, and, Minors (1996) reminds us, this process is one without end: “Ironically, these organizations are also the first to realize that there is no room for complacency – that change is continuous and the work of creating an anti-racist organization, and indeed an anti-racist society, is never done” (p. 208).

Multicultural Organizational Development in Practice

Nybell and Gray (2004), Chesler (1994), Hyde (2003), and Ferguson (1996) make compelling arguments in their demonstrations of the common pitfalls of multicultural organizational development. Although all four focus on multicultural organizational development within social service agencies, much of what they say might be transferable to institutions of higher education.

Continuum models are built on developmental metaphors, which contain underlying assumptions regarding the organization and the process of multicultural

development (Nybell & Gray, 2004). Firstly, these models assume that organizations are unified entities that can be assessed in such a way that they can be located on the continuum. Secondly, there is the assumption that the process of multicultural development is “universal and linear” (p. 18) along the continuum, retaining the developmental assumptions of individual people (Nybell & Gray, 2004). And thirdly, relying solely on a continuum model assumes that organizations can in fact move along the continuum, or make progress, through tasks such as rational goal setting, training, consultation, and hiring.

The above basic assumptions are drawn from “mainstream organizational developmental literature...[that] emphasizes a consensus model of organizational change and a set of rational, technical, and educational strategies for change” (Nybell & Gray, 2004, p. 18). The danger lies within the belief that organizations can “specify desirable organization ‘end states,’” and work rationally to arrive at this place through “goal setting, training, consultation, and hiring” (Nybell & Gray, 2004, p.18). Nybell and Gray emphasize that this model of developmental change is not suitable for the goals of multicultural development, and they cite Chesler (1994), who differentiates between organizational development and multicultural organizational development.

Chesler (1994) asserts that models of organizational development that are built on the process of achieving consensus and rational problem solving do not adequately address social injustice in the workplace. Chesler argues that when multicultural organizational development fails, it is because the basic goal of multicultural organizational development, which is to end racism and oppression in the workplace through a shift in power dynamics, becomes supplanted by conventional models of

organizational development, characterized by conflict-free consensus building. Chesler argues that a conflict-free process is not true multicultural organizational development; he argues that only models that allow for conflict will be effective in true multicultural organizational development.

Hyde (2003) illustrates further pitfalls in multicultural development by demonstrating, through research in twenty various social service organizations, that without undergoing “second-order” change, organizations implementing MCOOD cannot meet their goals. Hyde utilized the concept of *first-order change* and *second-order change* in her research to categorize types of change. She defines first-order change as “incremental [and]...largely involv[ing] the fine-tuning of the organization, but not fundamental transformation” (p. 41). Second-order change is “core or transformative...change, which involves a paradigm shift within the organization” (p.41). Hyde discovered that, within the twenty social service organizations, although the values of multicultural development required “second order” change, meaning change to the paradigm, the goals and activities point to “first order” change, and therefore fall short of aligning with the values. Hyde’s examination reveals the weaknesses in the implementation of some models of multicultural organizational development, and reports that “while the values indicate comprehensive transformation, the subsequent goals and activities do not fulfill such a vision” (p. 39).

In the same vein, Ferguson (1996) cites that despite the contributions of research, activism, and scholarly studies on the development of multicultural competence, social service organizations continue to support the policies and practices of institutionalized racism. She declared that the social service organization, with its mission to improve the

lives of those who are targets of oppression, is “a contradiction in terms” (p. 39) as without a holistic commitment against racism, multicultural work often takes a “band-aids” (p. 39) approach in response to complaints from employees, instead of examining the power dynamics and privilege that lead to problems.

Within organizations undergoing MCO, individuals’ perspectives of multiculturalism vary, creating an obstacle to the goals of the work (Nybell & Gray, 2004). Multicultural organizational development efforts within three child welfare agencies were perceived differently by “differently positioned” members of the organization (Nybell & Gray, 2004, p. 17). Conflicts will arise in the process of becoming “culturally competent,” in so far as the process involves, as it ought to, a redistribution of power and resources. Nybell and Gray assert that conflict is inherent in true multicultural organizational development, and that efforts towards multicultural development must “identify, surface, and renegotiate” conflicts (p. 17). Without addressing conflicts and redistribution of power, multicultural organizational development does not take place. Nybell and Gray cite Carol Williams, Deputy Commissioner of the Children’s Bureau, who in 1997 wrote about the dangers when conflict is not addressed within organizations during multicultural development:

What seems to happen in a lot of organizations is integration of the staff and a commitment to developing the right staffing complement, but then no one talks about it. The doors are opened, different players are brought to the table, and then there is no discussion about what it means to have different perspectives and different orientations; everything goes underground.” (p. 17, Williams, 1997, as cited by Nybell & Gray, 2004, p. 18).

Multicultural organization development must not only make space for but identify and invite conflict into the process. “Administrators and staff are not adequately prepared for organizational change through goal setting, knowledge building, and rational planning but need to be strategically engaged in surfacing and renegotiating conflicts instead” (Nybell & Gray, 2004, p 19).

Models of Anti-Racism Commitments

Recently, there has been a shift in the conceptualization of organizational development from processes along a continuum to processes of re-orienting organizations’ cultures around an anti-racism stance, introducing the anti-racism commitment model (Basham, Donner, Killough & Werkmeister Rozas, 1997; Donner & Miller, 2006; Ferguson, 1996; Miller & Garran, 2008). Ferguson (1996) underscored the importance of the difference between *anti-discrimination work* (multicultural development) and an *anti-racism orientation*, suggesting that the latter allows for deeper change and shifts in power within organizations. Miller and Garran (2008) continued along this line of thinking, highlighting the differences between a *multicultural organization* and an *anti-racism organization*. The former seeks to value all cultures and create equality among cultures while the latter orients its mission around the dismantling of racism in society. This orientation certainly includes the multicultural stance of the multicultural organization and Jackson and Hardiman’s (1994) and Sue et al.’s (1998) models of MCO, yet extends beyond MCO to openly examine and confront the underlying forces of power and privilege.

A continuum model is simply not enough used alone, but in conjunction with an anti-racism commitment, the continuum model is a useful tool. Both Donner and Miller (2006) and Miller and Garran (2008) support the notions of *anti-racism institution* and *anti-racism commitment*, but suggest the use of the continuum model in order to conduct an assessment and plan for changes *once the commitment is made*. They stress that once the commitment is made, change will flow from the commitment itself in the direction outlined by the assessment. Their thinking suggests that an anti-racism organization is *not* arrived at through a process, but is rather an orientation that demands multi-level change. Both articles mention the length of the process, and the title of Donner and Miller's (2006) article, "The Road to Becoming an Antiracism Organization," suggests that there is no end to the process. Likewise, Miller and Garran (2008), citing Hyde (2004), emphasized that organizations committing to anti-racism must "maintain dedication to this project for the long haul" (p. 222).

Change Within Organizations

In examining the process of change of an organization, the body of literature of organizational change can attempt to illustrate the ways that organizations go about making internal structural changes. The field of organizational change does not attempt to superimpose structure onto change, which is by its nature chaotic and unstructured (Caldwell, 2006). However, a number of theories attempt to describe the nature and characteristics of different types of organizational change. The theories tend to develop and rely on metaphors about how organizations function. The events that led to the

establishment of the Smith College School for Social Work's commitment to anti-racism occurred in various parts of the community: at the administrative level, within the corps of alumni, within the student body, among the faculty, and also within groups composed of members of multiple constituencies. Certainly the School followed a unique path in its course towards the anti-racism commitment. Although the establishment of the anti-racism commitment did not come about through a series of consecutive events each proceeding from the previous one, there is theory that can illuminate the path that was taken.

Organizations as Systems

One major metaphor within the organizational change literature is organizations as systems, biological systems more specifically. Katz and Kahn (1996, cited by Netting, Kettner & McMurtry, 2004) discuss open systems theory, which views organizations as akin to organisms, functioning interdependently within an environment. Organizations interact with their environment, acting upon and responding to the major external forces. Through this lens, organizational behavior is seen as “efforts to make beneficial environmental changes” (Katz & Kahn, 1996, cited by Netting, Kettner & McMurtry, 2004, p. 252). Included in the systems perspective is the notion of feedback mechanisms, as the system is a cybernetic, or self-correcting, system. Just as organisms gather information from their environment and adapt to the environment, organizations' survival depends on the same process of adaptation. In this way, change is seen as a process of adaptation to the environment.

Senge (1990) used the phrase *the learning organization* to describe organizations that can improve their results through a unique orientation to learning. He argues that learning is a fundamental human endeavor, and that the learning of individuals in an organization can be harnessed in such a way to improve the organization as a whole. Senge outlines five major “disciplines” at the heart of the learning organization. The “fifth” and most important discipline is using *systems thinking*, meaning the organization should view itself as one part of a much larger whole. Senge asserts that this kind of thinking should pervade the organization – from individuals as part of teams, teams as part of the organization, the organization as part of the surrounding community, and the community part of the larger world. Among other things,

systems thinking makes understandable the subtlest aspect of the learning organization...[which] is a shift of mind – from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something “out there” to seeing how our own actions create the problems we experience. A learning organization is a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality. And how they can change it. (p. 12)

Harro’s (2002) Cycle of Liberation is the response to the Cycle of Socialization (Harro, 2002). Harro calls for consciously developing the Cycle of Liberation through “‘nam[ing] the problem’ in terms of *systemic*” language, because “significant social change cannot happen until we are thinking on a systemic level” (p. 463). Both Harro’s and Kofman and Senge’s systemic perspectives call for holistic, transformative change.

Organizations as Societies and Communities: Change as Social Movement and Community Practice

A number of theories view organizations as societies, and the processes of change in organizations as correlative to social movements. These theories highlight processes of change that include foundations and steps towards change, and all take into account the dynamics of power as a real and powerful force shaping the path of change. Resource mobilization theory (Mulucci, 1995) attempts to explain how social movements occur; however, much of this theory can be applied to organizational change as it relates to institutional racism, as power is certainly addressed in this domain. Mobilization requires a collective identity, which is formed based on shared language and definitions, an active network, and emotional investment on the part of the members of the collective. Hardina (2002) relates how the basic tenets of resource mobilization can be applied to social workers' community practice. These same tenets can similarly be applied to change within a graduate institution of higher education that is addressing institutional racism. Hardina's basic assumptions are:

1. Social movements arise when groups are not represented in decision-making processes;
2. Public recognition occurs when there is protest;
3. Such a movement must develop an appropriate structure;
4. Success is dependent upon establishing a collective identity;
5. The better the organizations' message, the more membership will increase; and
6. Fund raising is always a problem because members will have limited resources and accepting funds from others may lead to abandoning the radical nature of the cause. (Hardina, 2002, cited by Netting, Kettner & McMurtry, 2004, p.57).

The metaphor of organizations as communities extends also to points made by Kofman and Senge (1993), who assert that the basis of learning organizations lies not

only in the systems perspective that these organizations adopt but also in the organization's identity as *communities of commitment*. The title of their article suggests the importance of this commitment: *Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations*. Kofman and Senge argue that dysfunction within organizations emerges as fragmentation, competition, and reactivity, and that these problems stem from "our success over thousands of years in conquering the physical world and in developing our scientific, industrial culture" (p. 6). Furthermore, Kofman and Senge assert that it is this very perspective that perpetuates itself with the mindset that we should "overcome these problems" (p. 6). The authors' solution to the problems of fragmentation, competition, and reactivity is in fact the systemic perspective, as "we recover 'the memory of the whole'" (p. 6). Kofman and Senge assert that at the center of the learning organization is a commitment to systemic thinking:

Thus the nature of the commitment required to build learning organizations goes beyond people's typical "commitment to their organizations." It encompasses commitment to changes needed in the larger world and to seeing our organizations as vehicles for bringing about such change. (p. 6-7).

Kofman and Senge, both professors at MIT's Sloan School of Management, state that learning organizations must be grounded in three foundations, the first of which is a "culture based on transcendent human values of love, wonder, humility, and compassion" (p. 16). With these values, conflict is rendered as "the ever-surprising manifestations of the world [that] show up as opportunities to grow, as opposed to a [*sic*] frustrating breakdowns for which somebody must take the blame" (p. 16). Within this model of learning organizations, Senge calls for *servant leaders* to supplant the traditional *hero leaders*. These servant leaders are committed to developing group leadership within the

organization, and hierarchies do not necessarily dictate who has “control” over others. Servant leaders lead “because they chose to serve, both to serve one another and to serve a higher purpose” (p. 18). And finally, Kofman and Senge assert that it is not only within the organizations themselves where the boundaries become blurred, but also within the individuals: “If learning becomes more integrated into how we work, where does ‘work’ and ‘learning’ begin?” (p. 19).

Kofman and Senge’s (1993) is not the only model of change that calls for “a shift that goes all the way to the core of our culture” (p. 22). Although Harro’s (2002) model address individuals’ own internal anti-oppression work, the concepts and metaphors beneath the ideas can be translated to the organizational realm. Like Kofman and Senge’s model, Harro’s model claims among its core values the qualities of love, balance, joy, support, and commitment.

Types of Change

Various types of change can occur in organizational change. As mentioned earlier, Hyde (2003) differentiates between first-order and second-order change, with second-order change involving changes to the paradigm of the organization, and first-order change involving “fine-tuning” (p. 41) of organizational policies and procedures.

Similarly, Patti (1980) identifies types of change through assessment of *generality* of the change and *depth* of the change. In terms of generality, Patti is referring to the “scope or pervasiveness of the proposal” (p. 116). Three degrees of generality can be used to assess the scope of change proposals: *1. Component*: change efforts that will

affect primarily the change agent or a small group associated with the change agent; 2. *Subsystem*: change efforts that will affect an entire unit of participants, such as a department or all caseworkers; and 3. *System*: change efforts that will have implications for the entire membership of the organization. Patti also suggests three levels to describe the depth of change efforts. 1. *Procedural*: change efforts that produce alterations in rules and procedures regarding the daily behavior of organization members without altering the purpose of the service. 2. *Programmatic*: change efforts that produce modifications to the programs so that the organization can more effectively adhere to its mission. 3. *Basic*: change efforts that produce shifts in the mission of the organization with a focus on a new set of problems and outcomes. Assessed simultaneously, the varying levels of generality and depth create nine possible classifications of change proposals. That is to say, change can occur on the scope of a subsystem, and on a programmatic depth, resulting in a unique picture that affects the organization in a unique way. Among other things, understanding the type of change that an organization will undergo can help predict that type of resistance that will be encountered in the change process.

Resistance to Change

Resistance to change may be met at various levels of the organization and during various stages of the change process. Patti (1980) writes at length about resistance to change in the context of human service organizations; however, the ideas can easily be transferred to the context of institutions of higher education.

Patti (1980) defines resistance as “those forces or conditions within the organization that tend to decrease the likelihood that decision-makers will accept or act

favorably upon a proposal for change initiated by an administrative subordinate” (p. 115 – 116). Patti asserts that there is a correlation between the degrees of generality and depth of change and the amount of resistance the change effort will encounter. Greater resistance will be encountered with proposals that have greater generality and / or depth. Patti writes: “This is to be anticipated since the more fundamental and far-reaching the proposal, the greater the costs of innovation and the potential for instability are likely to be” (p. 117).

Patti (1980) outlines various forms and causes of resistance, two of which are relevant to this study: the values of the decision-maker(s), and the concept of sunk-costs. The values of the decision-maker will certainly impact the major decisions involved in the change process. Patti identifies eight reasons that decision-makers might oppose a proposed change:

1. Power – authority and control over organizational behavior.
2. Money – increases in income or income substitutes
3. Prestige – respect and approval from those who are responsible for funding the agency, determining promotions, hiring and firing, and so forth.
4. Convenience – avoidance of conditions that will require additional personal efforts.
5. Security – protection against losses of personal power, prestige, or income.
6. Professional competence – respect from peers for knowledge, technical proficiency, or professionally ethical behavior.
7. Client service – achieving maximum program effectiveness and efficiency in the interest of better service to clientele.
8. Ideological commitment – maintenance of the agency as an instrument of an ideology or philosophical stance. (p. 118)

Patti (1980) also describes the notion of *sunk costs* as a source of resistance to change. The effort that members of an organization have put into to the organization’s arrangement and pattern of functioning is what is meant by sunk costs. These investments

include money, time, energy, and personal commitment. The greater the sunk costs in an organization's arrangement, no matter the level of functioning of this arrangement, the more resistance is likely to be encountered in efforts to change this arrangement. "Sunk costs, in other words, generate an organizational bias towards continuity" (p. 126).

The History of Anti-Racism Efforts at Smith College School for Social Work

Organizational Change at the Smith College School for Social Work: 1986-1994

Basham et al. (1997) provide a brief history of "early anti-racist efforts" (p. 566) at the School from 1986-1994. Ann Hartman, Dean of the School in 1986, was alarmed by the low number of students of Color: three of 286 students. Dr. Hartman viewed the need to increase diversity within the school as a necessary step, partly because diversity, in her view, was important in the education of competent social workers. As Basham et al. (1997) wrote, "...without a more diverse community to influence the direction of curriculum and programming, our curriculum would never sufficiently reflect what was necessary for students to work appropriately or competently with people of color" (p. 566). Additionally, Dean Hartman wished to increase enrollment of students of color in both the M.S.W. and Ph.D. programs in order to increase the number of professionals of color in the field. Dean Hartman made "changing our [the School's] response to race" (Basham et al., 1997, p. 567) a priority, and invited faculty, alumni, students and staff to participate in these changes.

One of the major events leading changes at the School was the Dean Hartman's decision to host and fund a Minority Alumni Conference in 1987. In essence, this event

was a landmark in the School's shift towards anti-racist efforts, as the School not only made room for, but invited and paid for, alumni of color to inform the School how they could improve the program for students of color. In her history of the School, Ann Hartman (2008) writes about her decision to hold the Minority Alumni Conference:

Taking a page from family network therapy in which everyone with interest in a problem is called together to solve it, and with the financial support of President Mary Maples Dunn, the following summer I invited every person of color who had graduated from the school to come back and help us with what I considered to be a genuine crisis. (p. 21)

This conference surely set the stage for further, larger commitments from the School regarding issues of race and racism. The conference resulted in a list of 33 suggested changes in the areas of curriculum, recruitment, retention, and documentation of the contributions and experiences of students of color at the school. Basham et al. (1997) documented a few of the suggestions, summarized as follows:

- The curriculum should reflect a diversity of cultures in course content.
- Every course bibliography should include published works by people of color.
- The faculty should bring their experiences of working with clients of color into the classroom.
- A recruitment officer experienced in recruiting students of color should be hired.
- The Sophia Smith Archives should include documentation of the School's efforts to make these changes as well as chronicles of the experiences of alumni of color at the School.
- The School should make its commitment to students of color more visible.

Dean Hartman's first response was to increase funding for students of color to attend the School; without more students of color, other changes would not be able to occur.

Increasing enrollment became both an end in itself and a means to an end. In addition to increasing the enrollment of students of color, a number of changes were implemented in

the fall of 1987 in response to the alumni proposals. Basham et al. summarized some of these changes: the school increased funding for scholarships for students of color, a part-time minority student recruiter was hired, and the Field Department adopted a “proactive stance” in confronting issues of racism experienced by students in the field (p. 568).

Basham et al. (1997) reported that the most immediate changes were seen in the increase of the number of students of color enrolled at the school and cited that changes in the curriculum did not occur immediately. In order to increase the number of students of color enrolled, the Admissions Office became a major arena of the change efforts during Dean Hartman’s tenure. A faculty Admissions Director with a commitment to diversity and skills in developing diversity was appointed in the Admissions Office. The process of reading applications was examined, and within the next few years, applicants of color and the number of students of color began to increase. The position of Admissions Director became a full-time position occupied by a person of color with the skills and motivation for recruitment of applicants of color. Basham et al. noted two major conditions created by the increase in the number of students of color that contributed to the School’s ability to do further anti-racism work. Firstly, a critical mass of students of color allowed the experiences and voices of students of color to enter more fully into classroom discussions and also into the dialogue within the School about the School. Secondly, the critical mass of students of color increased the attractiveness of the School to all applicants, including applicants of color.

In conjunction with the faculty, Dean Hartman established the Bertha Reynolds Fellow Program, which annually sponsors a doctoral candidate. The program’s goal is to support the research of professionals of color who are interested in pursuing a future in

academia. The fellowship includes a part-time position on the faculty as well as a part-time independent research on their own work.

The increase in attention to issues of diversity, race, and racism culminated in a decision by the faculty in the spring of 1994 to become an “anti-racist organization.” There is little information about this vote, but it seems that it prepared the School for a number of events that took the School forward in its development as an anti-racism institution.

Organizational Change at the Smith College School for Social Work: 1994 – 1998

Major changes took place at the School between the years of 1994 – 1997. In the spring of 1994, the faculty voted to become an “anti-racist” organization (later changed to “anti-racism” organization). There is little in the literature regarding the process that occurred around this, but it can be assumed that the changes occurring during Dean Hartman’s tenure and the focus on shifting the School culture in order to better meet the needs of students of color surely set the stage for the adoption of the commitment. In the summer of 1994, students held a demonstration outside the administration building following their dissatisfaction with the way students of color had been assigned to the course entitled *Racism in America* (later changed to *Racism in the U.S.*). This led to beginning conversations between students, faculty, and administration about the School’s policies that affected institutional racism. From this summer on, change continued to take place on a variety of levels and within a variety of the School’s departments, including a substantial change to the Mission Statement and the addition of an Anti-Racism Statement. The major arenas of changes over these four years were: the curriculum and

structure of the Racism in America course; the formation and purpose of the Anti-Racism Task Force; the Mission Statement of the School; the Anti-Racism Statement; the formation and function of the Monitoring Committee; the school-wide curriculum; Field Placement policies and procedures; the recruitment and retention of students of color; the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color and the training of faculty and staff.

Members from all the constituencies of the School were involved in the changes: faculty, students, staff, and alumni. Various established procedures and structures were used throughout the change process, but the major changes all had to ultimately be voted on by the faculty at monthly faculty meetings. This research project seeks to elaborate on this process of change that was summarized briefly here.

Summary

There is abundant literature written regarding the definition and expression of institutional racism in organizations. Most models for addressing institutional racism utilize the developmental paradigm, but there has been a recent focus on the anti-racism commitment model. Although both models may have similar goals, the conceptualizations of the nature of institutional racism and the direction of progress are quite different. Much literature has been written documenting the efforts of agencies following the developmental models of multicultural organizational development. However, little is known about the processes of change involved in the adoption of an anti-racism commitment. This research study will increase the literature in this area, exposing parts of the story of the establishment of the Smith College School for Social Work's commitment to anti-racism.

Documenting the exact historical context of the changes is an impossible task due to the dearth of documentation regarding the culture of the school and the expression of institutional racism particular to the School that initiated the process of change. I feel that without this history, the complete story is unattainable. However, this study will contribute to a fuller telling of the story of the Smith College School for Social Work than what is currently available to the School by providing a reflection on the unique and profound process of change.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to answer the following question: What were the organizational changes involved in the establishment of the Smith College School for Social Work's commitment to anti-racism? In order to answer this question, I used a retrospective case study design with flexible methods in an effort to develop an historical account of the changes that took place at the School. The case study model allowed me to focus on one unit – in this case the Smith College School for Social Work – and perform detailed, in-depth research about a process of change that occurred between the years 1993 – 1998. Case-studies can be particularly useful when studying processes of change (Anastas, 1999, citing Fonagy & Moran, 1993; and Gilgun, 1994). Additionally, case studies can be used “for recognizing both that something IS and WHAT it is” (Anastas, 1999, citing Kuhn, 1970, p. 85). This study recognizes that the changes in fact occurred at Smith, and attempts to describe what the process entailed. Unique to this case study is the retrospective stance, as this research is occurring in 2008, ten years after the end of the time period under investigation, which is 1993 – 1998.

Consistent with case study practices, more than one source of data was used. I examined public School documents, such as meeting minutes, reports, and articles regarding the research topic. In addition, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the members of the Smith College School for Social Work community

who were present during the years of investigation. Multiple sources of data create triangulation of the research information, which lends credibility to the research process (Anastas, 1999). Data from one source was used to confirm and elaborate on data from another source. For this process to occur, large amounts of data were collected.

My relationship to the unit being studied is an intimate one, in that I am currently a student at the institution that is examined in this study. This has allowed me relatively easy access to necessary documents as well as a favorable position to find research participants. However, I am also quite removed from the research topic, as the years of research are, as of this writing, ten and more years in the past.

The benefit of the case study lies not in any statistical significance, and in this case, generalizability of the study is low, as no one process of change is the same as any other. However, this case study, like others, may be used “for theory generation, theory elaboration, and/or examining the goodness of fit between theory and data describing the case” (Anastas, 1999, p. 95).

Sample

Participants involved in this study were all either current or former members of the Smith College School for Social Work community (faculty, staff, and alumni) who were present at the school at some point during the years of 1993 – 1998 and who were involved in the changes regarding the anti-racism commitment. Twelve participants took part in the study. Of the twelve participants, two were male, and ten were female. Five of the twelve participants were faculty during the years under investigation; three were staff members, and four were students. Five of the participants were people of color, and the remaining seven were white. Further identification of participant characteristics risks

revealing participant identities. However, the participants have held numerous elected and assigned positions and offices at the School, both in student organizations and administrative configurations. Many of the participants were involved in the Anti-Racism Task Force.

The snowball sampling method seeks to ensure that as many people as possible are contacted regarding their interest in participating. I used documents from 1993 - 1998, such as meeting minutes and luncheon notices (weekly notices with schedule and announcements), as well as published articles and current published information about the School, to find names of faculty, staff, and alumni who were involved in the changes leading to and following the establishment of the anti-racism commitment. In addition, I gathered referrals for participants from members who were present during the time period to be studied. Members of the community were able to share their knowledge of who was around during the critical stages of changes.

Upon compiling a list of the names of community members involved in the process of change between the years of 1993 - 1998, I reduced the list to the 12-15 community members who appeared to have been very involved in the change efforts as determined through various school documents, such as the Anti-Racism Task Force meeting minutes. This list was created with efforts to represent members from all constituencies of the School, as well as making efforts to create proportionality between the racial/ethnic and gender identities of the participants and the racial/ethnic and gender identities of the members of the Smith College School for Social Work community that existed during the years between 1993 – 1998. I sent these individuals the Letter of Recruitment through email (Appendix C).

Over the course of data collection, invitations were sent to nineteen community members. As soon as twelve participants who fit the requirements for the study responded affirmatively, efforts to recruit others were suspended. Certainly there were hundreds of people involved in the processes of change that occurred at the School between the years of 1993 – 1998. Twelve is a small sample, but represents a reasonable proportion of community members who played significant roles in the processes of change. However, it must be noted that due to the limitations of this master's thesis study, mostly time limitations, a number of community members who were involved in the changes did not participate in this study. Their perspectives are missing.

Data Collection

This study was approved in December, 2007, by the Human Subjects Review Committee at Smith College. The application process involved providing a detailed description of how federal guidelines for research would be followed, including how participant identity would be protected. All procedures outlined in the Human Subjects Review application were and will continue to be followed.

The process of recruitment involved the following steps. An eligible member of the School community was identified by the researcher from either School documents or through the referral process described above. I gathered the member's contact information and sent a Letter of Recruitment, explaining the research study and inquiring into the member's willingness to participate. If an email address was not available, I sent a letter through the mail. Upon receiving a positive response from an eligible participant, I contacted the member to confirm their participation, and I sent the Letter of Informed

Consent (Appendix D) and the Interview Guide (Appendix E) in the case that they might want to reflect on the topic before the interview. The potential participant was invited to communicate either through email or phone in order to discuss the research study in further depth. At this time, the participant was invited to ask questions to clarify the nature of the study or his or her participation and to establish a time and location of an interview. In the case that members did not respond to the Letter of Recruitment, either one phone call or one email was sent to follow up on their interest in participating.

Letters of Informed Consent were sent to participants by postal mail or email, if email was available. In postal mail correspondence, two copies of the letter were sent so that participants could keep a copy for their own records. In order to return the signed letter, participants were also sent an addressed and stamped envelope; participants were given the alternate option of bringing the signed letters with them to the interview and presenting the letter before the interview begins. Extra copies of letters of Informed Consent were available at the interview site in the case that the participant forgot to bring their letter. In this case, participants signed the letter of Informed Consent before the interview process began.

In order to safeguard confidentiality, a number of precautions were taken. Strict confidentiality was and will be maintained as consistent with Federal guidelines and the mandates of the social work profession. Participants' names were removed from the data, and each participant was assigned a number to be used in the coding and analysis process of the data. The information that links the assigned number to the name of the participant was kept separate from the data to be analyzed. However, participants' racial/ethnic

identity, gender identity, and position at the School, may be retained in the coding and analysis process as well as in the final report.

In order to further protect the identity of participants, signed consent forms were kept separate from data that was gathered through interviews. Confidentiality will be maintained, but it may not be possible to completely protect the anonymity of a participant. For example, a participant may have been viewed in public with this researcher. Efforts to protect anonymity will include offering the participant a variety of interview locations, dates, and times to choose from.

In the preparation of the material for public presentation, data from participants' responses will be presented in groups so that data does not suggest the response of a particular participant or member of the school. Illustrative vignettes and quotations will be presented in a way that does not reveal the identity of the contributor.

Confidentiality will be further protected by storing the data in a locked file for a minimum of three years as required by Federal regulations; after that time, it will be destroyed or continue to be kept secured as long as it is needed as determined by the status of the research project at that time.

Participants were informed that the research advisor for the study had access to the data but without identifying information. Additionally, participants were informed of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time up to April 1, 2008 by contacting myself, and that if they decided to withdraw, all materials pertaining to them would be destroyed.

Narrative data was gathered from twelve participants using semi-structured, open ended interviews. Interviews ran 45-60 minutes. Flexible methods of research allowed for

adaptation of the interview guide to match the participant's role at the School, as well as to elicit as much data as possible with respect to the interviewee's participation in the changes. Unanticipated themes arose and were explored thoroughly. Flexible methods of research also allowed for the case of three of the nine interviews to take place over the phone, as face to face interviews were not possible.

Efforts were made to address participants' concerns by giving participants a chance to express these concerns and have their questions answered before submission of the consent form. All information was held in confidence; however, due to the historical and narrative nature of this research, the final research report will reveal the fact that participants have contributed information, while not mentioning identifying information of the participants. Because some participants, by virtue of their specific roles at the School, may be personally identifiable, that risk was shared explicitly with the participants and every effort was made to report specific comments in ways that will make it difficult to attribute a particular comment to a particular individual.

During the interview, participants were asked to share their demographic information as well as personal information about their position in the School community. The Interview Guide (Appendix E) is based on the model of phenomenological interviewing, allowing participants to respond to open-ended questions in order to reconstruct their experiences within the topic of the establishment of the anti-racism commitment. The interview guide included questions in three main categories. Firstly, a list of questions regarding participants' role at the School invited participants to re-orient themselves with the years of the changes. Secondly, a list of questions regarding details of participants' experiences allowed participants to provide in-depth and detailed data.

Thirdly, a list of questions pertaining to participants' interpretation of the meaning of the process of change allowed for participants to give their reflections on the changes.

Interviews were documented using audio recording and note-taking; the audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher.

In addition to narrative data from interviews, data was also gathered from School documents. The following were major sources of written data: the Anti Racism Task Force meeting minutes, 1994 – 1998; notes and memos regarding the changes, collected by Josh Miller, member of the Anti Racism Task Force, regarding the changes during the years 1994 – 1998; the biannual progress reports compiled by the School, entitled *School for Social Work Progress Report on Anti-Racism Mission Statement*, years 1999 and 2007.

Data Analysis

Interviews took place over the course of three months. Initial interviews were coded, and the themes that were identified served as additional guides in the remaining interviews. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and the qualitative data were analyzed using elements of the grounded theory method, with constant comparison of data both from documents and interviews. A spreadsheet outlining the major components of the chronology and the major themes of the interviews was used to facilitate data analysis and manipulation.

The original research question called for coding of data for a chronological narrative. In addition, the constant comparison method revealed a number of other prominent themes pertaining to participants' reflections and interpretations of the changes.

This in-depth retrospective case study design utilized flexible methods to gather qualitative data from participants regarding a unique process of change that occurred at one graduate school for social work. School documents, such as meeting minutes, memos, and articles, provided necessary data for the framework of the narrative and for the interviews themselves. The findings include a narrative of the changes with commentary from participants, a unique contribution to the School's history.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This research project was designed to reveal a chronology of the major events that occurred at the Smith College School for Social Work during the years of 1993 – 1998 relevant to the adoption of the anti-racism commitment. In addition to a chronological narrative, the findings revealed participants' personal reflections about the changes. The findings are presented in two major categories: the chronology of the changes, and participants' reflections about the changes.

The first section of the findings reveals details about the changes that occurred in the establishments of the commitment to anti-racism at the Smith College School for Social Work. I present a chronological report of the changes that occurred and I depict a picture of the process that is faithful to the difficulties that were involved. The changes are examined through a number of discrete areas of the School, such as the history of the racism course, the curriculum, and the hiring of faculty and staff. An additional, non-chronological piece of this section discusses choices of language made throughout the process.

The second section of the findings illustrates participants' subjective reflections about the processes of change. Five themes were identified: participants' attribution of the changes to various causes and conditions; participants' reflections on the significance of the commitment; participants' perceptions of what is involved in the adoption of an

anti-racism commitment; participants’ recollection of concerns that arose during the process; and finally, participants’ personal response regarding what surprised them about the process.

The Chronology of the Changes

The chronology of the changes that contributed to and resulted from the adoption of the anti-racism commitment during the years 1993 – 1998 reveal a number of major events. This chronology is summarized in the following tables (Tables 1, 2, and 3).

Table 1: Summary of Major Changes, 1993 - 1998	
Racism course revamped	1994 – 1998
Curriculum amended to include an infusion of content on race and racism	1994 – 1998
Revision of Mission Statement	1996
Creation of Monitoring Committee	1995 – 1996
Increased anti-racism training for the whole community	1994 – 1998
Addition of anti-racism field projects	1997
Increased attention to recruitment and retention of community members of color.	1994 – 1998

Table 2: Timeline of Major Changes, 1993 – 1998.	
Spring, 1994	The faculty vote to become an “anti-racist institution”
	Dean Ann Hartman retires
Summer, 1994	Students of color and white allies walk out of the racism course to protest the fact that the course does not meet the needs of students of color.
	Acting Dean Susan Donner calls a school-wide meeting to discuss the racism course.
	Community members form the Racism Task Force (later changed to the Anti-Racism Task Force).
Academic Year, 1994 – 1995	Faculty voted to add a new “advanced” racism course to the curriculum.
	Faculty voted to run two sections of “50/50 mixed” composition for the next summer in order to meet the needs of students of color. However, students want a separate section of the course offered to students of color.

	Faculty amend the curriculum of the racism course.
Summer, 1995	Two “50/50 mixed” sections of the racism course are run. The remainder of the sections are all white.
Academic Year, 1995 – 1996	The new mission statement was adopted: The School joins with Smith College in its commitment to promote social justice, service to society, and greater appreciation of individual and cultural diversity in a multicultural community. It recognizes the pernicious consequences of racism and works to identify and overcome the overt and covert aspects of racism (Memo, To Students, Staff, and Faculty of the SCSSW Community, From Steve Grolnic A’97, student representative (RTF) and Kathryn Basham, Faculty Liaison (RTF).
	Faculty voted to initiate a Monitoring Committee to evaluate the SSW’s anti-racism efforts. The Committee includes representation from students, administrative staff, support staff, faculty, alumni, and the Council for Students of Color.
	Faculty voted to endorse an experimental plan to float a section of the racism course for students of color.
	Resident faculty met at two retreats to discuss racism at the School, in addition to further trainings.
	The School was reaccredited, and the Anti-Racism Task Force placed a large role in this process.
Summer, 1996	The racism course is run with a section offered to students of color.
	Six Bertha Reynolds Fellows were invited to work with the community on issues of diversity and anti-racism at the School.
Academic Year, 1996 – 1997	The Field Office introduces anti-racism assignments for students in the field: an agency assessment for first-year students, and an “action piece” for second year students to occur within the students’ placements. The faculty voted to adopt this.
Summer, 1997	The Anti-Racism projects are introduced to the students.
Academic Year, 1997 – 1998	A student makes a formal complaint to the U.S. Department of Education about race-based sections of the racism course.
	The practice of offering a separate section of the racism course to students of color is abandoned due to involvement of the U. S. Department of Education.
Summer, 1998	The School reverts back to randomly assigning all students to the various sections of the racism course.

Table 3: Major Areas of Change, 1993 - 1998		
The Racism Course	Spring, 1994	Minor changes made to the course for the remainder of the summer after the walk-out.
	Academic Year, 1994 - 1995	New "advanced" race course is added to the syllabus. Students can waive out of basic course with prior academic experience. Racism course curriculum is amended.
	Summer, 1995	Two sections of 50/50 mixed are run in the basic course, with the remainder of the sections all white. Students still want separate section of course for students of color. The advanced course runs.
	Academic Year, 1995 - 1996	Faculty poll students. ARTF supports the creation of a separate section for students of color. Faculty vote to float an experimental section the following summer.
	Summer, 1996	A separate section of the course is offered for students of color.
	Summer, 1997	No changes from the previous summer.
	Academic Year, 1997 - 1998	A student files a complaint with the Dept. of Education about the race-based sections. The practice of offering a separate section of the course to students of color is abandoned.
	Summer, 1998	The School returns to the practice of assigning all students randomly to the various sections of the course.
Curriculum	Various dates, 1994 - 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School moves to a model of "infusion of content on race and diversity." The Monday night lecture series is an additional arena of attention with regards to content on race, racism and diversity.
Adoption of the Mission Statement	Academic Year, 1995 - 1996	Faculty voted to adopt the new mission statement.
Creation of the Monitoring Committee	Academic Year, 1995 - 1996	Faculty voted to establish the Monitoring Committee to oversee and evaluate the anti-racism efforts of the School (now called the Anti-Racism Consultation Committee).
The School undergoes reaccreditation	1996	The ARTF plays a large role in amending School documents to reflect the anti-racism mission statement.
Addition of	Academic	Faculty vote to approve the addition of the first-year

Anti-Racism Field Projects	Year, 1996 – 1997	agency assessment assignment and the second-year anti-racism field project.
Increased anti-racism trainings for the whole community	Various dates, 1994 - 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty starts to meet monthly to discuss issues of race and racism.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of the orientation to the anti-racism commitment and the anti-racism symposium for first-year students.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased training for adjunct faculty and summer community.
Increased attention to recruiting community members of color: students, faculty, staff	Various dates, 1994 – 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention to process of hiring and supporting faculty, students, and staff of color.

Spring, 1994: Faculty Vote to Become an Anti-Racist Institution

Various sources document the faculty’s decision to become an “anti-racist” institution in the spring of 1994. This was the culmination of the previous efforts of the School under the direction of Dean Ann Hartman, who also retired in the spring of 1994. Basham et al. (1997) reference this vote but describe it as somewhat underdeveloped in its scope:

In the spring of 1994, the faculty at the School voted to become an anti-racist institution. Though not done without discussion, this decision was made with little articulation about what this decision would actually mean. (p. 565)

Later, the Anti-Racism Task Force references this same vote as a means to reexamine this decision in order to expand on its significance.

In 1994, the faculty strengthened this component of its mission when it committed to working toward the School becoming an anti-racist institution, with all of the many meanings that concept implies. (ARTF Position Paper Preamble, Draft, 1/10/95)

A number of participants recall this vote as important, but not accompanied by any type of plan of action or statement about the implications of the vote. One participant recalls this vote as the School's intention to make "a commitment to deal with race and to have a more diverse student body and faculty group, but not in a very assertive or aggressive way" (Participant 11). Another participant remarks similarly:

We made the [decision to become an anti-racist institution]..., but it was really superficial and clumsy. It was not elaborate and really well-thought through. We came up with something, and we discussed what it means in terms of issues of race and racism, and how we want to bring on the issues of race and racism but it really was not thought through. (Participant 6)

However "superficial and clumsy" this decision was, participants cite this vote as instrumental in the inciting the process of change that began in the summer of 1994 with the walk-out, suggesting that it was the spring faculty vote that set the expectations for increased consciousness from the School community, which in turn prompted the walk-out.

[The walkout] wouldn't have happened if the School hadn't raised expectations, because it was starting to seriously grapple with racism, because the course really did make a difference, and people expected more. Lots of students of color who went through the program...never had any hope for change, and they had to go along with the School's whiteness, and maybe be hurt or angry about it, but just have to get through it. I think white students hadn't thought about racism a lot. So the students' revolting had something to do with the conditions being laid for them to have the expectations and consciousness that it's worth doing. (Participant 11)

Summer, 1994: The Student Walk-out.

In the summer of 1994, students in the Racism in America course walked-out of their classes in protest, and marched to Lilly Hall, the School for Social Work administration building. This protest had been planned in the preceding days as an effort

on the part of students of color to demonstrate to the administration and faculty their dislike of the composition and curriculum of the Racism in America. The protest was widely attended by both students of color and white allies. The students' complaint was that the composition and curriculum of the racism course did not meet the needs of students of color. The protestors wanted the School to offer the students of color their own section of the racism course with a curriculum and course structure that met their needs. Basham et al. (1997) mention the "cascade of events" that began with the faculty vote and the student walk-out that "would lead the School on its patch toward anti-racism" (p. 584). One participant also remarks on the importance of the walkout:

It was really significant that students protested very strongly about that and I think that's significant because any system doesn't dramatically change on its own. So even though we had good intentions and we were already doing things that were putting down some tracks, that [the walkout] split everything open. So it was a dramatic event. (Participant 11)

The racism course was a small-group discussion-based course that explored issues of race and racism in the United States. Participants remarked that various factors of the racism course had caused it to be a focus of discontent and change at that time. The discussion format of the course, the provocative course content, the School's focus on self-reflection and the psychodynamic practice of exploring the dynamics of human relationships all contributed to the conversations that evolved in the Racism course (Participant 11, Participant 5, Participant 8, Participant 12, Participant 6). These factors created a course that allowed for the unearthing of classroom discussions pertaining not just to the history of racism, but to students' personal experience, and more specifically, students' personal experiences on campus and in the classroom. Because of these factors, the class discussions began to focus on the issue at hand: the expression of privilege and

racism that shaped the experiences of students of color at the School. In this way, the racism course became, as one participant described, “a lightning rod” (Participant 6) for changes at the School.

A brief history of the racism course allows for examination of the role of the course and the impact of the walk-out on the ensuing series of events (See Figure 1).

The History of the Racism Course

In the late 1970's, the School's efforts to address issues of racism and multiculturalism involved an increase in the recruitment of students of color. An additional required course was added, titled “American Racism: Implications for Clinical Practice” (Hartman, 2008, p. 20). One participant described this course as “really pretty spectacularly not successful” (Participant 12) in terms of meeting the needs of social work students in their preparation for successful clinical social work. This participant recalled that Dean Ann Hartman converted the format of the racism course from one lecture course for all students to several discussion sections entitled Racism in America (later changed to Racism in the U.S.). She also commented that this was a financial commitment for the School, as they not only had to pay for more sections, but also decided to have biracial teaching teams composed of one white teacher and one teacher of color. However, she added that this new format of the course allowed for discussion-based learning about race and racism (Participant 12).

The School had also made a commitment to ensure that students of color would not be marginalized in the various sections of the racism course. The School had worked to formulate a plan that would ensure that no student of color would be placed in a racism

class alone, which would have resulted in the student's feeling isolated and exploited. However, due to the low number of students of color, and despite the School's efforts at preventing this situation, students of color certainly felt that their needs in the racism course were not being met. Basham et al. describe the racism course at that time focusing on a review of "White people's stereotypes of people of color and focused on White guilt. Students of color often felt not only as though their presence was food for thought for the White students' education, but also that the course as a whole was not meeting their unique needs" (p. 573). One participant remarked, in response to the School's attempts to mitigate feelings of isolation by not isolating students of color, "you could hardly call three to four students [of color] a critical mass" (Participant 8). Additionally, she adds:

...what I remember is that, you know, students of color had for a long time raised their concerns about the course not meeting our needs in terms of the course really being geared towards white people accepting their privilege and dealing with their guilt, so, it really felt like one, they weren't learning anything, and two, were kind of being, I wouldn't quite use the word exploited, but the whole atmosphere, because there were so many white students of color, and mostly, you'd get one or two students of color in a class with you if you were lucky, that it felt like, all white students wanted to do was to hear students of color stories. So it felt...I guess exploitive in that way and painful for people [of color] to have to...talk about what they experienced and have [white] people have no kind of experience with that, or you know, kind of be more intrigued by it than concerned about it. (Participant 8)

Another participant recounts prior experiences of students of color in courses besides the racism course.

What I sensed, or what generally seemed to happen in some classes, [is that]... some incident would occur. Something would be said wrong, something would be taught wrong, and it would raise the concerns of the student. So that [the racism course] was not the only class. I understand from one of the students at one time in the Child Development class that when they looked at pathology, they focused on the pathology of the Black child....it might have happened more in the racism class, but it might also have been the fact that the faculty were not incorporating issues around cultural complexity into their class. (Participant 5)

One participant recalls that the students of color had certainly voiced their concern regarding the racism course prior to the walkout.

The Council for Students of Color...had been saying to the Deans and the faculty I think for several years, look, we're just,...I think they were primarily, then, focusing on the curriculum, it wasn't even so much how to talk about race, it was that we're not even talking about it, and there's not much diversity here, and people act like if they have an article then we're really engaging. (Participant 12)

Another participant recalls her experiences of teaching the racism course prior to the major changes:

I think the racism course at that time was probably not well-developed. I think we were all, anybody who was teaching it was teaching it by the seat of their pants. I don't know if anybody had much special training or experience in racial issues. I certainly didn't. I remember teaching one section, and it was a nightmare. I hated it. It was awful. (Participant 4)

Certainly prior to the summer of 1994, students of color were quite dissatisfied with their experiences in the racism course. However, the circumstances in the summer of 1994 allowed for students' concerns to be heard to a greater degree. According to one participant (Participant 11), in that summer, a new chair to the HBSE, the curriculum sequence to which the Racism course belongs, assumed the responsibility for creating the course sections. This participant recalls that this change of chairperson resulted, most likely accidentally, in the random assignment of students of color to the different sections of the course. It is unclear how composition of the sections worked out numerically, but at least one participant (Participant 8) remembered there being only one student of color in at least one of the sections of the racism course in that summer. Another participant recalls the particular set of events that led up to the walk-out:

We revised the anti-racism course so the summer of '93 [so that classes were] co-taught...And that summer it went really well. So in '94, the person who took over staffing that course didn't realize that they were supposed to not spread out the

students of color...So students of color were all spread out, two to four to a class.
(Participant 11)

This particular composition of the class certainly made the isolation and exploitation of students of color more visible and explicit. To assign two, let alone one, student of color to an otherwise white discussion course about racism in a psychodynamic-oriented social work school was certainly going to cause difficulties, even if it was accidental. It was this severity of isolation and discomfort imposed on students of color in the course that prompted the student walk-out.

After the Walk-Out

Susan Donner was Acting Dean at this time, as Ann Hartman had retired in the spring, and Dean Donner took leadership in responding to the student walk-out (Basham et al., 1997). One participant recalled that the walk-out was about “more of the same” (Participant 12), meaning a continuation of the complaints from students of color about their experience at the School. However, this participant noted the involvement of white students in the walkout, and how this demonstration of support increased the effectiveness of the walk-out.

As a result of the walk-out, the administration invited all members of the community to a meeting to discuss the racism course. Participants recall that these initial meetings were well-attended by various and diverse members of all constituencies, both whites and people of color (Participant 6, Participant 11, Participant 12). The goal of these meetings was to establish a plan for the remainder of the summer regarding the

composition of the racism course and the needs of students of color. Basham et al. (1997)

present an idea of how these initial meetings progressed:

Though there was not total consensus, the meeting provided a forum for multiple points of view. Sometimes, points of view coalesced around racial lines, sometimes around generational lines, and sometimes around faculty-student status. Points of view frequently crossed over all of those lines. Though feelings were strong, the group seemed constructively energized by the task. (p. 573)

The final decision regarding that summer's course involved no changes in the composition of the course, but rather the allocating of structured time in each class for students of color to meet with each other and with the faculty member of color to explore issues of race and racism pertaining to people of color, and for white students to do the same. It is not clear whether this arrangement satisfied the students' concerns. This arrangement was intended to be a temporary one while the School explored more deeply the issue of the composition of the racism course over the next year.

A second result of these original meetings that summer was awareness that the process of addressing students' concerns about the racism course led to identification of other areas of change with regard to curriculum and school structure and functioning as they related to issues of racism. The large group of community members at the meetings was divided into subgroups, each with a theme pertaining to the School's functioning around issues of race, racism, diversity, and the experiences of students of color.

The decision to focus exclusively on race and racism was explored early in these early meetings, as members of the community had to decide whether the School's commitment should be race-specific or should address all forms of oppression. One participant recalls,

I guess one of the big keys then was the decision that we were going to focus on racism and not all forms of oppression. Not that we weren't concerned about them. But we had more work to do in that area than any other area. I think that was true, and I'm really glad we made that decision. And I think every year it gets questioned, particularly by white students...and I think whiteness is just so prevalent in the United States as a privilege, and we had to choose that.
(Participant 11)

One participant recalls her own reservations about the decision:

...certainly the overwhelming argument was that race was by far the most destructive oppression by far and we should be focusing on that. I didn't know. I felt ambivalent about it. What I was afraid of was that eventually that would start to be divisive. The largest population, for example, was gay and lesbian students.
(Participant 4)

In his "Anti-Racism Orientation 2007," adjunct faculty member Fred Newdom attempts to explain the process behind the decision to focus solely on race:

Central to the discussion was the question of whether our commitment to justice should be expressed as an anti-racism mission or one devoted, more broadly, to anti-oppression work....

The most fundamental recognition we had in this process was that there was no answer that would be "wrong" and also that there was no answer that would be "right." It was a matter of choosing from between two equally compelling alternatives and acknowledging that whatever choice we made would generate problems of one sort or another. As with any policy decision, we were merely choosing which consequences we were most willing to tolerate. I want to underscore this: we knew that choosing either alternative would be right and that the question we ultimately faced was which inevitably resulting problems were we more willing to live with.

Ultimately, as you know, those of us involved in this process chose and the faculty considered and ratified the decision to focus on becoming an anti-racism institution. We did that with a full recognition that this could well be seen as stating that other forms of oppression were less significant, destructive, hurtful, and painful to experience. That wasn't our intent at the time and still isn't. Plainly and simply, we made the decision that we did at that time because we believed that racism has a unique legacy in this country...[and] it is clear that racism is still very much with us.

Because race is such a difficult issue to talk about, one that generates uncomfortable emotions like anger, even rage, sadness, shame and guilt, we saw it is a topic that, left to itself, would be avoided, as it is in the larger society. It was, in that context, that we believed that focusing instead on oppression in general

would exacerbate a process in which students would compete to have that portion of their identity that is not of the dominant culture become the focus of discussions on oppression. It was our concern that, given the discomfort with talking about race and the potential competition for “air time,” race and racism would receive little focused attention. (p. 2-3)

The decision to focus on race was, as one participant noted, “a very strong, politically grounded commitment, which seems to be important and still central, in spite of what people are saying about post-racial politics” (Participant 6).

With the focus on race established, the community members set to work exploring various facets of the School that needed attention, with a particular focus on the racism course and the curriculum at the beginning stages. Ultimately, this group of dedicated community members organized themselves into what became known as the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF). The ARTF continued to meet into the fall and spring of 1994-95, and has continued into the present.

The Anti-Racism Task Force

The Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF, but originally called the Racism Task Force, RTF) was unique among organizations at the School in its composition, in that membership was open to all constituencies, and members from all constituencies did participate: students, administration, staff, and faculty, both resident and adjunct. Participants recalled the importance of the mixed composition of the group in regards to its efficacy. The presence of resident faculty, the decision-making body at the School, contributed to the effectiveness of the group. As one participant noted, “it’s that whole how much do you invite the powers that be into something, but if you don’t court them, can anything change?” (Participant 3). Regarding the composition, another participant

(Participant 10) speculated that more staff members might have joined the committee if the meeting times were held during regular work hours.

The ARTF was not a decision-making body. As it had formed out of the earlier meetings addressing the specific situation of the Racism course, it had become a place where members of the School community could continue to discuss both the future of the Racism course as well as the other areas that required change. Interestingly enough, two students became the co-facilitators of the ARTF in the fall of 1995 as part of their Community Practice Project. Basham et al. (1997) report that an additional facilitator was the “departmental sequence chair” (p. 574), referring to the chair of the HBSE sequence, who oversees the racism course. The Anti-Racism Task Force meetings were held at least monthly, and minutes were recorded and retained by the members.

As far as members’ experiences in the meetings, participants gave varied perspectives of the role and functioning of the ARTF. One participant described the ARTF as a forum for ideas:

And this group of people would sit in a non-hierarchical way to an extent that that’s possible, because it’s never entirely possible, and come up with ideas, and we’d pool all the ideas together. And I think that was really the beginning of what [was later called] an audit. You really look at all the aspects of the functioning of the institution and ask questions...and kind of systematically go through those categories and get all the ideas on board, and there were action plans put into place. (Participant 12)

Similarly, another participant described the ARTF:

...we saw it as where the ideas would get generated and developed to be made into proposals that the faculty could act on. And it also became an opportunity in a sense to kind of look at how we’re doing. It was a place we could use to surface issues that we hadn’t thought about, or how to respond to issues. It was generative in that way. It was also a place for strategizing. How are we going to move? How do we get the School to be more serious in its hiring of staff to reflect the diversity of the community? How do we reach out? (Participant 9)

Another participant recalls the difficult position of the ARTF and its limitations:

And the ARTF, it carried a very weird role...it was not appointed or elected. Anybody could come....You spoke your own piece. It made the group outrageously disempowered. Because the power of the institution comes from votes and through the faculty vote. So this is a committee that could recommend only. And that crippled its work a lot. When it came down to it, they could bring recommendations back, and the faculty could vote them up or down. So it was a good, strong initiative, but it was the most powerless means to accomplish anything. I think I realized that more in retrospect rather than in person....I was naïve in thinking the ARTF could carry more weight than it did, and it didn't. (Participant 7)

One participant recalls the excitement she felt as a member of a collaborative group of people who came together to work together towards a goal:

And what made this so successful and so positive is that it was something the faculty and students could rally around. The oppressor in this case, it did start out to be the faculty and administration, because look at how you're teaching. But when they responded as, 'You're right,' they responded as let's try to fix this, then it became the bad object was racism, and everyone can rally around that. (Participant 8)

Another member recalls her experience of being in the meetings:

It wasn't a fast process and sometimes it was excruciating to be in those meetings. We'd get to a point in that discussion, then we'd start all over again. Because to go beyond that point mean you really had to own going forward....[The discussions would involve the issue that] maybe we don't have the definition clear. That's called avoidance. There was some avoidance that manifested in that form. I remember sitting in those meetings, thinking, we're not going to go very far with this....Okay, let me look at my watch here. Okay, this is the point that we go back. What's the definition again? Let's go back. And people sat in a room and tried to get it by moving forward a thousand different ways. But if you don't want to move forward, then you'll sit there and say, let's revisit the definition because I'm not sure what the definition is....The definition doesn't change. You have to embrace the definition to have change. What would that require? What would you have to give up? (Participant 5)

Adjunct faculty member Fred Newdom delivered the "Anti-Racism Orientation Remarks" in the summer of 2007, a transcript of which is posted on the School's website.

His remarks make reference to the difficult dialogues that took place at the School during this time:

[A number of events] led to a series of faculty-student-administration dialogues here. And, as you will come to learn about the culture of Smith, when I say “dialogue” I mean frequent meetings filled with seemingly endless explorations of issues and feelings and ideas. There were moments of incredible frustration and anger; there were moments of breathtaking honesty and compassion; and there were moments of utter confusion and lack of clarity. All of that was to be expected and our expectations were met. (p. 2)

The goals of the ARTF were many and varied throughout the years of 1993 – 1998. Basham et al. (1997) state that initially, the Task Force was divided into three subcommittees to deal with the three major targets for change: the racism course, the curriculum, and the institution. However, these goals became more specific within the initial meetings of the committee. The ARTF contributed to the changes of the School by identifying areas of change and proposing solutions. Given that the Anti-Racism Task Force did not have decision-making powers, its effectiveness lay in its role as an advisory committee to the faculty, the major decision-making group at the School. Members of the Anti-Racism Task Force decided to focus the goals into a series of position papers to be presented to the faculty and administrative staff for consideration. Basham et al. justify the decision to present the position papers section by section rather than as one whole document:

This decision was made in hopes that the faculty would commit to the spirit of the document and gain a better understanding of what was trying to be accomplished rather than asking them to buy into a long list of changes before there was an agreement in the overarching commitment. While members of the Task Force hoped this would more readily facilitate a positive response, it was also true that the document’s generality would make some faculty more reticent to support it. (p. 575)

The ARTF composed a number of position papers. Meeting Minutes from November 10, 1994, one of the first set of minutes, discuss nine different parts of the position paper:

- I. The philosophical reasons for needing to change SSSW to make it an anti-racist institution / what the school is already doing.
- II. Mission Statement
- III. Racism Course
- IV. Sub-task force on curriculum
- V. Field Placement
- VI. Admissions office annual report
- VII. Retention of Faculty, Staff, and Administrative Personnel of Color
- VIII. Plan to involve Faculty and Staff in SSSW's anti-racism efforts.
(ARTF Meeting Minutes, 11/10/94)

These topics became the major areas of focus of the work of the Anti Racism Task Force in this period. By the end of 1998, the ARTF had had a large influence on changes in the following realms: the racism course, the rest of the curriculum, the revision of the mission statement to include an anti-racism commitment, the recruitment of students of color, the hiring and support of faculty and staff of color, the field work department further anti-racism training for all community members, and evaluation of the School's anti-racism efforts.

The Position Paper Preamble

Section I of the Position Paper, "The philosophical reasons for needing to change SSSW to make it an anti-racist institution," became the Preamble to the Position Paper. Members felt that this was an important step in the writing of the Position Paper, as it would set the tone for the changes. Meeting minutes from February 21, 1995, report that at the February 22, 1995, Faculty Meeting, resident faculty voted to endorse the preamble

position paper: 7 yes and 4 abstentions (the minutes for the 2/21 meeting were typed after 2/22). Basham et al. (1997) present the position paper:

Becoming an anti-racist institution requires that each component of the School's program clarify its objectives, examine its progress toward meeting these objectives, identify gaps, confront the obstacles, and develop strategies for achieving its goals, as well as monitoring and evaluating its progress....As the School embraces this commitment, we need to re-evaluate and take appropriate action in regard to curriculum; field placements; recruitment and support for students of color; hiring process and support systems for faculty; administrative personnel and staff of color; mission statement; participants in the larger community; and monitoring process to appraise our progress. Embracing the Code of Ethics, the School as the opportunity to be an active agent in truly creating an institution which is anti-racist (p. 576, citing Position Paper Preamble, 1995).

The ARTF used the position paper to guide the thinking behind changes in the various other realms.

Changes to the Mission Statement

One of the early tasks of the ARTF was to draft and submit a proposal to the faculty regarding the adoption of an official anti-racism statement. Participants recall that one member was most adamant about this change, arguing that the insertion of an anti-racism statement into the mission would ensure that the School community would take the change seriously and would also ensure the survival of the commitment (Participant 11, Participant 8). This particular member believed that the power of the commitment would only be fully realized if it was incorporated into official school material. Many members of the ARTF supported this vision, but not all. "At the time, other people were pushing that more than me. 'Does it matter?' I thought, 'Let's get on with the issues.' But I didn't realize how important it is" (Participant 11).

As the ARTF was not a decision-making body, the group had to rely on strategies to influence the faculty regarding the mission statement:

Our goal and strategy as a task force was to make it [the adoption of the commitment into the mission statement] something that people couldn't object to. Like, how could you say no. We were willing to negotiate around the margins, but the mission felt like it had to be there, because that could be the thing that we constantly held people accountable to. (Participant 9)

Prior to the final version adopted in 1995, the statement of anti-racism underwent a number of drafts. The major addition to the School's mission statement with regard to anti-racism was the following:

The School joins with Smith College in its commitment to promote social justice, service to society, and greater appreciation of individual and cultural diversity in a multicultural community. It recognizes the pernicious consequences of racism and works to identify and overcome the overt and covert aspects of racism. (Memo, 6/4/96, To Students Staff and Faculty of the SCSSW Community, From Steve Grolnic A'97, student representative (RTF) and Kathryn Basham, Faculty Liaison (RTF), p. 1)

Meeting minutes of the ARTF reveal some of the changes that were made within the task force before the proposal was submitted to the faculty. In some cases, small shifts in language accomplished the goals. In one sentence, the word "helping" to describe the social work profession was replaced with "empowering" because "helping connotes a patronizing / matronizing relationship to us" (Smith SSW Mission Statement, Revision #3, Anti Racism Task Force, undated). In another location, "at risk" was changed to "oppressed and disadvantaged" because "we think that in the popular understanding, it ["at risk"] has a vague and demeaning connotation" (ibid). Other changes in language were made in Revision #3, and the final draft was submitted to the faculty September 20, 1995, for voting. The current anti-racism statement (Appendix F) as well as the School's mission statement (Appendix G) were voted into use in 2004 and 2003, respectively.

The addition of the commitment to the mission statement was viewed by participants as integral to the success of the continuation of the commitment beyond the beginning years of 1994-1996. “It means it’s always there. It’s in all our materials. We have the orientation, the symposium, all the students know. It’s part of the mission” (Participant 11). Another participant remarks on this same concept: “[Because the commitment is part of the mission,]...it doesn’t become something that a change in administration can say, well, that was then, this is now. This is permanent. The school isn’t about to get rid of the mission statement. It would be very awkward. And we intended for it to be awkward for that to happen” (Participant 9). However, there was skepticism on the part of at least one participant:

[The] need to adopt a statement, I never...what was that need about? I’m not sure about that...I’m not sure that people understood what it meant to adopt it other than it meant it would be the right thing to do. The unintended consequences of doing something are often not thought about. (Participant 5)

Other participants commented on the perceived skepticism and reluctance on the part of some faculty members regarding the adoption of the commitment. One participant mentions what he perceived were reactions of faculty of color:

It’s interesting, a number of faculty of color were very weary of it...they were kind of like “what’s this mean, you’re going to become an anti-racist institution, what’s that really mean? What’s going to happen?” I think for so long they just had to suck it up, and put up with the whitest of institutions, Smith College, and us being part of that, it was almost like, come on, I don’t even want to go there....I don’t think they trusted that it was really going to lead to much. It was emotionally risky for them to open themselves up to getting hopeful that things could actually change. (Participant 11)

Another participant describes his perceptions of the varying opinions of faculty:

My distinct impression was there was both a sense that this is good to do, glad something’s happening, and a dose of skepticism about whether anything was going to change. I think there was a very strong wait-and-see, and some got more

involved than others, and not getting involved was like, I've been down this road before, and let me see what they come up with....It was such an interesting dynamic. There were folks for whom this was of course we need to do that, but it won't affect my life because I'm really pretty together. And there were folks who didn't really understand what this could mean on a number of levels, but were in favor of it anyway. There were folks who were not comfortable with what changes it would require. (Participant 9)

And another participant recalls no difficulty in the process of making the commitment part of the mission statement:

I don't remember it as being really controversial. It was a smooth process. I think we worked very hard on it. I think, like anything, if you're writing on a committee it's very hard to get the wording just so. I think the whole faculty was committed. (Participant 8)

The revision of the mission statement was accompanied by a number of other changes, and the racism course was the target of the most radical and profound changes during the years of 1994 – 1998.

Changes to the Racism Course

The racism course was the original focus of the community meetings, as it had spurred the walk-out. However, it took a number of years for the students' concerns about the racism course to be addressed in a sustainable way.

The walk-out resulted in one immediate change to the racism course in the summer of 1994. For the remainder of the course, students of color would have an opportunity to meet as a group with the faculty of color on the bi-racial teaching team. The thinking behind this was that in meeting as a group, students of color could discuss issues pertinent to their needs regarding issues of race and racism, and white students could meet collectively to examine issues of race and racism pertaining to their needs in this area. Besides this change, the composition of the courses was not altered.

In the fall of 1994, the discussion around the composition and curriculum of the racism course continued in the ARTF, within the student body, and among the faculty. The students who participated in the walkout (Class of 1995) and some members of the class following theirs (Class of 1996) continued to request a separate section of the course for students of color. One undated, anonymous document entitled “The Course Racism in America Recommendations” clarifies the issues.

It should be clarified that students of color are not asking for ‘separate but equal’ classes divided on the lines of color, rather they are asking for two different classes geared towards the different learning needs of all students.

The assumption the school makes in requiring students of color to enroll in the course Racism in America, is that these students have not experienced and learned on a very personal level many of the goals and objectives of the current course.

...

We have found that the majority of the students of color who are in second year graduate school have struggled with and met these objectives throughout the course of their life experience. They also have a strong foundational understanding of many of the...objectives.

...

Many believe it is oppressive to require students of color to assist white students in learning about racism in America at the expense of their own identified learning needs. (“The Course Racism In America,” Anonymous, undated, p. 1, attached to ARTF Meeting Minutes)

Basham et al (1997) comment on the significance of the students’ changing perceptions of segregation:

Needless to say, the call for segregated sections was controversial. Students were reformulating their views on segregation, seeing it not always as a tool for the racial majority to gain more power, but also as an opportunity for students of color to further their own agenda, i.e., to use the class to look at elements of power in their own communities and strategize about ways to implement change effectively. Students of color viewed segregation as neither good nor bad, but rather as a means to an end, a way in which they could satisfy their educational needs. A tool historically used to oppress a population was given a new meaning (p. 578-79).

The faculty disapproved of the proposal to offer separate sections of the course for students of color. One participant recalls:

The thinking was that ultimately people of all races have to learn to work together and as a profession and as a society that's what the goal is, and when we segregate people, it's harder to get back together. And what was always said in response is that sometimes you need to create spaces for people to explore things in more homogenous ways, and the goal is to get people back together, so you don't always have to be together. I remember having some pretty heated discussion in the faculty about that. (Participant 8)

Another participant conjectured that the faculty did not immediately support the provision of a separate section for students of color because they saw that act as an act of segregation, an issue that had already been addressed to a large extent by the Civil Rights Movement and the integration of education (Participant 11). Faculty may have perceived the creation of a separate section for students of color as a step backwards, a regression to former, more oppressive times. Another participant remembers that the issue of segregation was personal to the faculty:

I think that [the personal history of the faculty] is significant. Because I think it was possible to be well-intentioned on both sides of the issue....On one level, well, the Civil Rights Movement went through its integrationist stage and its separatist stage, so it's not surprising that some of those sentiments got played out on both sides. (Participant 9)

The faculty did not immediately support the creation of a section for students of color. However, other formations of the class were proposed. One suggestion supported strongly by the faculty was to offer sections that were composed of fifty percent students of color and fifty percent white students. Due to the racial composition of the school, this solution would automatically create some sections with white students only. But this formation would allow for a critical mass of students of color in classes that contained students of color. One student active on the ARTF wondered how, in this situation,

biracial students might feel about having to make a choice about their identity if the school decided to go with this type of divide (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 11/10/94). A suggestion to have a class for only biracial students did not go very far. However, it was mentioned on the ARTF that students could submit their own proposals for course content and structure to the faculty.

In the fall of 1994, a group of students of color, led by Donna Crimbchin Schmidt (MSW, 1995), did just this. The group submitted a course proposal for the racism course which revolved around a unique three-section model that required students to self-select, based on their learning needs, which section they desired. This model would accommodate the needs of students of color who were forced to participate in racism courses with white peers. The student curriculum entitled “Out of Oppression, Into Empowerment, Toward Unity” was explained in an email from the students to the chair of the HBSE, who brought it to the Anti-Racism Task Force. The email and supporting documents explain the curriculum:

As outlined in the syllabus “Out of Oppression, Into Empowerment, Toward Unity,” learning needs are focused on issues of racial identity formation and empowerment, understanding the historical roots of cross racial hostility and systemic perpetuation of the same, exploring the intersections of race and class; and finally, exploring the issues pertinent to clinicians and professionals of color. (D.Schmidt, Email to Chair of HBSE sequence, 11/14/1994 p. 1).

In the email, Ms. Schmidt outlines the procedure for the proposed curriculum:

1. Offer all students the option to enroll in one of three courses pertaining to racism.
2. Divide the objectives contained in the Racism in America course and the objectives defined by students of color into three courses.
3. Define prerequisites for each of the courses.

This format is a combination of the process used for placement in the research course and the manner in which students choose electives within a certain

topic....The advantage of this approach is that it bases the decision of placement on previous coursework and life experience, not on the basis of race (p. 1).

Certainly Ms. Schmidt and her collaborators were taking into consideration the issues that had been brought up by students of color regarding the racism course. This curriculum sought to address these issues through a completely new design of the course. Certainly, the idea of students self-selecting based on their learning needs is exactly how the current course is run as of 2008. Ultimately, little of this unique curriculum was incorporated into the racism course before 1998. Ms. Schmidt's recommendations were not taken into serious consideration until the School experimented with other formulas of course structure and content. However, it is quite interesting to note that the recommendation that is most similar to the format of the current course was suggested by a group of students right at the beginning of the process of the revamping of the course.

At the end of the spring of 1995, just prior to the following summer term, the faculty decided to offer two sections of the courses composed of fifty percent students of color and fifty percent white students; by default, the remaining sections of the course were composed of all white students. By keeping the focus on cross-racial dialogue as the justification for offering mixed classes only, the faculty denied the creation of a separate section for the summer of 1995. The creation of all-white sections caused some discontent among some white students, as two participants recalled:

A lot of white people thought, how am I going to learn about racism if I don't have students of color in my class, and that was really a very clear perspective - that I basically want to get my money's worth, and if there are no students of color in there, I'm not going to learn anything. So we knew that was the overwhelming sentiment of white students. (Participant 8)

I was in an all-white class. I felt comfortable. I still felt that the discussion became around we want kids of color in our group so we can talk about issues of racism

and kids of color...[versus the students of color saying] we don't want to hear the white kids cry the whole time. (Participant 3)

Another proposal that arose in the ARTF meetings in the academic year 1994-1995, submitted by the then-chair of the HBSE sequence, was to offer an "advanced" course to students who could waive out of the basic, required course. This class was proposed in order to accommodate the needs of those students who had previous experience in the content of the basic racism course. From this suggestion, there was extensive debate regarding what constituted "prior experience." The ARTF supported the notion that prior experience, in this case, consisted of "academic and professional experience, including workshops" (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 1/27/95). However, the meeting minutes note that there was considerable debate around this topic. The faculty also supported this definition of "prior experience." But a poll of students conducted by students themselves in the summer of 1995 revealed that students supported the use of "personal experience in race and racism" (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 1/27/95) as sufficient in order to waive out of the course. Basham et al. (1997) review this controversy:

A controversy arose about the placement system and whether or not life experience should be taken into consideration as a sufficient form of instructive experience. Many students of color felt that the experience they had in society educated them on various aspects of racism. Conversely, many white students seemed more advanced in their theoretical understanding but lacked the personal insight and awareness....[A] scenario was considered in which more White students than students of color could waive because of formal educational experience, leaving the Advanced course dominated by White students with more students of color in the more basic course. This potential scenario seemed racist to many. Though life experience was rejected as a criteria, the discussion itself remained at an impasse. (p. 577-78)

In preparation for the summer of 1995, the curriculum for the racism course had been amended by the chair of the HBSE sequence in order to satisfy the requests of the

students regarding the material meeting the needs of students of color. However, the students' request for a separate section for students of color was not granted. The faculty decided to offer two sections of 50/50 composition for the following summer. Some students sent a letter to the Dean expressing their frustration at this decision. This letter was brought to members of the Anti-Racism Task Force.

Several of us expressed frustration at the announcement that the faculty had voted to support the 50/50 mix of students of color and white students in some sections, leaving a creation of a separate section for students of color to the discretion of individual instructors. This was not [*sic*] had been requested by the Council for Students of Color, or by the Task Force, and we wondered if the requests made had been heard or considered.

We were told that issues of academic freedom deemed it necessary for Smith not to dictate how the Racism in the U.S. course be taught. While we want to respect academic freedom, we also find it extremely important that we do not disregard the learning needs of students of color in the name of academic freedom.

While it could also be within an instructor's academic freedom to teach material which pathologizes lesbian and gay lifestyles, naming development of gay or lesbian identity as a failure in the developmental process, the administration has wisely chosen not to allow disrespecting gay and lesbian students and faculty in this manner. By the same token we ask that students of color no longer be subjected to a learning experience that disempowers them and disrespects their learning needs. (Letter, 2/24/95, from Student Org. Executive Committee to Dean, 2/24/95)

The ARTF supported the creation of the mixed classes, although there is documentation of much debate and disagreement around this. In the summer of 1995, two sections of 50/50 composition in the racism course were run, in addition to a few classes of only white students. In order to meet the needs for caucus dialogue, time was set apart in each of the 50/50 sections for students of color and white students to meet separately in order to discuss issues relevant to each group.

In the fall of 1995, a student poll, conducted again by students, revealed that 79% of students that responded wanted separate classes offered to both white students and

students of color. Despite the faculty decision to forego this composition in the summer of 1995, student enthusiasm had not decreased. The discussion of the course composition continued. By the fall of 1995, the ARTF voted 6:1 to support the trial run of “an experimental effort that changes the composition of the courses to ensure that all students of color are offered a separate section and white students are educated in sections that are composed of white students” (ARTF Meeting Minutes, Curriculum Day, 11/11/95). It is interesting to note that this was the first non-unanimous vote in the ARTF (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 11/15/95). The minutes reveal discussion about the importance of cross-racial dialogue as the reason opposing the creation of a new section. However, a number of concerns were raised with this vote. One member raised the concern that identifying as a student “of color” is a personal process that should not be in the school’s domain. Another concern mentioned was that students of color who felt that their learning needs were closer to those of white students should be able to be in the all white section of the course.

By the end of November, the faculty had decided to poll the students of color to determine how many wanted a separate section, with the justification that the School could not financially support a course without enough students. The number the faculty required was 12. One member of the ARTF did foresee a legal concern in the case that a white student wanted to register for the separate section. However, “there was consensus that the task force hoped the administration would hold firm and maintain the separate section exclusively for students of color” (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 11/29/95).

In the summer of 1996, the faculty offered a separate section of the racism course to students of color. The number of enrolled students in the course was 10.

In the fall of 1996, the faculty again raised budgetary concerns about supporting a class with fewer than 12 students. The ARTF unanimously agreed that the School should not compromise the section. An informal survey revealed that the number of interested students for the summer of 1997 would be higher than 12.

It is unknown exactly when the next major change occurred to the course, but a number of participants recalled an event just prior to the summer of 1998 that altered the course in a major way one final time. A white student filed a formal complaint with the Federal Department of Education regarding the division of students along racial lines for the assignment of the racism course. The Department of Education intervened immediately, and threatened to withhold funding from the School for Social Work if the School continued the practice. Within a few weeks prior to the start of the summer, the whole course had to undergo a complete revision. At this point, with little time left before the start of the summer, the School decided to revert to the practice of randomly assigning all students to the various sections of the course for the summer of 1998. (Participant 12, Participant 6, Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 11).

The School for Social Work Progress Report on Anti-Racism Mission Statement of Summer, 1999, illustrates the process leading to the final revision of the course. Resident faculty, adjunct faculty, and members of the ARTF designed a course with three different models with the opportunity for students to rank their preference regarding which model would most meet their own learning needs. The three models retained the original course description and objectives, but each focused on one of three specialization areas: cross-cultural dialogue, racial identity development for the dominant culture, and issues pertaining to clinicians of color. These topics allowed students to self-select into

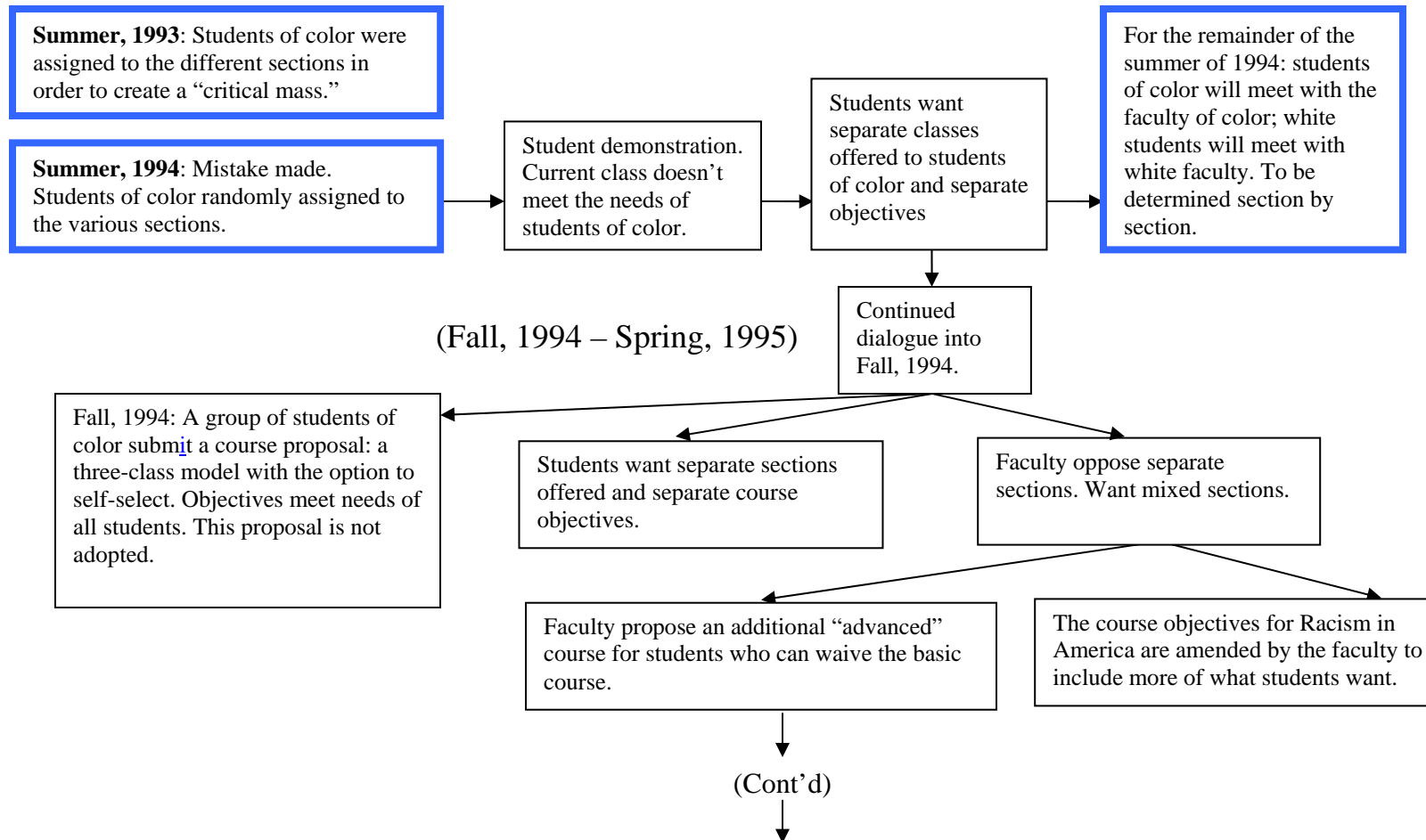
their courses based on their own assessment of their learning needs and solved the problem raised by the Department of Education. This format of the course was first offered in the summer of 1999. It is interesting to note that this final change is similar to the model proposed by Donna Schmidt and other students in their 1994 curriculum.

Another change to the racism course was the change of the course's official title. In 1994, the course was known as Racism in America. By 1997, the course is documented as being titled Racism in the United States. The course has retained this name up to the present time (2008).

The racism course certainly has played a large role both as galvanizer and target of changes throughout the time period of 1993 – 1998. Certainly more in-depth research into this topic could be explored, as an in-depth study into the School's methodology of teaching about race and racism could certainly reveal significant history of the School as well as significant findings about the pedagogy of race and racism.

Figure 1

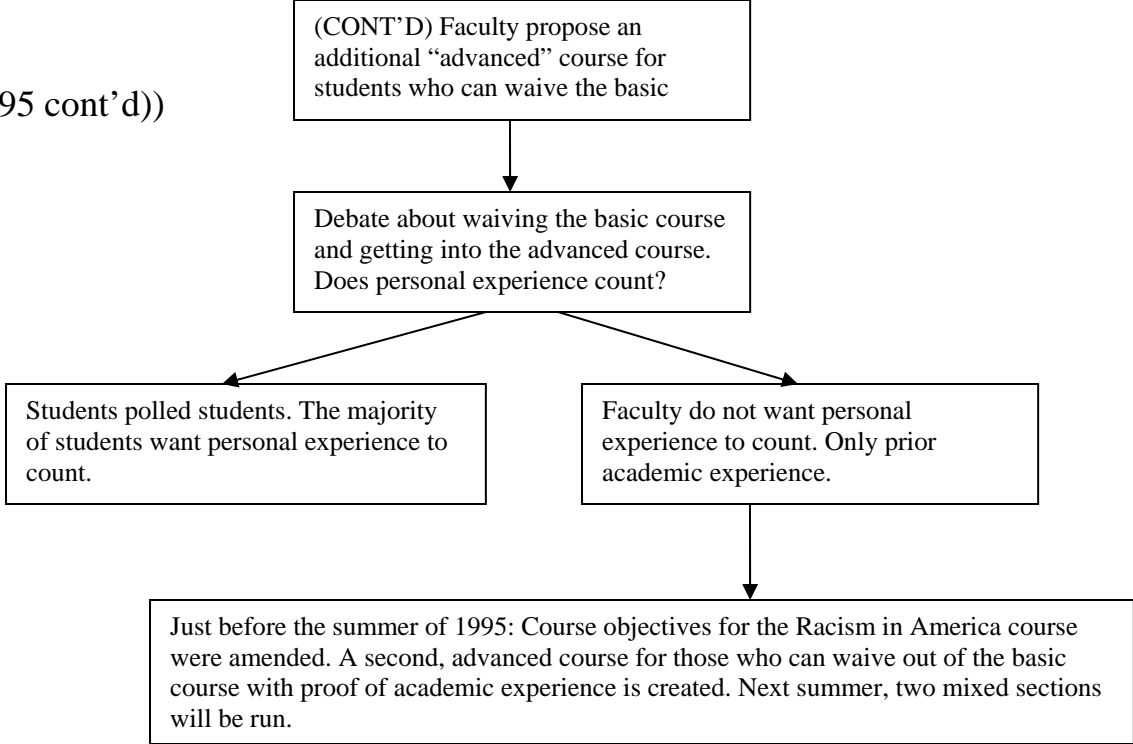
The History of the Racism Course, 1993 - 1998



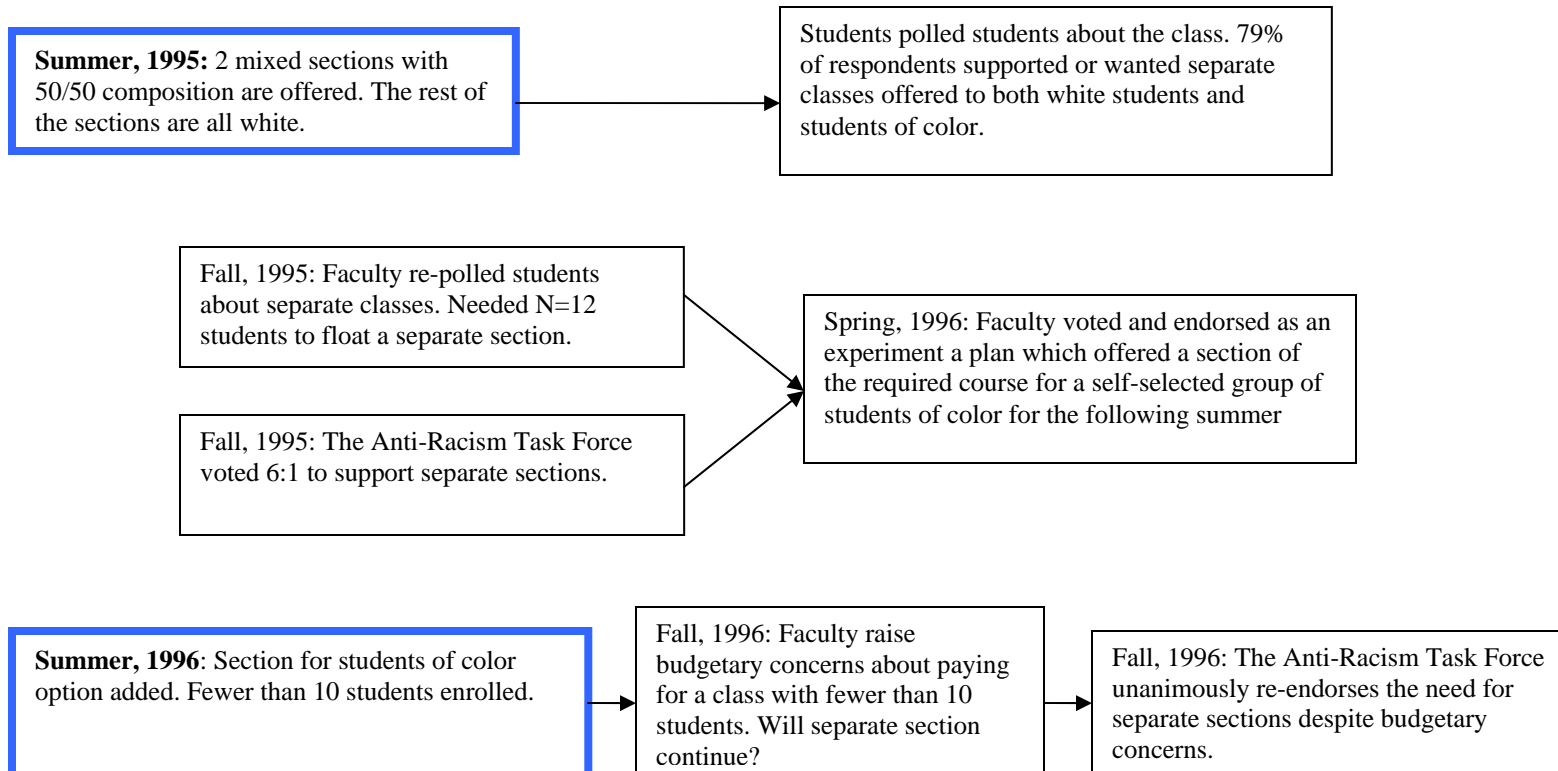
The History of the Racism Course, 1993 – 1998, cont'd

(Fall, 1994 – Spring, 1995 cont'd)

- Changes made:
- In mixed classes, time for separate group discussions: students of color with faculty of color; white students with white faculty
 - Racism in America curriculum amended.
 - Second “advanced” course created.



The History of the Racism Course, 1993 – 1998, cont'd



The History of the Racism Course, 1993 – 1998, cont'd

Summer, 1997: No changes from the previous summer. Section for students of color continues to be offered.

Fall, 1997 – Spring, 1998. At some point during this year, a white student files a complaint with the U.S. Dept. of Education claiming racial discrimination because of the section that was being offered to students of color.

Fall, 1997 – Spring, 1998: The U.S. Dept. of Education requires Smith College SSW to end the practice of offering a section specifically for students of color.

Summer, 1998: The School stops the practice of dividing the sections based on race. Once again, all students are randomly assigned to the various sections.

Changes in the Curriculum

The most extensive changes to the curriculum were made in the racism course, as this was the course that spurred the walk-out and the start of the changes. However, the work of the Anti-Racism Task Force prompted the faculty and students to expand the changes to the curriculum of other classes. One participant recalls this arena as one of the later arenas to receive attention within the changes (Participant 12). Throughout the School documents, reference is made to an “infusion of content” and “models of infusion” that sought to “infuse” content on anti-racism throughout the curriculum rather than to concentrate these efforts in just one course. The suggestion from the ARTF was as follows:

Infusion of content on anti-racism throughout the curriculum and the field is recommended as opposed to focusing the content only in specific courses. The issue of race and anti-racist stance should be woven into all courses as an integral part of the discussion. It should not be just “added on” as an addendum but treated as part of the foundation of each discussion. Inevitably the focus may vary depending upon the course and specific class, yet in some classes anti-racism may deserve extra attention or become the focal point. The interface between race, class, socioeconomic class and sexual orientation should also be emphasized regularly. (Memo, to Committee on Reaccreditation and Faculty, From Kathryn Basham, date 2/96).

The Summer, 1999, School for Social Work Progress Report on Anti-Racism Mission

Statement includes reference to the infusion model again:

Since the infusion model that weaves themes of diversity throughout all courses continues to be maintained, efforts have been sustained by faculty to strengthen multiculturalism, diversity and anti-racism content in all HBSE courses. Meetings have been scheduled to bring together the adjunct faculty for the required courses and select electives in order to prepare the following required courses: Family Theory, Theories of Individual Development, Problems in Biopsychosocial Functioning, Sociocultural Concepts and Child Development. Readings, videos and various exercises have been discussed and will be introduced into these courses. (School for Social Work Progress Report on Anti-Racism Mission Statement, Summer, 1999. p. 2)

This same report contains summaries of similar efforts completed by the committees of all other course sequences. In short, bibliographies were altered to increase the number of books and articles published by people of color, and class objectives were amended to include issues of race and anti-racism (Basham et al., 1997). At least one class (Practice 101) adopted a number of new text books. For a full review of changes made to the curriculum, please see the School for Social Work Progress Report on Anti-Racism Mission, Summer, 1999.

In addition to changes to course curricula, the Monday night summer lecture series received the same attention, and planning for the series involved attending more consciously to the representation of presenters of color and to issues of race, racism, and diversity.

Changes in the Field Office and Field Placements

The anti-racism commitment resulted in a number of changes to the students' education in the field, affecting the network of field agencies as well as students' experiences. Firstly, the School examined its relationships with placement agencies and questioned the impact of the anti-racism commitment on its relationships with certain agencies. There is no documentation available as to what exact changes the School made in this regard. However, one note from the ARTF meeting minutes reports that the School added placements that were better suited to meet the needs of students of color (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 2/9/1995). One participant recalls the extent to which relationships not only with agencies but also with FFA's and supervisors were affected by the anti-racism commitment.

It's really hard to convey exactly how much the School valued its long-term relationships [in the field]....Great opportunities, great relationships. And we were going to give that up and start opening doors into venues that had nothing behind them. We were going to trade off some esoteric Berkshire contact for [a community organization in a neighboring city]...., who can give you nothing. They'll turn around

and ask you for money every two seconds, because they're a great community organization but they're as broke as can be. Their network is a network of poor people. They provide nothing in return from which Smith benefits. I'm really surprised and pleased, although it was agonizing and painful, maybe not slow...they did let go of relationships. They did let go of faculty and adjuncts that were long time and beloved connections to make room. It really means making room. If you were going to add to the pot, there were only so many positions there, so many FFAs, only so many agencies, so many adjuncts. And the only way to create diversity was to not bring some back. (Participant 7)

Despite these changes, one participant questioned the School's affiliation with agencies that did not share an anti-racism stance.

And I think to a certain extent, one of the things I always felt Smith didn't do that I felt they really needed to do, but that...I thought was impossible, I thought we shouldn't be affiliated with field placements who aren't also committed to an anti-racism mission. Because that's most of our education. So you're going to put a Smith student at a placement that's not committed to that, that doesn't make sense. So many of the agencies are struggling as they are, you think they're going to add that to their list, there's no way....But that's the kind of thing that we really have to push ourselves and say, well, where does most of our learning come from, and how do we affect that learning? (Participant 8)

Another participant remarks similarly:

...[T]here was a lot of concern about, okay, as an institution we had decided that we acknowledged that racism exists, but what does that really mean if we say that the agencies we affiliate with are racist, and why would we affiliate with them if they were racist, and what does that mean?...[And] what does that mean that we were sending students into agencies where there was racism? (Participant 7)

In addition to changes in the agency network, two student assignments were introduced to complement the student's experience of anti-racism education in the field. Beginning in the fall of 1997, first-years students were required to write an Agency Assessment Report, which included reflections on their agency's efforts to address racism and to serve a multicultural clientele with competency. Second year students were assigned an Anti-Racism Project, which seeks to expand the students' experience in addressing racism

within their second-year placement agency. The evolution of the Anti-Racism Project took a number of years, and at first was considered very controversial. One participant recalled concerns about sending students into agencies with the agenda of addressing racism:

[There] was a concern [from]...field advisors and supervisors. You are going to be unleashing students who are going to wreak havoc. There was some greater anxiety in those years. It was palpable. Legitimately, when we launched the Anti-Racism Field Assignment...people voiced more anxiety and apprehension that this was not a smart idea. There was worry about students going into agencies and trying to make major changes and offend and alienate everybody, which some did, but most did not. (Participant 6)

Another participant recalls similar experiences at the introduction of the Anti-Racism Project:

I remember [what] came up when Jerry brought up the idea of the Anti-Racism Project. That terrified people. Sometimes you need to just jump in with a good idea and sort it out afterwards because it just moves forward. I'm surprised we didn't blow up our students. We started out without doing a lot of outreach to the agencies, because we were saying the least empowered person, a poor little social work intern, is going to walk in and say I assume there's racism in your agency, and I'm going to tell you how to address it. And that was how it was originally laid out. And now there's so much more around orienting our agencies and helping our students to think politically about who they are, what they're doing. There's an awful lot to be said about being able to observe, then to think strategically about how to intervene...So the anti-racism field assignment I think was met with a lot of resistance and anxiety probably for good reasons, but in particular because there was a lot of concern about, okay, as an institution we had decided that we acknowledged that racism exists, but what does that really mean if we say that the agencies we affiliate with are racist, and why would we affiliate with them if they were racist, and what does that mean? And if a student did an Anti-Racism Project and there was racism, should we disaffiliate with them, what does that mean that we were sending students into agencies where there was racism? (Participant 7)

One participant recalls her experience of the School's ambivalence towards her assignment:

You know, you can't mandate unfortunately in the field to any agency. So, if you're becoming an anti-racist institution and you're at some place that is not even thinking, is not even on the radar screen...for instance, I did my second-year placement at [an historically Black college], and the other person I worked with for my Anti-Racism Project was a white student who was placed at [an elite private college]. And those two counseling services had never spoken. So when we decided to do this project, Smith was very alarmed. What was this going to do? Was this big? Had we really

thought about it? So what we found is that there was so much institutional racism, these two schools, which are very famous, had never had a conversation, yet they served the same kind of student population. (Participant 2)

Changes in the Hiring and Training of Faculty and Staff

Within the realm of faculty, institutional change meant efforts towards increasing the number of faculty and staff of color employed by the School, as well as efforts towards trainings all faculty and staff about issues of race and racism.

The Hiring of Faculty and Staff of Color

The hiring of faculty of color was certainly a target goal of the School's since the tenure of Dean Ann Hartman, and perhaps before. Students saw this as an integral step in support of the anti-racism commitment, as this institutional change would contribute to a more supportive environment for students of color (Participant 3, Participant 8). One document of the Anti-Racism Task Force illustrates the situation in the Fall of 1994 regarding faculty and staff of color, referencing the existence of "3 full time faculty and 2 administrators of color" (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 10/3/94). These meeting minutes, the first collected minutes from the group, reveal faculty commitment to the hiring process:

5. Update from faculty. The faculty congratulate the Task Force for the good work that has already been done and look forward to hearing more about it. The faculty sees the hiring of the people of color as an important issue and it will be discussed fully at the next faculty meeting. There was some discussion as to wanting to get faculty of color input on the task force but the awareness that faculty of color have reasons for not coming to the meeting. Faculty on the Racism Task Force committee will seek out faculty of color to illicit [sic] feedback (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 10/3/94).

Regarding the hiring of faculty and staff of color, the Anti-Racism Task Force submitted a proposal to the faculty and administration in March of 1995, with recommendations for efforts to increase the number of faculty and staff of color at the School. The introductory paragraph includes a rationale for these efforts:

In meeting the needs and opportunities of a diversified student body, SSSW will have to hire a more diversified faculty, more faculty of color. The students' educational demands virtually require this, and not doing so would encourage discriminatory educational settings particularly for the students of color. However, every student would benefit from a faculty that more closely reflects our society (Memo, To All Residential Faculty and Staff, From The Anti-Racism Task Force, 3/25/95).

Members of the Anti-Racism Task Force compiled a list of 28 proposed goals to address the hiring and support of faculty and staff of color. This list of goals includes a timeline for each stated goal and an accountability designee for each. A Memo from the faculty chairs dated May 5, 1995, responds to the proposals of the Anti-Racism Task Force. Some of the proposals from the ARTF, with the faculty responses in italics, include:

- At least 1/3 applicants for any open position will be people of color. *Cannot guarantee number of applicants but will aggressively recruit to increase applicant pool. Slows down process – want maximum flexibility.*
- Increase the number of full time and adjunct faculty of color each year, culminating in 30% of full time and 30% of adjunct faculty by the year 2000. *Strive to increase the number of full time and adjunct faculty of color toward goal of 25%. Progress to be reviewed in year 2000. Also strive to becoming among major schools of social work a leader in affirmative action achievements. Efforts are ongoing.*
- Increase the number of staff of color each year, culminating in 30% of the staff by the year 2000. *We will set as our goal the Smith Design which will increase our present level of diversity while being cognizant of local labor pool. We will also continue to investigate an understanding of what would support successful achievement of this goal.*
- Review hiring procedures and eliminate discriminatory practices. *Ongoing.*
- Every interview include questions and experience of or sensitivity to issues of racism or ethnicity. *Our interviews do and will include questions and experience of or sensitivity to issues of racism or ethnicity.*

- Increase grants for faculty of color positions and increase grants for visiting scholars or instructors of color. *Will develop grants for visiting scholars of color. Presently have Bertha Reynolds Fellowship.*
- Increase the number of lectures given by people of color at Smith. *Assure representation of people of color presenting lectures at SSW. Work toward 30% or more.*
- Development of an evaluation tool which discerns why faculty / staff of color terminate. *Associate Dean or Dean will conduct interviews with any faculty or staff as to reasons for leaving the institution.*
- Development of a mentorship program for the faculty of color. *Efforts have begun to develop a program for faculty of color to review and support their needs.*
- Development of an evaluation form which the faculty of color fill out collectively at SSW. *Not appropriate.*
- Development of a narrative evaluation/document tool for personnel of color to record their experiences. *Will seek input from staff and faculty of color as to how they would like to get feedback into the system.*
- Funding for collation of evaluations and documentations and funding to make documentations available to SSW community in library. *Remove.*
- Develop a 5-year plan for educating faculty about racism and develop a 2-3 year plan for educating staff about racism. *Faculty and administrative staff has begun a process of looking at issue [sic] of racism within SSW and is committed to continuing this endeavor.*
- Commitment of all personnel at SSW to carry out anti-racism consciousness raising within the college and larger community. *Do not agree to this objective. (Memo, "Response to the Anti-Racism Task Force: Work on Recruitment and Retention." To Faculty and Administrators, From Chairs, 5/5/95).*

Participants remarked extensively about the issues of hiring both faculty and staff of color.

One participant describes this issue as the most difficult one among all the efforts of change that were undertaken:

I don't think there's anything hotter than search issues. That's the biggie. There was one particular search that was really controversial and hot. We had made the first priority hiring a person of color....That was the number one criteria, that it be a person of color. And that was to hold ourselves accountable for doing everything we could to recruit, to find, to search out potential candidates of color. And as I recall, we failed more than one search, several searches, because if we found a person of color, the other issue is that the faculty was factionalized around ideas, you know, whether a person had to be psychodynamic, or are they psychodynamic enough. I remember we found one candidate, and there was a group of faculty who just didn't like this person, and that was that, that search failed, because there weren't four people of color up [for the position]. So they felt they didn't have a choice....So that's been extremely

difficult. And there are some practical issues. Every school in the country is trying to hire faculty of color. And there's a lot of competition. And Smith is an odd program, and one of the issues that would come up is that people wouldn't find a community here. (Participant 4)

Another participant recalls how hiring practices revealed the extent of the Smith "network" that greatly impacted the hiring of people of color:

I remember there were times when [one faculty member] would put his foot down and say we can't offer it to that person, a clerical job, there's no reason why we can't have a more diverse pool. Positions would go empty for eight, ten months. And it was a systemic issue that the college wasn't even reaching out to diverse communities, so they're using their old channels. It's so hard to undo a system. You have an idea, it looks good, but your old mechanisms, your old channels, your old relationships...this system has done it that way for so long, it didn't even have the tools to go in that direction, even though there was a desire to go in that direction. That's how it worked. We had to undo something that worked. And from many perspectives, it was a good system. Why would you change something that was really good? (Participant 7)

This participant also recalled that the practice of hiring people of color for adjunct faculty and field advisor positions resulted in *not* re-hiring white people in these positions:

The undergrad school had begun to look at how painful it is to say, yeah, we want more people of color on campus, but that means I can't hire my cousin, I have to choose someone else. So the second step in this whole movement was to look at some of the institutional pieces, like field agencies, field supervisors, people with whom the School had prided itself on having years and years and years of relationships. The only way we can bring in new communities of color, agencies or supervisors, would be to not hire back some of our other people. And that was really, I remember that as one of the places where the rubber hit the road. It was really fine and dandy to accept more students of color. But when we began to talk about institutionalized racism...I don't think we ever used that term. When we began to look at some of our own systems, which is really institutionalized policies, people were much more hesitant. I mean, there are a lot of good reasons to hold on to things – you have good relationships, you find people whose values you share, whose judgment you trust, you value that relationship and nurture it, and it makes it easier to refer...so all sorts of good reasons to make sure you cherish these good networks that you develop. And we had a huge, strong white network nationally. Really large white network. I remember someone...counting out, so let's look at that. No pain no gain. Exactly how many people of color do we have in the field? So that was a difficult time because people weren't hired back and there was no good reason not to hire them back. We didn't wait for people to retire, or for people to...opportunities to fire people...which

would have been convenient but painfully slow. So it was a deliberate process.
(Participant 7)

One participant remarks on these efforts in the realm of staff:

We focused on hiring with an eye to increase diversity. We found this, especially on the staff level, frustrating because salaries attract people to jobs. This is a private institution. The salary scale doesn't necessarily attract people to move from a community. It continues to be a real challenge. To get qualified people in the pool who are diverse is very difficult. We do outreach. Something about working at Smith, a traditional white-gloves, rich-girl institution, does not appeal to many people of color. To live in a diverse community here, Northampton is becoming more diverse, but to live in a diverse community means you have a long commute. So the challenges are big there. (Participant 10)

The challenges of hiring personnel of color became clear during the years of 1993 – 1998. The amount of “success” achieved in this area during these years can be identified as a further area of research.

Training for Faculty and Staff

In addition to hiring personnel of color, the Anti-Racism Task Force undertook efforts to increase anti-racism training for current and future faculty and staff. One member of the ARTF remarks on the importance of training in a memo to the members of the ARTF:

The tension of this past summer is perhaps an indicator that it is time to move forward to provide the supports that can sustain structural changes. The racism course heightens the consciousness of our students, but we have nothing in place to bring our faculty (full & part time), staff, advisors and supervisors to a tandem state of awareness. Without well planned efforts to weave anti-racist principals into all areas of the School's operations, the racism course will always spur controversy and dissatisfaction on the part of our students (Memo to Members of the Racism Task Force, from Mary Lou Wittig, Registrar, Re: Development of a Plan to Involve Faculty & Staff in S.C.S.S.W.'s Anti-racism Efforts, 11/08/94).

This document continues by suggesting a model of training for faculty and staff that utilizes outside consultants over a five-year period for training. This document contains an addendum response from another member critiquing the consultant model and offering an alternative:

I want to express reservations about too quickly bringing in consultants or trainers to facilitate a process around dealing with race issues in the School. I believe this may short-circuit a process that has only just begun and that there is a danger of faculty and students deferring [*sic*] to trainers rather than struggling with issues themselves. In addition, trainers being human, [*sic*] come in explicitly or implicitly with their own agendas which may finese [*sic*] or short-circuit our process.

My own suggestion, particularly at the faculty level, is that we hold a series of half or full day retreats. The agenda for the retreats will be to examine in-depth where we are and how we as a School in the context of the college and the larger society got here individually and collectively. This will help us understand and define where we want to go. At that point one place we might choose to go is to bring in a consultant to help us get to a clearly defined place. I can, however, also imagine that we may decide that we have our own resources to get there all by ourselves by continuing to meet. What is essential is that the faculty commit itself to a dialogue that is planned, reflective, meets regularly and is held accountable (Addendum to Memo Re: Development of a Plan to Involve Faculty & Staff in S.C.S.S.W.'s Anti-racism efforts, To Racism Task Force, From Jerry Sachs, 11/08/94).

Final results of efforts to increase training for all faculty and staff included the introduction of monthly meetings of the resident faculty to discuss issues of race and racism. The School for Social Work Progress Report on Anti-Racism Mission Statement from the summer of 1999 reports that "Faculty continues to meet monthly regarding issues of racism....

Administrative staff participate in the meetings" (p. 1).

One participant recalls her experience as a faculty member during the faculty's own difficult discussions about race:

So the hardest thing of all...was for the faculty to talk about race issues on the faculty....we clearly had our own backyard to deal with. And we couldn't. It just wouldn't come up....I think the students have worked much better at [talking about

issues of race and racism]...It was surprising to me the resistance of the faculty to being able, and I include myself, to look at our own issues of race. Because we never did [at that time], I can't tell you even how I would have behaved in that situation. Maybe I would have fallen apart or not been able to get there, so.... (Participant 4)

Other efforts for community training were provided as well. Dean Anita Lightburn continued the Bertha Reynolds Senior Fellow Program, which had been established by Dean Hartman to support the presence senior adjunct of color on campus during the summer to help the School in its anti-racism efforts. Basham et al. (1997) describe their roles: "they held weekly teaching forums, sponsored diversity workshops, provided consultation about course curriculum, assisted with crises and problem resolution in incidents involving race, and consulted with students on research topics" (p. 582). In the summer of 1996, the School hosted six Bertha Reynolds Fellows.

Changes in the Recruitment of Students of Color

There is little information available regarding the changes that occurred in the realm of the recruitment of students of color as a direct result of the adoption of the anti-racism commitment. The data available for this study is limited in regards to official School documents. The Anti-Racism Task Force meeting minutes contain one document containing suggestions for changes and improvements in the recruitment and retention of students of color. It is unclear from the data available whether these proposals were ever formally submitted to the resident faculty, and what changes were made, and whether they were direct results of the efforts of the Anti-Racism Task Force. This document includes performing an inventory of past recruitment efforts and current recruitment efforts to determine what kinds

of procedures are effective. Another suggestion includes consideration of increasing financial aid and scholarship packages for students of color. Innovative methods to increase the retention of students of color include attending to the atmosphere and culture of the school. The writers of these proposals suggest increasing documentation of students' experiences on campus, including oral histories of alumni, and increasing supports for students of color on campus ("Recruitment of students of color," anonymous, undated document, attached to ARTF Meeting Minutes binder).

Basham et al. (1997) cite the School's goal during these years of increasing the enrollment of students of color to 20%, in addition to increasing scholarship money for students of color. A number of participants note the importance of having more students of color in the community:

The best thing you can do about racism is change who's at the table. Everything else will happen if you change who's at the table. So the biggest thing we ever did was having [the Director of Admissions] really work on admitting more students of color, and getting it up to 20%, from what it'd been, 5% I think, 20 years ago....Just people's consciousness, the discourse changes, the assumptions can't be made that are made. People don't feel like they have to go underground or keep quiet because they're the only one or there's just a few people. What is normal, what's centered changes. (Participant 11)

The impetus [for the changes] was recruiting more students of color. And they got there and probably to a large extent they didn't like what they saw. And they started raising awareness. I think awareness was starting to be raised all around. So I think that as you got students on campus, that just in itself raised awareness tremendously. (Participant 4)

The Evaluation of the School's Anti-Racism Efforts.

As the anti-racism commitment evolved, members of the Anti-Racism Task Force proposed a means of evaluating the School's efforts in order to stay on track. The members

presented their conceptualization of the Monitoring Committee in Meeting Minutes from November 29, 1995:

The history of monitoring efforts to overcome racism in institutions has produced a multitude of measurement tools, reporting forms, activity summaries, and the like, which have been effective at monitoring activity without assuring any real progress toward the elimination of racism. Our approach to monitoring begins with the recognition of the difficulty of eradicating racism and of the temptation to substitute form for content. Our belief is that anti-racism work is a process and, as such, can be most appropriately monitored by the creation of inter-active processes which look at the institution's activities in a dynamic fashion.

A broadly representative Monitoring Committee (including designees from such key constituencies as the faculty, students, staff, administration, alumni, the College's Office of Affirmative Action, and the Council for Students of Color) should be empowered to assess the School's progress in dealing with racism.

While reports – statistical and otherwise – should be prepared for and reviewed by the Committee, the central monitoring methodology will be the development of format for discussion, problem identification, and problem solving. These monitoring sessions should be held on a regular basis throughout the year, with at least one such session taking place while students are in residence at SSSW. (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 11/29/1995)

Meeting minutes from December 12, 1995, report that the faculty accepted the proposal of the Monitoring Committee “with the stipulation that those being monitored would have input into how they are monitored” (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 12/12/95). In the beginning, the Monitoring Committee's role was a bit unclear, and it took a number of years for the committee to be formed into an effective body. Meeting Minutes from February 4, 1997, reveal discussion about the clarification of the Monitoring Committee.

[One member]...suggested that the Monitoring Committee should interview candidates of color who turn down jobs here to help inform us as to what the School for Social Work is not providing as incentive for them to come here. [Another member]...questioned the function, and specifically the passive role, of the Monitoring Committee. This led to a discussion of what the role of the Monitoring Committee is in general. The central question seemed to be whether the Monitoring Committee is to be a reactive or proactive group. There was a subsequent discussion about the Monitoring Committee's role in handling racist incidents during the

summer session. It was discussed that the monitoring Committee might be viewed as an additional problem solver in the already existing structure of handling complaints or racial harassment (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 2/4/97).

By the summer of 1997, the Monitoring Committee had a new name, the “Special Issues Committee” (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 8/13/97). Meeting minutes from October, 29, 1997, reveal further efforts to clarify the committee’s role: “Since there has been some ambiguity about the various responsibilities of this Committee, a recommendation was made to ask this committee to clarify its current mission, goals, composition and structure.” Undated meeting minutes (presumably, based on their position in the binder, from December, 1997) report clarification by the committee itself regarding its mission and roles, and reveals another name change:

The Anti-Racism Support, Consultation and Monitoring Committee (formerly known as the Monitoring Committee) reported on their discussions related to their purpose, composition and name for the group...In summary, the functions of consultation around specific issues, reporting on the School’s compliance with an anti-racist agenda, education and advocacy were all considered purposes of the committee. Thus far, the structure has involved volunteer membership from alumni, students, administration, administrative staff and faculty (ARTF Meeting Minutes, undated, possibly from 12/1997).

Regarding composition, the ARTF suggested, in a January, 1998, meeting, that membership to the Anti-Racism Support, Consultation and Monitoring Committee be through vote, “to further legitimize” the committee (ARTF Meeting Minutes, 1/1998).

Despite the ARTF’s declared focus on the anti-racism efforts as a “process,” participants recall various responses to the idea of a Monitoring Committee:

The Monitoring Committee was an unfortunate name. We spent a lot of time on the name. But words do have meaning to people, and you use the term monitoring and people feel that they’re being monitored. That was really meant to be the group that looks at whether we’re doing what we say we’re doing. (Participant 12)

We thought, not only do we need to make this part of our mission, but we need to have a structure to keep ourselves accountable. So we created the monitoring committee, then changed the name. (Participant 9)

Today, the Monitoring Committee is known as the Anti-Racism Consultation Committee, and functions as an important part of the School's anti-racism mission. A description of the committee is available on the School's website:

The Anti-racism Consultation Committee (ARCC) was formed about one year after the Anti-racism Task Force, in 1995. Its purpose is to be available to any member of the SSW community for consultation about issues of race, ethnicity, culture and social justice. The ARCC also assesses the SSW's progress towards becoming an anti-racism institution and issues a progress report every two years. Based on its consultations, ARCC makes recommendations to the Dean about policy and programmatic changes to further the anti-racism mission.

The ARCC is an elected committee (with a few standing appointments) that maintains the confidentiality of those with whom it consults. Members include a faculty chair (appointed by the Dean), the Associate Dean, two faculty members, a first and second year student representative, a representative from the Council for Students of Color, senior and junior Bertha Reynolds Fellows, an administrator, an administrative support staff member and an alumni representative. SSW community members seeking consultation can contact any member of the committee. (¶ 1 and 2)

Other Discussions

Anti-Racism Task Force meeting minutes from November 20, 1996, include a statement of thoughts by one member regarding the future goals of the Anti-Racism Task Force. This document, entitled "Smith as an 'Anti-Oppression' Institution" suggests ways to further the breadth and depth of the anti-racism commitment. The opening paragraph of this document is as follows:

Considering ways in which Smith acts in complicity with forces that oppress people and, in some instances, acts as an oppressor itself, is likely to suggest some of the thorny and potentially liberating aspects of the campaign we are embarking on. They foreshadow a substantial amount of struggle – first, among ourselves, next within our

community, and, finally, as we attempt to remember two things: first, that, as Frederick Douglass reminds us – “If there is no struggle, there is no progress;” second, that the structures we are seeking to dismantle have been built over a long time, they serve the interests of powerful people and forces, and they have been constructed so as to provide many opportunities for us to fight among ourselves. The first steps to dismantling them are to keep our eyes on the prize and to keep on talking (“Smith as an ‘Anti-Oppression’ Institution,” Fred Newdom, undated, attached to ARTF Meeting Minutes, 11/20/96).

This document continues by suggesting ways that the School can transition from an anti-racist commitment to an anti-oppression commitment through increasing the “breadth and the depth of the school’s actions and commitments” (p. 1). This member suggests extending the “concerns and actions” (p. 1) to include other groups of people who experience oppression.

In addition, this member calls for further institutional changes:

In terms of the **depth** of our commitment, it’s my sense that we need to look at ways in which the School acts as a citizen of the community, the profession, and the larger society. Areas we might want to consider include **Smith as an employer** – do we, for example, support the aspirations and interests of people who work at the School and the College? Do personnel practices provide for adequate health care, child care, job protections, family leave? To what extent do the **School’s business decisions** reflect the willingness to support enterprises owned and operated by people who belong to oppressed groups? Do we make the School’s and College’s **resources available to community** members who might need them? To what extent is the **School’s governance** a replication of hierarchical modes which have perpetuated the oppression of people?

...Should we choose to engage in that work, it seems clear to me that we will have to address some very vexing questions. Among those are:

- What means will we develop to resolve competing claims on the School’s human, physical and fiscal resources? And, in a related question,
- How do we avoid pitting various oppressed groups against each other in the process of supporting varying claims for justice?
- How do we avoid becoming immobilized in our pursuit of some aspects of a justice oriented program (e.g., countering racism) while we attempt to implement a larger and more inclusive vision?
- Who decides on the means for moving forward on an anti-oppression mission and who decides on the extent of that movement?

I hope that these beginning thoughts provide us with a springboard for useful discussion. (p.1-2)

Uses of language throughout the process

Both School documents and participant contributions reveal a number of discussions and concerns about language related to the anti-racism commitment. In many instances, original language was altered to more adequately represent the concepts the community wanted to support.

Anti-Racist to Anti-Racism

One of the major changes in the beginning years of the mission statement was changing the term *anti-racist organization* to *anti-racism organization*. A number of participants recalled the thinking behind this change, and discuss how this small shift in language allowed for a larger shift in perspective and stance.

Some people were interpreting our mission as trying to ferret out local racists...The language – anti-racist organizations – it was my pet peeve. I said, anti-racist implies we're against racists, and that's not a good message, as we all have inherent racism. Our agenda is not to go and try to...it was part of the language of monitoring. We're not supposed to just be detecting people's racist, exposing them, shaming them, and punishing them. We're trying to avoid the policing, but we're trying to be mindful of identifying and recognizing racism. So it's a nuance of racism. I do think that there was a tone at times of people trying to point out, who are the most offensive racists in the group. (Participant 6)

Well, you know, although racism is carried out by people on all kinds of levels, it's just not helpful. Calling somebody a racist just doesn't bring out the best in them. It's an insult, and so it was an attempt not to say that we're not all responsible, but to give people a little more breathing room to look at it. Because when you call somebody a racist, that usually, unless you have an exceptionally articulate and strong person, is the end of the conversation. It's kind of like saying, hate the sin but love the sinner... When people are afraid they're going to be called a racist, most people are going to run for cover. One way to run for cover is to find the other racists. And...it actually decreased people's responsibility rather than increased it. (Participant 12)

The language is aggressive. That was really hard. And we started out, we had an anti-racist commitment. And we had to change it to anti-racism because anti-racist

felt too much like we were going to find those people. I think the language is provocative, but I don't think we would have achieved what we had if we hadn't taken on such a provocative term. I think it's what keeps the conversation going, and alive, and it creates discomfort even now, I mean really, a lot of these themes continue right now in our own community here. So it's important. Multicultural would have been much easier to swallow and live with. (Participant 7)

Becoming an Anti-Racism Institution

Several alumni participants recalled their reactions and perceptions of the School's original wording of the commitment, which had omitted the word *becoming* and instead implied that the School already was an anti-racism institution, simply with its own declaration.

I was very disturbed with the fact that Smith had in its mission statement the fact that it did not say that they were becoming an anti-racism institution, it said, if I remember correctly, that we *were*. What I remember is that was the first issue...that the mission statement did not reflect where I felt the School was at that time. (Participant 1)

Something [that was discussed] at the time was becoming an anti-racist organization, and that was important that there was awareness that we weren't anti-racist, and that it's always a process. (Participant 3)

The only thing I remember about the mission statement was the whole concept of can we say we are going to be an anti-racist institution or that that's our plan, and can we be one in the context of the racist society? So are we setting ourselves up to fail basically? And the other side of that was, if we don't say that we're even trying, how can we say that we're committed to it? (Participant 8)

Racism in America to Racism in the U.S.

Meeting minutes from the Anti-Racism Task Force document one member's suggestion to change the name of the racism class from Racism in America to Racism in the U.S., citing that America refers to the continent which includes multiple countries, and the course really addresses racism in the United States. It is unclear based on the documents when this change officially took place.

Changes to the Names of the Sections of the Racism Course

After a student complained of racial discrimination to the U.S. Department of Education, the chair of HBSE had to re-design the course to legally comply with the federal regulations. Originally, the School had offered a section of the class to students of color, as students of color had requested. However, this final revision involved arranging the sections by topic: cross-cultural dialogue, issues pertaining to clinicians of color, and racial identity development for the dominant culture. One participant recalled her experience as a student of color with these topic-based sections:

My perception was that the way they worded the description kind of lent to this whole idea of where we were supposed to go. They could not say directly, this class is for this, this class is for this, so it was the way they worded it, but they could not prohibit white students from taking that course if they wanted to take it. (Participant 1)

One of the major difficulties before the class became topic-oriented was that the School had to figure out who would be in the section for students of color, which meant determining who was a student of color. One participant recalls the difficulties of this task, and the eventual recognition that this was unhelpful:

And who for example, should we list who are people of color? Who are not people of color? We gave that one up. There is no list. We started off with one. We decided that was not wise. It would not help, and did we really know anyway? (Participant 12)

Other Language Concerns

Participants recalled various other issues with language. One participant recalls personal difficulty in designing some school documents with regard to language that would reflect the School's anti-racism stance.

We really had to take a hard look at some of our school policies and procedures and school manuals. To look at them from a language standpoint. I learned some hard lessons there, a couple of times. So that was very instructive. I learned a lot about that. To watch language, to watch what policies might put someone in a corner, or isolate someone....Where I really fell down, and the lesson I learned, was through some of the booklets. I learned to look at it with a different eye. I'd done all the proof-reading, then I sat back, trying to put myself in another perspective, does this disenfranchise anyone. (Participant 10)

Another participant mentions the importance of how racism is defined by the leadership.

A lot has to do with your leadership, how does your leadership want to define racism as an institution, is it institutional commitment, is this a pedagogical goal, or is it a goal of multiculturalism, or what does it mean, really really?...How much will you hold, tow the line? Is it institutional or is it just what the students need to get in the end? (Participant 7)

One participant recalled discussions about the visibility of the commitment on official School documents.

And there was even talk about what do you put it in, what's it on, the mission statement. The students really said you need to put it everywhere, it needs to be visible everywhere, even on the application. (Participant 5)

Monitoring Committee to Anti-Racism Consultation Committee

Participants recalled the change in the name of the committee that oversaw the School's anti-racism efforts, from the Monitoring Committee to the Anti-Racism Consultation Committee. This change is similar to the change from anti-racist to anti-racism, as the revised language is intended to appeal to more people and more accurately reflect the mission of the committee.

The Monitoring Committee was an unfortunate name. We spent a lot of time on the name. But words do have meaning to people, and you use the term monitoring, and people feel that they're being monitored. That was the committee. The Anti-Racism Consultation Committee has gone through quite a few permutations. That really was

meant to be the group that looks at whether we're doing what we say we're doing. it does a little of that, it doesn't do quite as much of that [now]...it still scares people whatever we call it. (Participant 12)

The original intent was to monitor the School's progress. To be in a committee - part of its mission to uphold the history of the School. They make that document [the Progress Report on Anti-Racism Commitment]. That's what the monitoring piece meant, but it made some people nervous. (Participant 10)

Institutional Racism

Participants recall the occasional use of the term *institutional racism*, but this term does not appear often in School documents, despite the focus on institutional changes and issues of race and racism.

But when we began to talk about institutionalized racism...I don't think we ever used that term, but when we began to look at some of our own systems, which is really institutionalized policies....(Participant 7)

Yes. We had a faculty member who has since died who took some leadership in this. No one would ever accuse him of being an extremely blunt and outspoken person, which sometimes moved us forward, and sometimes moved us backwards. That would be a word that he would feel as comfortable using as can I have an ice cream cone. (Participant 12)

Yes [we used that word]. It wasn't common in terms of pointing out the School for Social Work as being sort of institutionally racist, but I think in terms of talking about where we were in terms of an institution in our anti-racism process. I think maybe we talked about systemic racism rather than institutional. (Participant 8)

Yes. In fact, that's how I got into the work. Through [work in] institutional racism. The steps that an institution can take to become anti-racist...I use the word with the caveat that institutions are people. (Participant 10)

Certainly, a number of events occurred during the years of 1993 – 1998 that both contributed to and resulted from the adoption of an anti-racism commitment. These findings reveal the major events in addition to commentary from participants regarding their recollection of these events. However, as in the telling of all stories, there are perspectives

that are missing, and these findings present only one unique perspective of what occurred during the years under investigation. The second section of the findings presents participants' further reflections about the entire process, organized into a number of themes.

Participants' Reflections on the Process of Changes

In addition to a narrative of the events, the data revealed six themes regarding participants' reflections on the process of change. Firstly, participants contributed their perspective on what set the stages for the changes, and attributed the changes to a variety of causes and conditions that were unique to the School during the years of 1993 – 1998. Secondly, participants contributed a variety of thoughts about the significance of the anti-racism commitment. A third theme was participants' recollections of the themes of resistance and concerns that arose from various constituencies at the School regarding the changes. The fourth theme was perspectives about what the process of adopting an anti-racism commitment entails and what can be expected if an organization is considering adopting an anti-racism commitment model. The fifth and final theme was participants' personal reactions of surprise as they reflected back on a process that occurred more than ten years ago.

The Causes and Conditions of the Changes

One prominent theme was participants' attributing the process of change to various causes and conditions at the School, both during and prior to 1993. In response to question, *Why did this happen at Smith at this particular time?* participants cited a number of key players and their characteristics: Dean Hartman, faculty, students, the particular composition

of the community at that time, and the personal commitment of those involved. Some respondents cited attributes and structures that are unique to the Smith College School for Social work as factors of change: the Block Plan, the orientation of the School, the history of the School, the format of the Racism course. Thirdly, participants cited conditions that were specific to the time period 1993 – 1998 that allowed for such an extensive process of change: the faculty vote in 1994 to increase attention to issues of anti-racism, the retirement of Dean Hartman, and the increased dialogues about race in the larger society.

The People

Participants attributed the changes to community members who helped establish the conditions for change and members whose participation in the changes was instrumental in the propagation of the process.

The work of Dean Ann Hartman. The work of Dean Ann Hartman received a lot of recognition, as she had worked hard to make several, lasting changes before her retirement in the spring of 1994.

I guess I would give a lot of credit to Ann and Mary Dunn [the then-president of Smith College]. I think that Ann could pull it off because the person that she was – she could be a little intimidating because she was so incredibly confident in who she was. She could take risks, she didn't have a lot to lose. And when she came here she said this was going to be her last job. So she could take risks because if it blew up she didn't have to take another job. It was who she was, where she was in her own life, her own experiences. And she had all the support of Mary Dunn. So it was Ann, it was her time, and the president [of Smith College]. Ann is a really complex person.... Her favorite person in the world is Bertha Capen Reynolds. She believes in her heart of heart that social work is about working with the poor and the disadvantaged. She hates snobby social work. And this was a very powerful way for her to put her stamp on it. Having said that, I think Ann wasn't quite sure how to make this happen, but she was willing to take a risk and bumble through and see what would happen next. (Participant 7)

I think the Deans get credit for it. I think Ann Hartman, when Ann Hartman came...we had maybe one or two students of color...And she said, this has really got to stop. And we have got to do something dramatic. So she had the Minority Alumni Conference. That was a powerful thing to do. [She said] we're willing to pay you to really tell us what you think and you don't have to deal with the dynamics of us being in the room, so that was powerful. I attribute it to that. (Participant 12)

I think Ann Hartman, when she got here, she looked around and said, this is all white, I can't believe it, this is a social work school, what's going on here? So she hired Jerry Sachs as Director of Admissions, and he was on board with that mission, and so there was active recruitment of students of color and trying to change that. (Participant 11)

Clearly Ann brought a vision of social justice to the School that was very different than the image I had of the School. You know, there's the long history of the School, then there's the immediate history of a School that began in the late '80's to kind of say, we've got to do something about the fact that there are virtually no students of color at this place, and we're the best training in the country for clinical social workers, then communities of color are not getting the benefit. (Participant 9)

The particular composition of the community at that particular place and time.

Participants noted the unique composition of community members at the time as one factor in producing the changes. One participant noted that "it's just one of those things that no one person could have done, and no one could have mapped it out, it just happened" (Participant 11). This participant also recalled:

The students were a major catalyst for it. We were kind of ready for it. You need the right cast of characters. There were key faculty members, about six [of them], to play kind of leadership roles who were really committed to it. Students were involved. You needed a confluence of these things coming together. (Participant 11)

Other participants remarked similarly:

Sometimes it's the serendipity of the right people in the right place at the precipitous moment where it can happen, where everything is aligned in just a particular way. I've been here a long time, and thinking, could we have pulled that off today?...I don't know if it could be pulled off today. (Participant 7)

If you start from the assumption that institutions are made up of people, and it's the institutions that...it was that moment, with that cast of characters, and there were some things in place to support the energy that erupted around a cause. (Participant 9)

The nature of the students at that time. A number of participants recalled how the involvement of the students was instrumental in causing the changes. One participant remarked how the students kept the School accountable: "I attribute it to the students saying, you think you're dealing with diversity, but you're really not. And the faculty, most of the faculty eventually really getting that" (Participant 12). Another participant remarked on the experience of students attending the School and noticing problems:

[Students] come here and to hear people talk about the issues and they seem to be ignorant of some of the dynamics that factor into the psychic wellbeing of people of color. And that would have to kind of drive you kind of nuts. Wait a minute, I thought this was the best place since sliced bread. How come they're so behind on this component on what constitutes the wellbeing of a person of color? And I don't know that the faculty understood that. I know some faculty understood it, because of their own minority status....So the dialogue did help people begin to get inside of that, in a way that maybe they hadn't had to do before. There was a steady group of students coming every year. It was their own sense of what...really happens internally when you have to integrate racism into your psychic wellbeing. And there was no one there, there was no one there who could stand up and talk about that (Participant 5).

The increase in students of color. Participant 11 recalled that "The Council [for Students of Color] was a major force." Another participant remarks that "...the big crisis came when we began to have a greater mass of students of color who were very impatient with the racism course" (Participant 4). These participants noted that the increase in the number of students of color was a key factor that led to the process of changes. This had been a result of the efforts of Dean Hartman.

The best thing you can do about racism is change who's at the table. Everything else will happen if you change who's at the table. So the biggest thing we ever did was having [the Director of Admissions] really work on admitting more students of

color, and getting it up to 20%, from what it'd been, 5% I think, 20 years ago....Just people's consciousness, the discourse changes, the assumptions can't be made that are made. People don't feel like they have to go underground or keep quiet because they're the only one or there's just a few people. What is normal, what's centered changes. (Participant 11)

The impetus [for the changes] was recruiting more students of color. And they got there and probably to a large extent they didn't like what they saw. And they started raising awareness. I think awareness was starting to be raised all around. So I think that as you got students on campus, that just in itself raised awareness tremendously. (Participant 4)

The role of Jerry Sachs. Jerry Sachs was a member of the resident faculty as well as Director of Admissions at the School. He was hired by Dean Hartmann with a mandate to recruit students of color. Jerry was very involved in the Anti-Racism Task Force, and many participants mention his particular personality and commitment as instrumental in the changes, particularly in the areas of continuing the conversation once it began. Jerry died in 2002.

I have to give [him] a lot of credit. He was a difficult guy. He would say so too. He was also a very nice person....He was also challenging. He had axioms. "If it doesn't hurt, we haven't accomplished anything". And he was difficult. When conversations came up, he was difficult in a group setting. He was provocative. He was accusatory. He was very difficult to manage in a group. But he came in at a time, this was and is, an elite women's, white women's school, with the steepest traditions in a New England area, so it's conservative. People here know how to tell you how to go F yourself in the sweetest way. There is a way of being. If you don't have someone at his end...He represented the other end of the spectrum. And only by having someone as loud, as brash, as demanding at that end of the scale did we move to the middle at all. And I really do believe that since he's passed away that our middle has moved back towards the conservative end. (Participant 7)

He was a huge stakeholder, and he would bring up things where people weren't necessarily thinking it was racist or had anything to do with racism. He would show you how it was [related]. So that was really helpful to a lot of people. It pissed a lot of people off, but it was really helpful in a lot of ways...And I really

have to credit Jerry Sachs a lot. As much of a controversial figure that he could be, he was really instrumental in the whole thing, and really had a lot of faith and commitment to making this work. When some faculty either weren't interested or weren't really sure how far they could really take it, he pushed. He pushed, and he had power to push. Students didn't really have power to push. We had power in number to a certain extent, but after that, what else could we really do. He was amazing in that way. And yeah, I really do have to say that he was a big force behind it. (Participant 8)

Something I really appreciate about Jerry was that he would get personal, and I think a lot of people didn't like that, but he was very real....[People would say] 'Jerry said this or that, but at least he's being real.' (Participant 3)

The personal commitment of the community members involved in the changes.

Six participants cited their own and others' personal commitment to anti-racism work even prior to joining the community. One participant describes how her personal commitment to issues of race and racism motivated her to become a member of the Anti-Racism Task Force.

And it [a former job] certainly exposed me to much more diversity than I had been used to. And beginning to deal with it was part of my beginning professional life, not because I chose to, but because I had to. But after a while, it became, I thought, well, this is kind of a good thing for me. And so, the ARTF became kind of more like that. Well, this is great, and I took the time to educate myself again more, and so, I liked being on it. It was a personal issue as well as an organizational issue. (Participant 12)

Certainly participants noticed that the people present at the School prior to and during the years 1993 – 1998 impacted the course of changes that occurred. In addition to commenting on the roles of specific people and constituencies, participants noted attributes of the School itself that created the conditions for the changes.

Organizational Structures

Participants mentioned a number of characteristics about the Smith College School for Social Work that could have set the conditions for the changes to occur: the Block Plan, the history of the School, the psychodynamic focus, the format of the racism course, and the

transition in the Dean's position in 1994. Additionally, participants remarked that the discourse in the larger society that was occurring at that time may have influenced the events at the School.

The structure and format of Smith College School for Social Work. Participants suggested that the structure and content of the Smith College School for Social Work program provided for a unique environment that allowed for the changes to occur. The School operates on the Block Plan, and students come to Northampton, MA, for ten weeks in the summer to take classes, then complete their field internships in various parts of the country during the traditional academic year. The length of the entire program is 27 months, spanning three summer sessions and two academic-year field placements. In the summers, students are in class for at least twenty hours per week, and many students live in dormitories with each other on the Smith campus.

You got a place that is, as I said, isolated. You have an intense learning lab there. Basically it promotes itself as that....You think about community as a warm and engaging place. So you come to a place for 27 months and you hear the word community, and how are we going to be that? Are you going to respect me? I'm here now, and I'm in the classroom and that's sufficient....Why at Smith? Because people couldn't go home. People were living, breathing, being in a space with people. It's a learning lab. Different from other schools. It's not a learning lab at the expense of anyone. I don't think the students of color wanted to come and be a learning lab for everybody else. They want the same opportunities for their money that everybody else wants. (Participant 5)

It's the Block Plan. I mean, I've taught at two other schools. Everything is different because of the Block Plan. Because you have 200-some students living together all summer. And you know, I had no idea Smith was going to be like that when I went out there. I thought of it as a conservative...you know, it was very light on social content, terrible on social content...it was almost like a clinical training school rather than a social work school. They didn't even know what social environment meant. But on the other hand, the students had a club and an organization for everything.... So I think in part it's the groupness, that's the major thing that makes it unique. (Participant 4)

The history of the Smith College School for Social Work. One participant mentioned the School's history as a training center for social work with veterans as setting the stage for the School to address difficult social issues. Another participant noted the history of Smith College and the geographical location of the School as relevant to the changes that occurred.

I think Smith [SSW] has a long long history of tackling issues...I remember [the Dean] talking about the most recent efforts in Veteran's [issues], that's just who we are, as far as the institution goes. It's not really anything necessarily new for Smith to tackle things that are difficult, things that are real in society. And of course the way that you do that, I mean, it does take time, it's not perfect, it's not a straight road, there's that step before, there's many people who have tackled these kinds of things. (Participant 1)

I always like to say that I'm thankful that Smith can have the conversation, and it is built upon the history, not only the history of Smith but the history of the area, the race history in Florence, the churches in town, the abolitionists. The history of Smith...they always say something like "the beacon of hope" in the world, and that's the truth. Sophia Smith founded Smith because she wanted women to be able to have an equal education, and so then, thus it begins, with the founding women of Smith. (Participant 2)

The clinical and psychodynamic orientation of the Smith College School for Social Work. The Smith College School for Social Work provides clinical training in social work with theoretical roots in the psychodynamic tradition. Participants identified these traits of the School as setting the conditions for the changes that led to and resulted from the adoption of the anti-racism mission:

One reason it happened at Smith [is] because of the emphasis on self-reflection because of clinical work, which you have to do. I think it [the focus on self-reflection] gave a lot of people permission to look at themselves, both white people and people of color, to see how they both contribute to it and how they themselves, by not helping the change, what did that mean for them. (Participant 8)

You've got to look at this [the changes] in the context of who's at a school like Smith. The psychological determinants of, okay, here's this issue, we can't keep

ignoring it in the session, we've got to bring it in and work through it....We're going to work through it because that's what we as clinical social workers do. (Participant 5)

And also the fact that unlike other schools for social work, we are clinically focused. And so it brings it down to a level of discussion that can be avoided in an institution that's looking at it only from a historical perspective. It puts it out there. So I think that's unique. (Participant 10)

The format of the racism course. A number of participants pointed to the racism course as one of the major focuses for the origins of student discontent. One participant described the impact of the course: "The anti-racism class has been a lightning rod for the entire time I've been here" (Participant 6). Another described the course as the locus of consciousness: "I think the course was critical – raising the consciousness of the students and faculty who were teaching it, which led up to the demonstration" (Participant 11). Another participant described the course similarly:

We kept doing better recruiting students of color, and we kept tinkering with the race course. And students would make various suggestions and demands, and we would agitate in committees over those, around curriculum development. But it seems to me that the big crisis came when we began to have a greater mass of students of color who were very impatient with the racism course. (Participant 4)

Other Factors

The Spring 1994 vote to commit to anti-racism efforts. Dean Hartman had led to School to a new place with her efforts towards changing the composition of the community to include more people of color. In addition, in the Spring of 1994, the faculty voted to commit to anti-racism efforts more fully. There is little available information about this vote and the language that was used, but a number of participants noted how the School's increase

in attention to issues of race and racism allowed for further conversations (Participant 6, Participant 11, Participant 12).

Dean Hartman's retirement. A number of participants mention the major transition in leadership of the School as Dean Hartman retired in the Spring of 1994. One participant remarked: "Dean Hartman was at the end of her era at that time, so there's that transition, I think, that does allow for some room for growth and change" (Participant 3). Another participant saw the departure of Dean Hartman similarly:

What was important was that Ann Hartman left as the very esteemed senior Dean who had been really promoting these issues and a strong advocate. So there was a sense of transition and inevitable uncertainty in the community because we didn't know who the new Dean would be. And Susan Donner came in as Acting Dean and anchored the School in a very positive way, but it was a tumultuous summer because when you have major systemic changes of that sort, you see tumult....The change of the Dean was pivotal, in terms of organizational shifts. (Participant 6)

The social context. Participants noted that the increasing trend of talking about race and racism at the School may have been influenced by the same trend in the larger social context. One participant remarked about the importance of the social context: "I think you do have to have a sense of the external climate in the world. People came from everywhere with other kinds of things that were sitting in the back of their head before they got [to Smith]" (Participant 5). Similarly, other participants recalled the details of the social context at that time:

Maybe it was a sign of the times. Clinton was elected. It was a little...the ice age of talking about racism thawed slightly. The *NY Times* had a whole series about racism. [It was a] greater part of the public discourse.

...and then there's the backdrop of the Rodney King beatings, Anita Hill. Also the political climate was very tumultuous in terms of racial disparities. So there was that level of political discourse for the haves and have-nots and race and racism was front and center. It was one of the issues that was dealt with more actively in the classroom.... So I think our conversations were paralleling what the issues were in the general political landscape. We could have been totally insular and ignored everything, but we weren't. (Participant 12)

I'm trying to remember what was going on nationally at the time because I know all those things trickle down...Oh yeah. L.A. riots. It makes you wonder...perhaps there was this *we need to do something about this*....(Participant 3)

In addition to the social and environmental settings, one participant remarked that “as an academic institution, the School was influenced by themes present in academic settings at the time” (Participant 8). Similarly, another participant describes these influences:

Also we've been influenced by what's going on theoretically and conceptually. So racial identity development was really big in the '90's, so students were reading it and formulating things around it....And racial dialogue – how to have conversations about race. (Participant 11)

The Significance of the Commitment

Participants were asked about their interpretation of the meaning of the commitment. When responding to the question, *What significance does the commitment have?* participants noted that the significance of the commitment lies in the conceptualization of the commitment, which denies that there is an end-point, or destination to be achieved in anti-racism efforts. Participants also noted the how the commitment allows for a continued conversation while also allowing for problems. Participants noted the ability of the commitment to bridge the micro and macro aspects of social work and social work education, and similarly, to organize multicultural efforts in a whole, systemic approach that includes accounting for how the School “does business.”

A Commitment Without a Visible Destination

A number of participants used variations of the phrase “no there there” and other phrases to discuss how the shape and structure of the commitment denies the existence of a specific destination, and rather implies that just as racism has no end, the School’s efforts to address racism have and will have no end.

It’s a process. There is no there there. If we were to have a conversation at the School about what would anti-racism even look like, this perfect place, I think we would have a range of ideas. I don’t know if they would be inconsistent ideas, but we would have a different sense of what this place would look like...I think you have to come to recognize that there is no there there, or there is no attainable there there, and that the real issue is, are you willing to stay at the table to keep on talking to each other, to work from the assumption of good will. (Participant 9)

We don’t even know what it would look like. Where is a model? There isn’t one. I mean, I think we can be aware at this moment in time of things that could be different now and that aren’t, but I don’t have any model for any society or really any institution that functions free of racism or really any other isms for that matter. Is there a there? Well, there has to be created. But we’re not there. (Participant 12)

It’s one of those things that you just can’t drop it. What are we going to say, we’re not going to have it anymore, we’ve gotten there. We haven’t gotten there. Obviously. So that’s again one of the strengths of having it in the mission statement. (Participant 11)

I think there may be a sense of an idealized place of where [the School] want[s] to be or where they want to get to, but there’s the sense that you are making it up as you go along, there aren’t other models of it. I think that’s significant. That’s a lot to take on – a lot of responsibility. You say you’re committed to it, but you’re saying you’re not quite sure what it looks like. In some ways, it’s a set-up for them to always disappoint. And I think I give them a lot of credit for that, because that’s the place you have to be in, because they don’t know, and saying that they know what it’s going to be like or how long it’s going to take, or who’s going to be involved, or what we should all be waiting for, it doesn’t make sense. So that is significant and important... The models that are out there are primarily theoretical and or people have only gotten half way, they haven’t gotten through to the whole, they haven’t gotten to the end. I think that’s the good thing about Smith’s, and that’s where the clinical helps, is the idea that this is a process, just like any interaction, and you don’t necessarily know where it’s going to take you, and you have to be vigilant, and you have to try and assess where things are and figure out the right interventions for the time, but you may not know ahead of

time, and you may look back and say that was a bad one, but you just keep going. (Participant 8)

It's a moving and changing thing. But that's what keeps it exciting. Racism is not static. It moves and changes with history and the pressure of current events. It may not be possible to have "achieved the goal." The essence of the School's commitment is that we intend to continue to examine all levels of our operations and make forward-looking changes. (Participant 10)

It's Like Committing to a Conversation

Participants acknowledged the importance of a continued conversation as being part of the commitment.

It's the only place I know that really has tackled [the issues of race and racism] in the way that it does. It ebbs and flows in the intensity of it, but they've always been willing to have the conversation, to struggle through making the change, and I think that the commitment is what keeps me connected to the School, because in no other place in the world can you speak in a language as we speak in at [Smith SSW], especially around race. (Participant 2)

The trick is to not shut down anyone's concerns, because they're valid, while also not allowing the discussions of race to go underground, which is often what happens....I think once we made the commitment...once it was out there, and then something happened and it's out there, and you've written it, and you've said it publicly, then you have to do something. So I think it does make a difference to say it, and to put it out there. It makes life more difficult, because people come in expecting things that we can't delivered, or we haven't delivered. (Participant 12)

The more you make something the centerpiece of the conversation, you can't control what the conversations are going to be. Race has become a much more significant issue on campus....I think it has made the climate much more conscious, and sometimes it winds up being not as helpful, but the alternative sucks. Not talking about it is worse than talking about it badly. It doesn't allow conversations to go underground as much, and the as much is important. (Participant 11)

It's Allowing Problems to Occur

Participants discussed how the shape and form of the commitment allows for problems to occur and commits to deal with them rather than attempts to preemptively prevent conflict.

The problems were there before the commitment, but now they surface. And I really am of the school that it just goes underground. And people of color just have to suck it up. If there's not enough space or safety to challenge white supremacy, then it hurts people. It always hurts people even if you're creating those spaces, but if you don't have those spaces, then I think people have to lay low. They have to endure microaggressions, act okay and smile. They can't form support groups, at least overtly. (Participant 11)

It's part of the growing pains. There's pain all the way. If you're not learning from it, it can be meaning-sucking. There would not have been that problem had we not made that first step. But once you put your foot forward, you have to be prepared to drag the other one up. Keep going forward. And each step brings something else up. (Participant 10)

...there were so many screw-ups. You need to be able to be, as an institution, forgiving and say, because we're all in the process and we're not there, we're going to acknowledge that we'll all screw up. As long as you can say that, then we're all on the same path. (Participant 7)

I think any one of these [problems that arose] could have been really daunting to any other place, but the fact that they're still going forward with those constraints... they're saying, if we're doing nothing, then we're colluding. So even though it may not be possible, or we don't know what it's going to look like, we have to be committed to what we can do. (Participant 8)

[When problems occur,]...it doesn't necessarily mean you made a bad commitment. And what significant thing does one undertake in life that doesn't have problems? (Participant 12)

It's Bridging the False Dichotomy in Social Work

A number of participants noted how the form and structure of the commitment allowed for a "bridging" of micro and macro social work. Participants who commented on

this also held the opinion that the separating micro and macro social work issues detracts from both lenses.

[The division between micro and macro social work] is a false dichotomy. I don't know how you do clinical work without getting involved in all parts of people's lives. The idea that you can help people become all of who they are without helping them influence the systems that make them who they are makes no sense to me. (Participant 9)

And then the conversations would begin, how can you really have excellence in clinical social work without really dealing with issues of racism, and it's extremely important in clinical work. How are we teaching students to factor in not just issues of loss and abandonment but where racism impacted them? How has it filtered down into their individual self, psyche, life chances, biases?...I think sometimes the discussions are too bifurcated about [micro and macro social work]. (Participant 12)

I can say from my own viewpoint that if you're going to do anything clinically, you can't divorce it from social change, because there's the whole thing about the environment....And if you're going to work with somebody you can't divorce it from what's going on in their environment. (Participant 3)

I think it was a good time to be there because being a clinically oriented program, it was nice to get first hand the idea of organizing and the macro perspective, and I think what that did for me was, I really have this kind of imbedded sense of micro and macro that I can't separate. I really really can't see micro as completely adding to macro practice and perspective and vice versa. (Participant 8)

I've always been so frustrated with the dichotomizing that often occurs in schools – the racism and gender piece seems to be at a macro level, and then there's the practice. And practice, if you do it correctly, always deals with issues of race....I think it's still separate. I think people still struggle, and many people still see [it as] here's the racism class over here, and they have trouble recognizing that it's present in every single clinical case. (Participant 6)

It is Institutional Transformation

Participants remarked that the commitment allowed for a holistic and systemic approach to dealing with issues of race and racism rather than a compartmentalized method

of addressing solely the multicultural education needs of the students for educational purposes.

[Before the commitment]...it became, well, we want to be multicultural, we want to see diversity, that was easy to say. We want to make sure our students have multicultural competencies. [Then] [t]he other side said, the anti-racism stance is much more proactive and involved, it's alive. It means I'm not just learning, I'm participating and I have a goal I need to achieve. It starts with an understanding that there is racism, and says, I have an obligation to respond in some way....You can externalize [multicultural efforts] by saying it's about the education, not the institution. That's the easiest pitfall we fall into all the time. We need to just make sure you [students] get it. It doesn't matter what [staff] get. The focus on the students' experience. But it's different if you're talking about institutional transformation....This was the first time that students and administrators and staff and faculty were in a shared conversation. I think it was helpful in...having the group resist thinking about the issues from just an academic perspective. To really think more in terms of the institutional, all the way down to hiring, not just who are we admitting, but who are we hiring, who are we bringing in, who are we contracting with, what do the curriculum look like. The conversations ran the whole gamut. They ran from talking about classes and what does it mean to be anti-racist versus including content about multicultural communities, to how does one do business as an institution. (Participant 7)

And that's what an institution is – a collection of individuals. An institution itself can't be racist. The collective, it's the people. Our collective mandate, our collective thoughts and feelings and reactions to racism, and how we can come together in a consolidated vision....One thing that gets lost is about when students first come in, [they think] oh, they've made this utopia for me. But in fact, the institution isn't just the people who are designing and running it, it's the students as well. It's everyone together who work to make the institution an anti-racism institution. We can't do it without all the people present. So in terms of spoon-feeding people anti-racism, that's not going to work. Students have to be able to take responsibility for being on board, just like we as admin and faculty have taken the responsibility to be on board. People back away from [saying it's students' personal responsibility]. I find us urging that. I find myself urging that at the table. We have to ask for that commitment, we have to expect it. Expect you to step forward and do that personal work. (Participant 10)

Themes of Resistance

Participants recalled a number of themes of resistance and concerns in responding to the question, *What themes of resistance were encountered in the process?* Participants recalled some community members' initial reactions about the effectiveness and necessity of the commitment, and also how the commitment altered the experiences and expectations of students at the School.

Concerns About the Meaning and Effectiveness of the Commitment

Participants recalled that some community members were skeptical of the meaning and necessity of adopting a commitment. One participant remarked, "And you know, there were people of color here at the time that said, you know, you're kidding. You don't really know what you're doing. And there was truth to that" (Participant 12). A number of other participants recall similar reactions to the idea of the commitment:

A number of faculty of color were weary of it...they were kind of like, 'what's this mean, you're going to become an anti-racist institution, what's that really mean? What's going to happen?' I think for so long they just had to suck it up and put up with the whitest of institutions, Smith College, and us being part of that, it was almost like, come on, I don't even want to go there....I don't think they trusted that it was really going to lead to much. It was emotionally risky for them to open themselves up to getting hopeful that things could actually change. (Participant 11)

My distinct impression was there was both a sense that this is good to do, glad something's happening, and a dose of skepticism about whether anything was going to change. I think there was a very strong '[I'll] wait and see...I've been down this road before, and let me see what they come up with.' (Participant 9)

The only thing I remember about the mission statement was the whole concept of can we say we are going to be an anti-racist institution or that that's our plan, and can we be one in the context of the racist society? So are we setting ourselves up to fail basically? And the other side of that was, if we don't say that we're even

trying, how can we say that we're committed to it? That was a big tension.
(Participant 8)

One participant contributed her own perspective of skepticism about the adoption of the commitment: "I'm not sure that people understood what it meant to adopt it other than it meant it would be the right thing to do. The unintended consequences of doing something are often not thought about" (Participant 5).

Concerns About Allocation of Resources

Participants recalled that faculty members expressed concern about how the adoption and implementation of an anti-racism commitment would affect the educational focus of the School. Some faculty felt that the history of the excellence in clinical teaching might be threatened by an anti-racism commitment.

[One] tension [that existed] amongst the faculty [was] about how much attention this commitment should get and does it detract from our clinical commitment. I would say that everyone on the faculty [said] of course it's part of our clinical commitment, but as far as what that [meant] to people, it [varied] considerably. And back then, there was a lot of feeling that this was kind of an activist, social-change project, and here we were, a clinical school, so I remember that as probably the most central thing.
(Participant 4)

So the institution and the people in it already had to engage in what it was going to mean, and anticipate some of the ways that it was going to take more resources, that it was going to probably make life less comfortable for a lot of white people in particular, but not just white people...[Some people] were like, well, why would we make the commitment, and is this going to take our resources, and our real commitment is to provide excellence in clinical social work. And then the conversations would begin, how can you really have excellence in clinical social work without really dealing with issues of racism. (Participant 12)

There were concerns about what does it look like, what does it mean, if we make this an overarching commitment, how does that...clinical, anti-racism, which comes first. And we're not an anti-racism school, we're a clinical school. So I think there was a lot of positioning around, how would it change the School. Who would we attract? I think implied, although never really verbalized...I think it really was conveyed that there was concern about the quality of our own student body if we became very

aggressive in doing outreach to communities of color. I remember at one point a conversation where there was recommendation around recruiting students of color, but not necessarily out of communities of color, but couldn't we go to elite undergraduate schools where there were students of color, so we could get better students....There was a concern about losing our position as an elite school. (Participant 7)

[One theme of concern] was not wanting to give up the preciousness of the psychodynamic content. I mean, you can't do Anna O. and spend tons of time on drive theory and so forth. Something has to give if you're going to really increase your social content, your policy content, your cultural and race content. The School has expanded in terms of its electives, but the overall picture looks a little different, and that's always true – people have to give up something. (Participant 4)

Back then, there was a lot of feeling that this was kind of an activist, social-change project, and here we were, a clinical school, so I remember that as probably the most central thing. The macro, activist type of thing [was] that was seen as the type of thing that some of us did, but not what the majority of people were here for. There was some eye-rolling, are we going to talk about this again, or how much time are we going to spend on this, or should we yet again have the spring faculty meeting, or the Curriculum Day focus on racism, what about other things? (Participant 11)

All appeared to be on board with the general concept. Resistance emerged when the details of the change began to take shape. It meant everyone had some extra work to do. It meant that each of us needed to be more introspective in regard to our personal work with anti-racism, in order to make larger institutional gains. (Participant 10)

One participant describes her own reservations about this theme of concern:

So the other issue that came up, and I found myself in a lot of conflict with one of the other people who was active in this whole theme, found it very painful, and sort of began to pull back...but my concern at this time, and it's still a concern, but I said this in a meeting...and I got a really horrified response from students and faculty, and I was really by myself on this position. I felt that, if we continued...it felt to me that everything was becoming about race. Everything. That it was taking over, and in some ways there are many many positive things, but in many ways it was almost like a virus that infected everything that went on. It felt like so many things that weren't really about race were getting turned into race, racial issues. People were claiming racism. Teachers were nervous. Young, new teachers would say one thing wrong in class, the next thing you know you've got a whole class turning on them, and they've only been there a week, they don't know the language. I think I said, this could end up biting itself in its own tail, and maybe we should choose our battles more carefully,

and go for the things that were really important, that really mattered, but tone down. I was afraid we'd get a huge backlash. (Participant 4)

Concerns About Focusing Solely on Race

Participants recalled extensive discussions around the difficult decision of having the commitment focus solely on racism rather than on multiple forms of oppression.

There's always the controversy that's raised with these discussions of why we would focus primarily on race as opposed to other issues of oppression. It took a very strong, politically grounded commitment, which seems to be important and still central, in spite of what people are saying about post-racial politics. I think race and racism is still a central issue in this country. (Participant 11)

And certainly the overwhelming argument was that race was by far the most destructive oppression by far and we should be focusing on that. I didn't know. I felt ambivalent about it. What I was afraid of was that it eventually would start to be divisive. The largest population, for example, was gay and lesbian students. And they had been very supportive, probably the most supportive group among white students of the Anti-Racism Task Force...I think it's important to look at your own racism. But I'm not sure that should be the focus of all this...one of my colleagues said it was the Oppression Olympics. Sometimes it feels self-indulgent to me, sometimes it feels...and the world is falling apart. Go and change the mission statement in your agency. Go to placements where 50% of the clients are Black and there isn't a single clinician of color. (Participant 4)

Look, this is a Black-white thing at this point. If we can't have that conversation in America, we have to start there, begin to talk about other kinds of people of color, make an assumption that people want to identify, and that's not necessarily true. And then...over the years...it was the Oppression Olympics. (Participant 2)

Concerns About Being Seen as Racist

Participants recall instances of community members increased fear about being seen as racist, both in the faculty and student body, because of the commitment.

Some of the concerns that I was aware of and other people expressed – some people were interpreting our mission as trying to ferret out local racists. Even the language – anti-racist organization – it was my pet peeve. I said, anti-racist implies we're against racists, and that's not a good message, as we all have inherent racism.

Our agenda it not to go and try to...be detecting other people's racism, exposing them, shaming them, and punishing them...I do think there was a tone at times of people trying to point out, who are the most offensive racists in the group. (Participant 6)

[There was] a feeling that some faculty members who had thought less about race and racism or were less comfortable talking about that, people saw them as racist. So how to either be quiet, or tread very gingerly, it's only in the last few years that we meet as a faculty once a month to talk about racism. (Participant 11)

With entering, it takes a while to absorb what this is all about. It's what we've struggled with – where do we put this. If we put the orientation to the commitment in the first week, it's totally overwhelming, and it scared people, caused incredible angst. So if we infuse it in the first term in thoughtful ways, put a symposium in the first week of the second term, we've evolved that way to make it more thoughtful and less scary for people. I think it's what everyone's fear is: am I racist? If you're a student coming from the dominant culture, am I racist? If you're a student of color coming into this, am I going to be put on display, am I going to be responsible for representing my race? All the ways that racism can make us feel scared, uncomfortable, inadequate. (Participant 5)

Students' Expectations of the Commitment

Participants noted how the commitment affected incoming students and their reactions to the School's orientation. One participant remarked that students' expectations that an anti-racism commitment means that there is no racism on campus is unrealistic: "Well, let's see, you're coming off the street, where there is racism, and you walk through this magic doorway, and no one on this side is affected by what's on that side, yeah, that's real" (Participant 9). Other participants noted some students' expectations in this regard:

And some students of color, some white students come here and they expect this to be a dramatically different kind of planet, and we're not dramatically a different kind of planet. (Participant 12)

Some students would pick Smith because of the mission statement, and when they came, they realized, uh, it's still racist. That was hard, because they felt like they were duped, and those were some of the strongest voices in saying how wrong things still were at Smith. So it was trying then to figure out a way to say we're not

there yet, but we're committed to it and we're doing everything we can to be there. (Participant 8)

But then you have the issue of people saying, I'm going to come here and there's an expectation that because they've made a statement that this is an anti-racism institution that they have done that. So that would be an issue for people. Wait a minute, I thought this was taken care of, but it's a work in progress, and I'm going to have to be a part of the work. There were higher expectations, and that pissed some people off. That would be a point of contention for some students who were there. That got to be grist for the mill....(Participant 5)

I think sometimes students come into it, their wish is they will come into this institution and we'll be there, we're going to provide this wonderful environment for them where all problems about race have been solved, and that is not, in my book, possible. We can only try to keep pace with it and try to change with its ever-changing dynamics. With entering, it takes a while to absorb what this is all about. It's what we've struggled with – where do we put this. If we put the orientation to the commitment in the first week, it's totally overwhelming, and it scared people, caused incredible angst. So if we infuse it in the first term in thoughtful ways, put a symposium in the first week of the second term, we've evolved that way to make it more thoughtful and less scary for people. I think it's what everyone's fear is: am I racist? If you're a student coming from the dominant culture, am I racist? If you're a student of color coming into this, am I going to be put on display, am I going to be responsible for representing my race? All the ways that racism can make us feel scared, uncomfortable, inadequate. (Participant 10)

I think a lot of what came from those orientations, a lot of the feelings of confusion or anger or whatever people's emotions were came from sitting through those and either feeling like they were being talked down to, or blamed for things, or some people not going to Smith because of the commitment, because they didn't even read it, they didn't even know what it meant, then being hit in the face with it, and they just kind of walked into it. And the other group, seeing their reactions, how come they didn't know what this was all about. (Participant 3)

Students' Concerns About the Seriousness and Effectiveness of the Commitment

Three participants, all students of color during the years 1993 – 1998, mentioned their concern about the manifestation of the commitment and what it meant for their experiences at the school, both on campus and in the field.

I also found myself feeling a lot as if we were almost pressured into sometimes having a position or trying to take a position....I felt a lot at times that we were being pushed [by] white allies, a lot of the ARTF, some of the things that came out of there had less to do with students of color wanting certain things versus these white allies. That used to tick me off because I'm saying yes, I don't have a problem with anybody being an ally for change and for things to be better, but you know, you can't run my race for me if I'm standing right here....Even with this whole anti-racism piece, we are taught, they have classes about how white clinicians can work with people of color, nothing for people of color to work with white people. Cross-cultural doesn't go both ways. And the other thing, as far as student body and coming back years later [as an alum], I noticed that when there were teachers or instructors who did some things that were pretty controversial that may have caused them to not come back the next summer...yet, those folks may not have come back for a summer or two, but later on, they're back at the school, they're receiving accolades from the School, so what type of message are you really sending?...I'm saying that if we're committed to being an anti-racism institution, and people are continually doing things of that nature, yes, you do need to reconsider because when alumni come back and see those folks are still there, we're like, are you really serious? (Participant 1)

I did not want to have the conversation because I felt...that we were being kind of told what and how we were going to do things from our allies, and no one was really asking us what we wanted or needed....I felt a lot of things were being forced on us...I felt like there was a certain way that, you know, wasn't P.C. We got labeled, I got labeled as the angry Black woman. So what were we really trying to do? I felt like the effort, it felt to me like it didn't do enough. I think it looked really good on paper. And I was really concerned and still have deep concerns that...there's never been a strong infrastructure to support the students of color and the idea around becoming and anti-racist institution. So you can do the work, you can have the courses, but if there's not the infrastructure built to support students through the experience.... (Participant 2)

One thing I always felt Smith didn't do that I felt they really needed to do, but that at the same time I thought it was impossible, I thought we shouldn't be affiliated with field placements who aren't also committed to an anti-racism mission. Because that's most of our education. So you're going to put a Smith student at a placement that's not committed to that, that doesn't make any sense. So many of the agencies are struggling as they are, you think they're going to add that to their list, there's no way. (Participant 8)

White Students' Concerns About the Impact of the Changes to the Racism Course

Two participants recalled white students' concerns about the changes made to the racism course, and the effect these changes had on some white students' educational experiences.

A lot of white people thought, how am I going to learn about racism if I don't have students of color in my class, and that was really a very clear perspective that I basically want to get my money's worth, and if there are no students of color in there, I'm not going to learn anything. So we knew that was the overwhelming sentiment of white students. (Participant 8)

I was in an all-white class. I felt comfortable. I still felt that the discussion became around we want kids of color in our group so we can talk about issues of racism and kids of color...[versus the students of color saying] we don't want to hear the white kids cry the whole time. (Participant 3)

Participants recalled a number of various themes of resistance and concerns about the changes during the years 1993 – 1998. These themes reflect the variety of experiences and perspectives of the process of change.

What an Anti-Racism Commitment Entails

Many participants generalized their experiences of the process to talk about what is needed for a school to undertake the process of adopting an anti-racism commitment.

Participants noted that leadership is required, that commitment to "the long-haul" is necessary, and that the process is not always fun, but is important and meaningful.

I would say one is that it's absolutely essential that...there's leadership at the top for this to move forwards. That's just a given. It will create incredible angst in an organization and levels of paranoia as well. The toppest leadership needs to hold steady, hold the institution while this happens. Secondly, I'd say that you have to be in it for the long run or don't start, because if you just want to do it for a while, then all you'll do is create incredible chaos in your organization, but you won't have

achieved anything. You'll have wounded many people and burned many bridges and you won't have gotten to the other side. So if you can't do it for the long haul, don't do it. And the third is, don't over think it. It really does kind of have to unfold. And you need to have a body of people who are willing to commit, keep the conversation going, make it participatory at all levels, because if not, the system has a tendency to focus on who's not there. The faculty couldn't say it was the admin, the admin couldn't say it was the faculty. I'd say good representation. (Participant 7)

First of all you need to think about what you really mean. You need to be clear about what your motivations are, because once you start down the road, you have to be serious about it, and there may be many things that make you want to turn back, and you can't. So be as clear as you can about why you want to do it, what's in it for you, what's in it for your students, why it's important to the education. Then there are a variety of ways to think about it. If you do decide to do it, you need to take a comprehensive view and think of all of the ways that impinge upon your institutional and educational life. And you need to be in it for the long haul, and it's going to take resources. So don't say when it takes resources...why are we spending our resources on this. You have to be prepared for that. And find a way, at least enough of the time, to come forth with those resources. So think about your motivation, know why you're doing it, be serious about it, and if you make the commitment, know that it's not always going to be a lot of fun. And prepare for that. And don't think that because you're not all having a good time all the time or because it causes other problems that it's not a worthwhile thing to do. Because it's really a process....Once you see how important it is, you need to be on board for the long haul. You'll get something. Everyone will get something. Everybody. (Participant 12)

Drink some beer and have a good time. Get down and just talk....Being very real. I don't think you always have to be P.C. You can make mistakes, but you're real. I think that just being very real is a lot of what we need to do. And it really benefits us all and it's not just a person of color issue. I think for someone who's white, like myself, it creates health for all of us. So for a school to undergo this, yeah, there's going to be tension, it's not always going to be pleasant, it's not always going to be fun. Don't just say we're looking at it as a one-year issue, realize it's going to be a lot of work, a lot of logistical stuff, a lot of...training. Even the faculty are really aware of their own identities and issues. But that first year, there's a lot of semantic things. And the second year, there's more of the tensions and arguments and discussions, and there can be some fall-out, and then you pull it together and it's a multi-year process, but stay with it, because it really does affect the health of the individual, the group, the school, it makes a difference. (Participant 3)

[A school] better mean it, and [there is a] need to understand this is going to ripple through the system in ways...[you] can't predict. But you need to be thinking about how committed the faculty are, whether or not you have the resources, or are willing to dedicate what resources they have to supporting the mission. They need to be able

to talk to students about how this is a process and we ain't getting there. Ultimately, they need to be willing to put their money where their mouth is. They're essentially saying, "hold us accountable." And folks will. (Participant 9)

I think you really have to be ready to kind of blow everything out of the water, and that's a really hard place to put yourself in. I don't think people can do this thinking they're going to maintain control of it the whole time. There's no way. It's not that kind of process. And the whole thing that it's going to get worse before it gets better is definitely true. (Participant 8)

Personal Reactions of Surprise

Participants' personal reactions to the process of change included being surprised at a number of different aspects of the change. Many participants noted their surprise that the changes occurred at Smith College School for Social Work as opposed to another school for social work. Participants noted surprise at the effectiveness of the change, as well as at what did not get accomplished as quickly or at all.

Surprise That It Happened at Smith

In their reflections, participants described what surprised them most about the process. Many participants mentioned the fact that the process took place at Smith College School for Social Work and not another school.

Probably if somebody had a God's eye and said what is the school that is most likely to take on the commitment to be an anti-racism institution, it probably would not have been the Smith College School for Social Work. I think it's a problem that in the profession, although I don't think it's accurate, clinical schools are seen as more conservative because they tend to focus more on...direct work with individuals, families, and groups, and that's not a macro approach. So one can see that sometimes it's framed as conservative. So for a school that might be seen as conservative in that vein to take on something like an anti-racism commitment, probably, we wouldn't have been chosen. (Participant 12)

I never would have expected us to become such a leader among schools of social work, but constantly people are saying, oh, you're from Smith, you have the anti-

racism commitment. We're seen as a school that has really dealt with this....It was very unlikely that Smith would have been a flagship school in dealing with racism. (Participant 11)

Surprise About What's Been Accomplished

A number of participants were pleasantly surprised that the commitment has been sustained through the present time. Others noted surprise at the accomplishments that resulted from the commitment, such as the faculty listening to the students and the School's decision to let go of some relationships to make room for new ones.

I'm surprised we've stuck with it. I'm surprised there's been that much buy-in either fully or behaviorally. I've been around long enough...well, I think that's just the nature of people and organizations, and people make up organizations, so I think the fact that the School has stuck with it this well and this long, and in the face of being this imperfect, it's all the players, including the ones who are ambivalent about it, the conversation has shifted. Simply to how do we do it. And that's a tremendous change. Moving from how do we do it to how do we do it better. And that process is part of the mix. (Participant 9)

I think it's kind of surprising that it happened at the time it did, because there's a lot of conversations about multiculturalism, diversity, words like that, but actually talking about anti-racism, even that is still tricky, and being very real about it, is not something that happens. So for Smith to sort of break some of that down, at least they were willing to look at some of the specifics. That part is kind of surprising. And surprising in some ways that they did respond to what some of the students were talking about. And they did respond pretty quickly, even to put it in the literature, stuff started shifting within the next year, which is pretty surprising. (Participant 7)

I guess it's really one of the great things about Smith and the hard things about Smith, is that they really did hear the students, and kind of look at themselves and say, well, they might have a point here, so that's a great thing about them. I think they did want to respond because when you think clinically, that's what you do. (Participant 8)

I'm really surprised and pleased at...it's really hard to convey exactly how much the School valued its long-term relationships. This is multigenerational. Think your most elite school, there's something very precious about your club....Those are great things, but it's an incredibly exclusive club, so it works both ways. Great opportunities, great relationships. And we were going to give that up and start opening doors into venues that had nothing behind them. We were going to trade off some esoteric Berkshire contact for [a local community organization] in [neighboring city], who can

give you nothing. They'll turn around and ask you for money every 2 seconds because they're a great community organization but they're as broke as can be. Their network is a network of poor people. They provide nothing in return from which Smith benefits. I'm really surprised and pleased, although it was agonizing and painful, maybe not slow, it felt slow, they did let go of relationships. They did let go of faculty, adjuncts, that were long time and beloved connections to make room. It really means making room. If you were going to add to the pot, there were only so many positions there, so many FFA's, only so many agencies, so many adjuncts. And the only way to create diversity was to not bring some back. (Participant 7)

One participant described her surprise at how responsive the School was to the requests of students:

For Smith, they were pretty much leaders in the area, considering the context of where we are. So for Smith to sort of break some of that down, at least they were willing to look at some of the specifics. That part is kind of surprising. And surprising in some ways that they did respond to what some of the students were talking about. And they did respond pretty quickly, even to put it in the literature. And stuff started shifting within the next year, which is pretty surprising. I also think it's a little surprising that they wanted to document and write an article, maybe they thought other schools would follow if they saw that, so that was surprising too. And they let two students be the co-facilitators of the Anti-Racism Task Force. (Participant 3)

Surprise About the Difficulties That Were Encountered

One participant mentioned her surprise at her experiences on the faculty during the years 1993 – 1998.

It was surprising to me the resistance of the faculty to being able, and I include myself, to look at our own issues of race. Because we never did while I was there, I can't tell you even how I would have behaved in that situation. Maybe I would have fallen apart or not been able to get there, so....That was surprising to me. (Participant 4)

Surprise About Both What's Been Accomplished and What Is Yet To Be Accomplished

Other participants were surprised by both the effectiveness of the commitment as well as what is left to be done.

I'm both surprised by how far we've come and I'm surprised by how far we haven't come. And some things that haven't changed a whole lot. I have a much better sense of how much work it really is. And that it makes a more prickly community. And this is a pretty prickly community. And that I think, I know it was the right thing to do, and I do think there was a certain level of naïveté in having done it...probably like having kids. If you really knew what it was going to be like to have four children, would you really have them? But once you have them, you never not want to have them. Racism is a fundamental part of this society. And it's so deep, and mostly so out of awareness, and so normalized, so hidden, so built into the structures of everything we do and the way we live and who goes to school and who has what. And now we have a language that makes it easy...So this School is really never going to be done with this issue...ever, ever. So. And I will die long before, and you too probably, before anyone has a sense of what there actually looks like. And I get that more than I used to. (Participant 12)

I'm surprised by how much progress we've made. It's really hard for students who are here now to imagine what it was like back then, so progress, compared to what we were like then. What [also] surprises me is that despite how much I focus on this, write about it read about it, teach it, how much more I have to learn about it, how complicated it is, and how we're going to continually shift how we understand it and see it, just as racism continually shifts, so I see it as a life-long project. I thought I could master one subject area more easily. (Participant 11)

Conclusion

These findings present participants' reflections on the changes, and help to convey a sense of the thinking that was circulating during the period of 1993 -1998. These findings present the opinions of community members who were supportive of the changes as well as community members who had concerns about the changes. However, as is true with the first section of the findings, these findings represent only a small percentage of the community members who were present at the School during the time under investigation.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to establish a narrative of the changes that occurred at the Smith College School for Social Work during the years of 1993 – 1998 that contributed to and resulted from the adoption of the anti-racism commitment. In addition, this study sought to explore this narrative through the lenses of multicultural organizational development and organizational change theory. The major findings included a narrative of the changes with commentary from participants regarding the major events as well as an exploration of the language that was used throughout the process of change. Further findings included participants' reflections on the causes and conditions that resulted in the changes, participants' interpretation of the significance of the commitment, participants' summary of what an anti-racism commitment involves, participants' recollections of the themes of resistance and concerns that occurred, and finally, participants' personal reactions of what surprised them about the process.

Relevance to the Literature

In many regards, the findings echo many themes from the literature. The narrative established in this study expands on the only other published source of the chronology of the events, which is Basham, Donner, Killough and Werkmesiter Rozas' (1996) article *Becoming an Anti-Racist Institution*. However, this study expands the chronology to 1998, and includes

data from participant interviews regarding their recollection and reflections on the processes of change that occurred.

In regard to the literature that explores models of Multicultural Organizational Development (MCOB) and the implementation of these models, the findings endorse many of the ideas about effective models of MCOB. The literature of Nybell and Gray (2004), Chesler (1994), Hyde (2003), and Ferguson (1996) assert that models of MCOB that fail to implement systemic changes are not effective models, as they do not address the systemic problem of institutional racism. Nybell and Gray's assertion that developmental models of MCOB are insufficient in their conceptualization as they utilize an ideal "end-state" is reflective of participants' perceptions that the significance of the School's anti-racism commitment lies in the fact that it allows for the truth inherent in effective anti-racism work that "there is no there there," as one participant described (Participant 9). Participants describe this understanding that a commitment without a visible or understandable destination "is the place you have to be in" to participate in effective anti-racism work (Participant 8).

Chesler's (1994) assertion that effective MCOB models must allow for conflict was endorsed by a number of participants who remarked that the significance of the commitment lies in its capacity to allow for, and even invite, conflict. As cited in the findings, one participant described the problems that occur as evidence that the process of addressing racism is effective:

There's pain all the way. If you're not learning from it, it can be meaning-sucking. There would not have been that problem had we not made that first step. But once you put your foot forward, you have to be prepared to drag the other one up. Keep going forward. And each step brings something else up (Participant 10).

Additionally, Chesler (2004) states that

Multicultural specialists generally articulate an approach to organizational change that is frankly anti-racist and anti-sexist. The multiculturalism that is sought is not simply an acceptance of differences, nor a celebrative affirmation of differences, but a reduction in the patterns of racial and gender oppression (racism and sexism) that predominate in most U.S. institutions and organizations. (p. 244)

Echoes of this principle can be heard in one participant's description of the extent of the changes at the School with regard to hiring and community connections:

So the second step in this whole movement was to look at some of the institutional pieces, like field agencies, field supervisors, people with whom the School had prided itself on having years and years and years of relationships. The only way we can bring in new communities of color, agencies or supervisors, would be to not hire back some of our other people. And that was really, I remember that as one of the places where the rubber hit the road. It was really fine and dandy to accept more students of color. But when we began to talk about institutionalized racism...I don't think we ever used that term. When we began to look at some of our own systems, which is really institutionalized policies, people were much more hesitant. I mean, there are a lot of good reasons to hold on to things – you have good relationships, you find people whose values you share, whose judgment you trust, you value that relationship and nurture it, and it makes it easier to refer...so all sorts of good reasons to make sure you cherish these good networks that you develop. And we had a huge, strong white network nationally. Really large white network. I remember someone... counting out, so let's look at that. No pain no gain. Exactly how many people of color do we have in the field? So that was a difficult time because people weren't hired back and there was no good reason not to hire them back. We didn't wait for people to retire, or for people to...opportunities to fire people...which would have been convenient but painfully slow. So it was a deliberate process. (Participant 7)

This participant also noted that it is the language of the term *anti-racism commitment* that keeps the institution goals on task to do effective MCOB work:

I think the language is provocative, but I don't think we would have achieved what we had if we hadn't taken on such a provocative term. I think it's what keeps the conversation going, and alive, and it creates discomfort even now, I mean really, a lot of these themes continue right now in our own community here. So it's important. Multicultural would have been much easier to swallow and live with. (Participant 7)

Ferguson (1996) asserts that “organizations must now holistically address the issue of institutional racism at the levels of the agency’s internal structure, culture, process and relationship to the surrounding community” (p. 37). Similarly, Hyde (2003) states that only “first-order” change will bring about effective multicultural organizational development. Participants recounted various ways that the efforts resulting from the anti-racism commitment certainly addressed the institution as a whole, as well as ways that first-order change was undertaken as a direct result of the commitment. One participant recognized that the commitment became about “how does one [an institution] do business” rather than just addressing the pedagogical needs of students for a diverse student body (Participant 7).

The model of adopting an anti-racism commitment, as it was revealed in practice in this research study, reflects much in the literature about what is effective MCOOD, and the findings align with these researchers and theorists. Certainly it could be asserted that adopting an anti-racism commitment might be an effective model of Multicultural Organizational Development.

Many of the themes from the Organizational Development literature are reflected in the findings. Firstly, the findings revealed a number of themes of resistance and concerns about the adoption of the anti-racism commitment, many of which are echoed in Patti’s (1980) list of sources of resistance on the part of decision makers. The findings revealed concerns about how the adoption of the commitment might affect the allocation of resources; this correlates with resistance encountered because of concerns about money, prestige, and security (Patti, 1980). Another concern was that community members were going to have to work harder and contribute more to the process of the commitment; this theme of resistance

correlates with Patti’s “Convenience – avoidance of conditions that will require additional personal efforts” (p. 118). Another theme of resistance that emerged in the findings was concern that the adoption of an anti-racism commitment would detract from the clinical focus of the School. The source of this concern arises from what Patti calls “Ideological commitment – maintenance of the agency as an instrument of an ideology or philosophical stance” (p. 118).

The basic tenets of resource mobilization theory as outlined by both Mulucci (1995) and Hardina (2002) are reflected in a look at how the process of change occurred at the School. Mulucci’s three requirements for resource mobilization are a collective identity, which is formed based on shared language and definitions, an active network, and emotional investment on the part of the members of the collective. Based on the findings, all three of these requirements were met by the members of the Anti-Racism Task Force, the organization that became the proponent for change during the process. In addition, a comparison of Hardina’s basic assumptions about resource mobilization theory and the events that occurred at Smith reveal correlations:

Hardina (2002)	The process of change at Smith
1. Social movements arise when groups are not represented in decision-making	The findings reveal that the needs of students of color were not being met in many arenas.
2. Public recognition occurs when there is a protest.	The students walked-out of the racism class in the summer of 1994.
3. Such a movement must develop an appropriate structure	The walk-out evolved into a series of meetings to develop a plan to address the students’ concerns.
4. Success is dependent upon establishing a collective identity	The meetings evolved into the establishment of the Anti-Racism Task Force.

5. The better the organization's message, the more membership will increase	As a group designed to address systemic changes, members of all constituencies attended the Anti-Racism Task Force.
6. Fund raising is always problem because members will have limited resources and accepting funds from others may lead to abandoning the radical nature of the cause. (cited by Netting, Kettner & McMurtry, 2004, p.57)	N/A

One defining characteristic of Senge's (2006) *learning organization* is the use of a systemic perspective. The findings reveal the use of a systemic perspective, as the School underwent "institutional transformation" (Participant 7). Findings also echo Kofman and Senge's (1993) writing on *communities of commitment*, which "[encompass] commitment to changes needed in the larger world and to seeing our organizations as vehicles for bringing about such change" (p. 6-7). The anti-racism commitment certainly intended to address the expression of the larger, societal force of racism within the organization of the Smith College School for Social Work.

This research study sought to explore the process of adopting an anti-racism commitment at the Smith College School for Social Work. This retrospective case study provides new literature in the field of multicultural organizational development and organizational development as it illuminates the process of one graduate institution's adoption of an anti-racism commitment as a holistic, systemic method of addressing issues of institutional and systemic racism.

Strengths and Limitations of this Study

There are numerous strengths of this study. Firstly, it is the first case-study that explores in-depth not only the process of change that occurred at the School between the years of 1993 – 1998, but also participants’ reflections about the changes, revealing some characteristics of the thinking behind the changes and the resistance that was encountered. The inclusion of participants’ reflections on the changes contributes a human dimension behind what can easily be remembered as an institutional process. As one participant reminded the researcher when discussing institutional racism, “institutions are made up of people” (Participant 10).

In addition, the sample obtained for the study represented a large variety of constituencies, including members of the faculty, staff and student bodies that were present during the years 1993 – 1998. Fifty-eight percent of the participants were white, and the remaining 42% were of color. Regarding representation, attempts were made to recruit participants from the following categories: white students (alumni) and students (alumni) of color; white faculty and faculty of color; white staff and staff of color; members of the Anti-Racism Task Force and non-members of the Anti-Racism Task Force; proponents of the change efforts and opponents of the change efforts. The final constellation of participants met nine of these categories, but not all ten.

Open-ended interviews allowed for participants to reflect on the changes and strict guidelines of confidentiality allowed for participants to be candid when responding to questions. Because the participants were recalling changes that occurred ten and more years ago, participants’ contributions regarding the details of the chronology were verified through

either a second interview or through School documents. However, the lapse in time between the process of change and this research study allowed for rich description and data regarding participants' reflections on the changes. The passage of time also allowed for participants to respond to the process of change from a temporal distance.

This study sought to uncover details of the experiences of community members during the changes, and in this way, the study was successful. These details had not been revealed for public knowledge, and one participant lamented this absence: "I think it's too bad the way the School is structured. We don't have this institutional memory from the student body. So then it is left up to staff and faculty who are overstretched as it is" (Participant 8). Numerous other participants remarked that because the nature of a school involves students coming and going, it is up to the faculty and staff to make new students aware of the unique history of the School's adopting an anti-racism commitment. The orientation to the anti-racism commitment happens for students in the first week of the summer. This study could potentially serve as a reference for students seeking more information about the unique history of their school.

The major limitation of this study evolved from a limitation of time on this researcher. A master's thesis project prepared in conjunction with a full-time clinical internship severely limited the gathering of all data that is pertinent to this topic. Not included in this research study were various School documents pertaining to these changes. Additionally, the Smith College Archives were not used, even though this researcher was aware of the abundance of data potentially available from this source. Many sections of the chronology were not given

full treatment, such as how the commitment affected change to the curriculum, and how these changes came about.

The sample of participants for this study was adequate for a preliminary study on this topic. However, further research could incorporate a larger sample, and could have quite different findings. As stated above, one of the ten categories of participant characteristics was not fulfilled.

Implications of This Study

This study may be beneficial to the Smith College School for Social Work community, as it contributes to the literature regarding instrumental changes that are inextricable from the current mission of the School. An historical chronology of the changes could be useful in helping the School in its evaluation of the current anti-racism efforts, as a historical perspective can often illuminate the current and future paths of action. As many participants noted, the School does not claim to be an anti-racism institution, but rather has made a commitment to move in that direction. As is the nature of schools and organizations in general, the community members are always changing, as students graduate and faculty and staff retire or leave the school. As it is today, the mission statement is kept alive and attended to through various School procedures and practices, including through the involvement of the Anti-Racism Consultation Committee, the final form of the original Monitoring Committee, which is discussed in the Findings chapter. However, it will be interesting to see how and to what extent the commitment impacts the School within the next fifty years, when even more of the original players are no longer at the School. It will be

interesting to see, at that point in the future, how the typical ebb and flow of any liberation movement will manifest through the community's involvement in the commitment. One participant posed this question too:

This tension between, how do you keep it going after fifteen years, or fourteen years, and keep it going for another 15 years without, I don't know, what would you call it, diversity fatigue. And I think that's uncharted waters. I don't think too many organizations or institutions, I haven't read about them, have continued this process, and continued and just kept working on it. (Participant 11)

This research study does not attempt to explore the current state of the School's anti-racist efforts. However, as a current student, I take the liberty to say, as many participants also reported, that the School certainly has a long way to go in addressing institutional racism.

In addition to being a resource for the Smith College School for Social Work, other graduate schools of social work or other institutions and organizations seeking to address systemic, institutional racism through the adoption of an anti-racism commitment may find this study beneficial as it provides an example of what this process of change looked like for one institution. This study contributes to the literature regarding methods of addressing institutional racism, while simultaneously providing an ethnographic retrospective exploration of a community in change, albeit a relatively limited one. Most importantly, this study contributes to the literature about how systemic problems require systemic solutions.

Themes for Further Research

This study reveals a number of themes for further research. One question that arose and is mentioned in the literature review is *How do graduate schools of social work reconcile the mandates of the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards of the Council for Social Work Education, the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers,*

and the pervasive force of institutional racism? A survey study of graduate schools of social work's efforts to adhere to the CSWE's policies could reveal important information. Further investigation into the history of the racism course could reveal additional important information about how the School's pedagogical methods evolved. This research could be effective if it included an exploration of the experiences of students of color, white students, teachers of the course, members of the faculty who designed the course, and the Registrar's Office, which created the compositions for each section. Although given in-depth treatment in this study, further research into this area could be enlightening in as far as it would reveal information about the experiences of students of color at the School.

Other themes of further research could be any of the following questions. *What are students' perceptions of the anti-racism commitment before entering the program? What are students' perceptions of the anti-racism commitment after graduating from the program? How do students conceptualize the anti-racism commitment? How do students conceptualize their role as members of a community that has an anti-racism commitment?* And, perhaps less related but just as interesting, *What are defining components of the culture of the "Smith summer?"* Certainly numerous other themes are relevant as well. In the end, the Smith College School for Social Work, with its unique position as the only graduate school for social work operating with an anti-racism commitment, must take initiative to perform research into the history, nature, effects, and all other components of the operationalization of the anti-racism commitment.

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Appendix A

Human Subjects Review Committee: Approval Letter

December 18, 2007

Joanna Vaughn

Dear Joanna,

Your second set of revisions has been reviewed and all is now in order. We are happy to give final approval to your interesting study pending our receipt of the permission letter from the SSW administration.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain signed consent documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Good luck with your study and particularly with the task of involving the key players in the process. It should be a very useful and interesting project.

Sincerely,

Ann Hartman, D.S.W.
Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Fred Newdom, Research Advisor

Appendix B

Letter of Institutional Approval



Office of the Dean
School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7977 F (413) 585-4456

December 19, 2007

Email Version

Joanna Vaughn, A08
jvaughn@email.smith.edu
18 Park Street, Apt. #5
Florence, MA 01062

Dear Joanna,

I have had an opportunity to review your request for a letter of Institutional Approval for submission to the Human Subjects Review Committee with regards to your thesis research. Please consider this letter as my decision to grant you approval to move forward with solicitation of administrators, faculty and alumni during the years of 1993 through 1998 with regards to the School's anti-racism commitment. I do however wish to express my concern that it be made clear in your recruitment letter that participation in your research is strictly voluntary, and that you are mindful to insure that there are safeguards for those individuals who do not choose to participate, particularly for those administrators and faculty who are currently employed at the School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carolyn Jacobs'.

Carolyn Jacobs, M.S.W., Ph.D.
Dean and Elizabeth Marting Treuhaft Professor

cc: Ann Hartman
Human Subjects Review Committee

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter

Dear _____

My name is Joanna Vaughn, and I am a second-year SSW student this year and the Smith College School for Social Work. I'm writing regarding the research study I am conducting as part of my thesis requirement.

(For people who were referred by a community member):

I got your name from _____, who identified you as being present at the Smith College School for Social Work during the years of 1993 – 1998 and being involved in the process of change leading up to and / or following the anti-racism commitment.

(OR)

(For people whose names appeared in documents and texts relevant to the changes):

Through my research so far, I have been able to identify you as someone who was present at the Smith College School for Social Work during the years of 1993- 1998 and who was involved in the process of change leading up to and / or following the anti-racism commitment.

I am writing to notify you of my research study, and to invite your participation in the study. My research question is: What were the changes involved in the establishment of the Smith College School for Social Work's commitment to anti-racism? I am interested in looking at the processes of change within the Smith community that occurred between the years of 1993 – 1998 that contributed to and resulted from the School's commitment to anti-racism.

Part of this project will involve establishing a written narrative of the changes that took place from the perspectives of the members of the community – faculty, staff, and students – who were involved. I am inviting you to participate in this research. Your participation would involve a 45-60 minute interview regarding what you recall about the process of change that occurred during the years of 1993 – 1998. Ideally, this interview would take place face-to-face, but accommodations could be made for phone interviews as well.

Your participation in this research will be a great contribution to the Smith College School for Social Work, as the community will surely benefit from having an additional written narrative of the changes, the results of which are inextricable from the current mission and work of the school.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact me. If you are

interested in participating, you may either respond to this invitation by phone, or you may send me an email with some good times that I might reach you by phone. This follow-up phone conversation will allow you to ask questions about the study and your nature of participation as well as confirming your eligibility. Upon confirmation of your eligibility and participation, we will establish a time and location for the interview. I will subsequently follow up by sending you a letter of Informed Consent as well as the Interview Guide if you wish to review the questions prior to the interview.

Kind regards,
Joanna Vaughn, A08
18 Park St., Apt. #5
Florence, MA 01062
jvaughn@email.smith.edu
510-290-0110

Appendix D

Letter of Informed Consent

Dear Research Participant,

My name is Joanna Vaughn, and I am conducting research regarding the organizational changes that occurred when the Smith College School for Social Work established its commitment to anti-racism. I am interested in the processes of change at the School, and how the changes can be understood in the context of organizational change theory and multicultural organizational theory. I am also interested in contributing an additional written narrative of the changes, the results of which include an “anti-racism statement” unique to the School among graduate institutions of social work. The study is part of a MSW thesis, which is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Social Work degree at Smith College School for Social Work.

You are being asked to participate in this research if you were a member of the School faculty, staff, administration, or student body between the years of 1993 and 1998 and you have been identified as being involved in the establishment of the School’s anti-racism commitment. As a subject in this study you will be asked to participate in a face to face interview. Questions will center around your experiences at the School during the changes involved in the School’s establishment of its commitment to anti-racism. The interview is expected to take 45-60 minutes to complete. With your consent, interviews will be recorded by audio or, if preferred, detailed notes will be taken. The audio recordings will be transcribed by myself for analysis.

The potential risks of participating in this study are the possibility that you might feel strong or uncomfortable emotions while talking about your experiences. It is my hope that you will benefit from this research by knowing that you are contributing to a narrative account of historical changes that occurred at the School, the results of which are inextricably linked to the School’s current mission and work. You may also benefit from being able to tell your story and having your perspective heard.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained as consistent with Federal guidelines and the mandates of the social work profession. Confidentiality will be protected by coding the information and storing the data in a locked file for a minimum of 3 years. Your identity will be protected, as names will not be used in the analysis of the data nor in the final report. Your name will not be associated with the information you provide in the interview. Preparation of my MSW thesis may include, but is not limited to, consultations with research advisors and peer review, including review of disguised vignettes or brief illustrative quotes. For the purpose of this study, some identifying information, such as your current and previous positions and roles at the School *but not your name*, may be included in the final report to increase the validity of the research. Some participants, by virtue of their specific roles at the School, may be personally identifiable; however, every effort will be made to

report specific data and comments in ways that may help conceal the identity of the participant.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection process and you may refuse to answer any questions without penalty by indicating in writing that you are no longer interested in participating. You have until March 1, 2008, to withdraw from the study; after this time, I will begin writing the Results and Discussions sections of my thesis. If you choose to withdraw, all materials pertaining to your participation will be destroyed.

YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND THAT YOU HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, YOUR PARTICIPATION, AND YOUR RIGHTS, AND THAT YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Participant signature

Date

Researcher signature

Date

Please return this letter to me using the enclosed addressed, stamped envelope. Alternately, you may bring the signed letter with you to the interview and I will collect it before the interview begins. I suggest you keep a copy of this consent form for your records, and have enclosed a second copy for this reason. If you have any further questions about this study, participation, rights of participants, or this consent form, please feel free to ask me at the contact information below, or contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Thank you for your time, and I greatly look forward to having you as a participant in my study.

Sincerely,

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Appendix E

Interview Guide

I. Identifying Information

Current position at the School and duration:

Previous positions at the School (including as student) and dates:

Total number of years the School:

Race / Ethnicity:

II. Focused Life History / History of School

1. How did you become part of the Smith College School for Social Work community?
2. What are the ways that you perceived the School address issues of racism and diversity during the years of 1993 – 1998.
3. From your perspective, how did the School become an anti-racism institution?
4. How did you become involved in the changes that took place from 1993 - 1998 regarding the anti-racism commitment?

III. The Details of the Experience

1. From your perspective, what were the significant events leading up to the adoption of the commitment?
2. What stands out to you in your memory about the changes that occurred at the School from 1993 – 1998?
3. How were you involved in the changes?
4. What was happening at the school that led to the need for the adoption of the commitment?
5. What do you remember about the climate on campus during the events that occurred from 1993 - 1998?
6. Which major groups on campus initiated the changes– faculty, staff, administration, or students?
7. Were you aware of any concerns about adopting an anti-racism commitment?
8. What was your understanding of the process of agreeing on the anti-racism statement and the changes to the mission statement?

IV. Reflection on the Meaning

9. What is significant about the Smith College School for Social Work's commitment to anti-racism?
10. What does the commitment attempt to address?
11. How do you understand the anti-racism commitment?
12. How do you understand your role in the community? and related to the commitment?

Appendix F

Smith College School for Social Work's Anti-Racism Statement

Racism is a system of privilege, inequality, and oppression based on perceived categorical differences, value assigned to those differences, and a system of oppression that rewards and punishes people based on the assigned differences. It is manifested politically, socially, economically, culturally, interpersonally, and intrapersonally, and grounded in the unique history of racism in the United States.

Smith College School for Social Work is committed to addressing the pernicious and enduring multilayered effects of racism. Anti-racism initiatives promote respect for and interest in multiple world views, values, and cultures. The School for Social Work develops and teaches knowledge, skills and values that enhance the ability to mutually affirm each other's equal place in the world. In addition, self-reflection and deepening conversations about race shape the School's anti-racism mission and promote culturally responsive practice, research and scholarship, and other anti-racism activities.

Smith College School for Social Work's Mission Statement

Clinical social work practice is concerned with the interdependence between individuals and their environments and the use of theoretically grounded, relationship based, culturally informed interventions to promote healing, growth and empowerment. Clinical social work recognizes and responds to the complexities of the human condition: its strengths, possibilities, systems of meaning, resilience, vulnerabilities and tragedies. As a collaborative process, clinical social work expresses the core values of the profession, including recognition of client self-determination, growth and change in the client system, and pursuit of social justice. It rests upon a liberal arts base and integrates evolving theories about individuals, families, groups, communities, and the larger social systems in which they are embedded.

In its educational practices, the School promotes critical thinking and self-reflection to help students expand their knowledge in the substantive areas of human behavior and the social environment, social work practice, research, social policy, field, values and ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk and social and economic justice. The School educates students in the application of professional values and ethics, collaboration with other disciplines and the evaluation and dissemination of evolving theories and practice models.

The School shares with the social work profession its historic commitment to serve oppressed, disadvantaged and at risk members of our society. It is committed to implementing a curriculum that addresses the concerns, issues, and interests of these populations. The School joins with the profession to struggle against inequality and oppression based on such variables as: race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disability. The School and Smith College are committed to promote social justice, service to society, and appreciation of individual and cultural diversity in a multicultural community. The School recognizes the pernicious consequences of racism and works to identify and diminish the overt and covert aspects of racism. Smith College School for Social Work is committed to work toward becoming an anti-racism institution.

The School implements its educational mission through its masters and doctoral degree programs, as well as through its Program of Continuing Education. Through its scholarship, publications and research and program initiatives, the School contributes to the development and dissemination of knowledge relevant to social work. In its affiliation with a liberal arts college, the School places a priority on the process of teaching and learning and community service. The School maintains relationships of mutual respect and influence with its affiliated agencies, major professional organizations, and other representatives of the social work practice community to aid in curriculum renewal and to contribute to the development of the profession as a whole.

Appendix G

Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards Relating to Race, Racism, and Diversity

1. Purposes

1.0 Purposes of the Social Work Profession

....

- To enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social justice. (p.4)

3. Program Objectives

3.0 Foundation Program Objectives. The professional foundation, which is essential to the practice of any social worker, includes, but is not limited to, the following program objectives. Graduates demonstrate the ability to:

....

3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

4. Understand the forms of mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice. (p. 7)

4. Foundational Curriculum Content. All social work programs provide foundation content in the areas specified below. Content areas may be combined and delivered with a variety of instructional technologies. Content is relevant to the mission, goals, and objectives of the program and to the purposes, values, and ethics of the social work profession.

4.1 Diversity. Social work programs integrate content that promotes understanding, affirmation, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds. The content emphasizes the interlocking and complex nature of culture and personal identity. It ensures that social services meet the needs of groups served and are culturally relevant. Programs educate students to recognize diversity within and between groups that may influence assessment, planning, intervention, and research. Students learn how to define, design, and implement strategies for effective practice with persons from diverse backgrounds.

4.2 Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice. Social work education programs integrate content on populations-at-risk, examining the factors that contribute to and constitute being at risk. Programs educate

students to identify how group membership influences access to resources, and present content on the dynamics of such risk factors and responsive and productive strategies to redress them. Programs integrate social and economic justice content grounded in an understanding of distributive justice, human and civil rights, and the global interconnections of oppression. Programs provide content related to implementing strategies to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic deprivation and to promote social and economic justice. Programs prepare students to advocate for nondiscriminatory social and economic systems. (p. 9)

Accreditation Standards

6. Nondiscrimination and Human Diversity

6.0 The program makes specific and continuous efforts to provide a learning context in which respect for all persons and understanding of diversity (including age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation) are practiced. Social work education builds upon professional purposes and values; therefore, the program provides a learning context that is nondiscriminatory and reflects the profession's fundamental tenets. The program describes how its learning context and educational program (including faculty, staff, and student composition; selection of agencies and their clientele as field education settings; composition of program advisory or field committees; resource allocation; program leadership; speakers series, seminars, and special programs; research and other initiatives) and its curriculum model understanding of and respect for diversity (p.16 – 17).