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Cultural Brokering: Insights to College Career Counselors from Colleagues In Diversity Offices

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Cultural Brokering: Insights to College Career Counselors

From Colleagues in Diversity Offices

Sherrill J. Yeaton, Ed.D.

Concordia University–Portland

College of Education

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the College of Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in

Higher Education

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Abstract

This qualitative case study sought to capture insights from professional staff trained to serve diverse student populations in colleges to inform additional staff in better serving underrepresented students. Higher education student populations have changed drastically over the past several decades, representing greater diversity in American colleges and universities, necessitating enhanced practice in counseling and advising diverse students. The case study research sought to better understand needs of traditionally underrepresented students in 4-year predominantly White institutions (PWIs) through the lens of professional staff in diversity-focused positions within the colleges and universities. Critical race theory (CRT), sociocultural theory, and positive psychology were used to frame and develop the study. This qualitative study examined how diverse college students are being served from the perspective of diversity professionals in one northern Midwest bi-state region, to inform career counselors and other student affairs professionals who collaborate with students throughout their educational experience. Questionnaires, in-person interviews, and researcher field notes were used and coded to identify emergent themes surrounding the support of diverse college students in specified PWIs. Key findings, including connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy, can be used to inform all staff and faculty in better retaining and developing diverse student talent in the region, and in a broader sense.

Keywords: diversity, inclusivity, higher education, career counseling, college, underrepresented students, multicultural, minority, university, student affairs

Dedication

To my family, friends, colleagues, students, faculty, and classmates.

To Mike, Dad, and Dr. Graham ~ Thank you for your patience.

To Steel and Sampson ~ Change the world.

To everyone and the unique story they have to tell.

To positive cultural climate change.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

The achievement of diverse college students, when compared to their dominant culture cohorts, has been a growing concern on college campuses for many years. The constitution of higher education student populations has been diversifying over the past several decades (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Fullan & Scott, 2009; John & Stage, 2014; Smith, 2011). Staff and faculty diversity has changed only minimally. A rising concern is institutional preparedness to handle the notable demographic shift (Husband, 2016; Karkouti, 2016; Palmer, Maramba, & Holmes, 2011). The question of whether higher education institutions are prepared to serve an increasingly diverse student body, particularly in historically predominantly White institutions (PWIs), has been addressed by researchers (Harris & BrckaLorenz, 2017; Hughes, Horner, & Velez Ortiz, 2012; Mosholder, Waite, Larsen, & Goslin, 2016). Administrative and campus expectations place undue pressure on underrepresented staff and faculty to advise diverse student groups and support diverse needs for the entire campus (Chang, Welton, Martinez, & Cortez, 2013; Cole, McGowan, & Zerquera, 2017; Diggles, 2014). This qualitative case study proposed that career counselors and student affairs professionals, in predominantly White 4-year colleges and universities in the United States (PWIs) can intentionally gain insights from colleagues in diversity-focused positions on how to better serve diverse student populations.

Questions or issues that arise in connecting with or serving underrepresented students often become the entry point into an examination of diverse student needs on campus, despite strategic goals or training available to staff and faculty on diversity (Bonner, Marbley, & Howard-Hamilton, 2011; Parker, Barnhardt, Pascarella, & McCowin, 2016). Additionally, diversity-serving professionals have traditionally been expected to mentor diverse students

d(Chang et al., 2013; Cole et al., 2017; Diggles, 2014). With increased numbers and decreased funding, this becomes a challenge. In this regard, student affairs professionals who specialize in serving diverse student populations remain a largely untapped resource in alleviating the problem. This qualitative case study aimed to explore how diversity professionals serve underrepresented students in 4-year PWIs on a day-to-day basis. Insights could be shared with the entire campus community. A diversity professional is defined as a student affairs professional in a college or university whose position provides support to students who are in the minority on campus (Watt, 2013). The remainder of the chapter provides the background, problem and purpose, research question and rationale, research design, definition of useful terminology, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and an overview of the remainder of the paper.

Background

Existing literature places emphasis on the lack of success of diverse college students and its subsequent impact on retention. Barriers to making it into colleges and universities in the first place for diverse students and lack of multicultural faculty and staff in higher education institutions are also highlighted. Student affairs professionals in higher education, specifically career counselors, are in the distinct position to work with all students at their institutions. Multicultural career counseling has been explored in the literature over the years, justifying further study (Byars-Winston, 2014; Morgan Consoli, Llamas, & Consoli, 2016; Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016). Student affairs professionals in 4-year colleges and universities are in contact with underrepresented students and their distinctive needs in greater numbers than ever before (Bonner et al., 2011; McClain et al., 2016). Changing demographics present great opportunity, alongside great challenge, calling for adequate preparation and advancing

knowledge in ministering to diverse student populations. Staff and faculty serving in diversity-focused roles in their institutions represent excellent resources for learning about the needs of diverse students in the university environment and could be better utilized before issues with students arise (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015; Seelman, 2014). Questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's field notes were used to gather information from diversity professionals in this qualitative study. The researcher's intent was to capture knowledge that can be used proactively in the future, allowing diversity professionals time to tend to their other professional duties and responsibilities.

Certain theoretical frameworks motivated and framed the current research project including critical race theory (CRT), sociocultural learning theory, and positive psychology, as evidenced in past research on the topic (Magyar-Moe, Owens, & Scheel, 2015; Patton, 2015; Wilson, 2014). However, for this study, critical race theory, sociocultural influences, or positive psychology cannot stand alone as guiding principles in expanding diverse student success in White institutions, led by predominantly White faculty, staff, and administration. All of them are necessary components in an innovative approach to examining the issue.

Problem Statement

The problem this qualitative study explored is how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in the northern Midwest. Literature shows that not all college professionals place emphasis on or adequately serve diverse student populations (Diggles, 2014; Ferreira, Vidal, & Vieira, 2014; Matos, 2015). Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's field notes with diversity-serving professionals, professionals whose primary role on campus is to serve diverse student populations in their success. Insights from diversity

professionals could be shared with college career counselors and additional personnel who may not have direct experience working with the underrepresented populations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to explore how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in the northern Midwest. The study aimed to provide insights to student affairs professionals by exploring the perceptions of professionals who continuously serve multicultural student populations. The study explored current practices of diversity professionals in one northern Midwest region, with the hope of transferring the knowledge to the general student affairs community in the identified region, with a recommendation for replication throughout various regions of the United States, and in various types of colleges.

Research Question

The research question that guided this study was:

RQ1. How do college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in one northern Midwest bi-state region?

The study proposed that diversity professionals have specialized knowledge that can be transferred to student affairs colleagues across campus, in a more efficient manner. Strategies used by diversity professionals are particularly applicable for career counselors, and other student affairs professionals, who can work with students throughout their academic journey. A qualitative case study approach is suitable for work in student affairs where one of the main goals of assessment is to tell the story of the work that is being done with students daily

(Henning & Roberts, 2016). Student affairs practice by its very nature is an ideal emplacement for collaborative practice.

Rationale for Methodology

The success of diverse student populations in higher education has been a perplexing topic in student affairs for five decades (Karkouti, 2016). Shifts in methodology from quantitative to qualitative have been noted in the research on college student development as gradually gaining momentum over the years (Arroyo, Palmer, & Maramba, 2016; Waterman & Sands, 2016). The continued complexity of the issue, and growing support of qualitative design and methods when examining the topic, presented an opportunity for the current qualitative case study research on success strategies for diversity professionals.

Understanding complex social phenomena in progress further justifies a qualitative case study approach due to the enduring nature of the topic (Yin, 2014). The timeliness serves higher education institutional retention in an era of growing diversity in college-age student populations (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011; Smith, 2011). Heightened interest in higher education assessment furthermore prompted progressive methodology (Ferreira et al., 2014; Henning & Roberts, 2016).

Previous qualitative studies related to work in student affairs paved the way for further examination, such as research by Hughes et al. (2012), Parker, Puig, Johnson, and Anthony (2016), and Pang, Lam, and Toporek (2013). Qualitative studies have been well represented when providing insight on diverse student experience, including those by Hotchkins and Dancy (2015), Hwang et al. (2014), and Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, and Klingsmith (2014). The difference in the current research study is the emphasis on the professionals' practices with

students, not the practitioners' professional journeys, or the experiences of the students solely, but the collective work of practitioners with students.

Research Design

This qualitative case study explored how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in the northern Midwest. Information was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's field notes with diversity professionals in local colleges. A case study design was proposed to examine the practices of current college diversity professionals due to the boundaries of the geographic region, type of institution, and type of position (Yin, 2014). The study aimed to capture knowledge on current successful practices of diversity professionals for the researcher to analyze themes and patterns and make the information available to other student affairs professionals in 4-year PWIs. Gathering information from diversity professionals in similar settings lends greater insight into individual practice patterns through commonalities (Yin, 2014). The richness of data resulting from examining the unique, diverse student strategies, and potential to inform practice in the specific region of study, called for a qualitative approach. Perspective through a diversity lens and personal and professional experience with diversity were foci. The study utilized a purposeful sample of all full-time professional staff working in diversity positions, approximately 27, distributed across the northern Midwest region's three 4-year colleges and universities.

Definition of Terms

Operational definitions are provided to enhance understanding of basic terminology used throughout the paper.

Critical race theory (CRT). Critical race theory makes the assertion that the needs of racially diverse students are distinctly different from their majority counterparts. Institutions are typically ruled by dominant culture assumptions and principles (Baxley, 2014; Peralta, Caspary, & Boothe, 2013).

Diversity. Diversity is broadly defined to represent many dimensions of diversity such as ethnic and racial differences, national origin, learning abilities, and sexual identity and orientation (Tharp, 2014).

Diversity professional. A diversity professional is defined as a student affairs professional in a college or university whose position is dedicated to providing support to students who are in the minority on campus (Watt, 2013).

Positive psychology. Positive psychology focuses on student development through the strengths and value an individual brings versus assuming something is wrong or needs to be fixed (Clifton & Anderson, 2006).

Sociocultural theory. Sociocultural theory frames learning in a social context, which considers cultural frameworks and practices (Vygotsky, 1986).

Assumptions

Certain assumptions were made in the current research study and are elaborated on below.

1. The richness of data emerging through narrative questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's field notes in examining unique, diverse student strategies, and potential to inform practice in the specific region of study, take precedence over quantitative measures.

2. Gathering information from professionals in similar settings within the geographic region lends greater insight into individual practice patterns through commonalities (Yin, 2014).

3. Professionals would answer questions fully, honestly, and to the best of their abilities.

4. Professionals working in diversity-focused positions would value the research topic in much the same way as the researcher.

5. The study would provide valuable insights to researcher and student affairs practitioners.

6. The broader campus would value the research similar to the researcher and participants.

7. Students would benefit from the research.

The following identified limitations and delimitations were present in the study and are described below.

Limitations

1. Generalizability is not possible due to the design of case study research (Yin, 2014).

2. Research is specific to one geographic region.

3. While it is unlikely that professionals would falsify information, the possibility still existed.

4. The diversity professionals could experience burnout due to being over-questioned in their area of expertise.

5. No funding was available to professionals to compensate them for their time.

6. The potentially sensitive nature of the topic being discussed could elicit emotional responses from the professionals being questioned.

7. Participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time which could have caused the study participants to drop below the minimal sample.

Delimitations

1. Every effort was made to frame the research as a benefit for inclusivity regarding reducing time and future stress.

2. Limiting the sample to include the only three 4-year colleges in the region, and not including 2-year or technical institutions or broadening the geographic boundaries, will provide more usable data.

3. The possibility of returning to the pool of qualified participants if the sample size dropped below 10 was written into the project and is addressed more extensively in Chapter 3.

Overall the potential benefits were deemed to outweigh the drawbacks. Additionally, the potential risks for participants were not predicted to be greater than those encountered during regular work or life activities.

Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Addressing diversity in today's college student population is a growing trend in higher education and an integral component in the continued and future success of higher education institutions (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Ferreira et al., 2014; Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011; Smith, 2011). The remainder of the research outlines relevant literature from the field, methodological structure for the study, analysis of the data and results, summarization and conclusions, and recommendations for future research and practice. The review of the literature in Chapter 2 highlights the changing and stagnant demographics in higher education, challenges and successes of diverse college students, and positioning of career counseling and student affairs in relation to

the issues. The need for colleges and universities to better serve diverse students from an

institutional success standpoint and the potential for buy-in across campus further motivated the

research. The lack of insights specifically from diversity professionals in prior research is also

emphasized. Distinctive needs of diverse college students were examined through the theoretical

framework which includes a merging of critical race theory, sociocultural theory, and positive

psychology.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology, use of questionnaires, in-person interviews,

researcher's field notes to gather data from current diversity professionals, and the value of

qualitative research. Chapter 4 introduces the sample, analyzes the data and results from all

three phases and collectively, and describes emergent themes. Chapter 5 details the findings and

implications, recommendations for practitioners and scholars, and the need for future research.

The success of diverse college students is not only a topic relevant to diverse students and the

diversity professionals who serve them but to career counselors and student affairs professionals

across campus (Diggles, 2014; Husband, 2016; Winkle-Wagner, 2015). This qualitative study

ultimately aims to capture and share insights across various roles on campus.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Chapter

Serving diverse student populations has been a perplexing topic in higher education for several decades. The purpose of the current qualitative study was to explore how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in the northern Midwest. The hope is that information could subsequently be shared with student affairs professionals across campuses. The term diversity is defined broadly for the purposes of this study, to include racial and ethnic identity, disability identification, LGBTQIA affiliation, international student status, and multiple underrepresented identities (Tharp, 2014).

Chapter 2 provides background on the changing demographics in higher education student populations, lack of change in staff and faculty diversity, varied needs of diverse students, the necessity for faculty and staff of all backgrounds to adequately assist traditionally underserved populations, and the positioning of career counseling in working with diversity in recent years. Chapter 2 details the theoretical framework for the study including a juxtaposition of critical race theory or CRT, sociocultural learning theory, and the potential for a positive psychology strengths-based approach to student affairs practice (Clifton & Anderson, 2006; Gallup, 2017; Patton, 2015; Vygotsky, 1986). All three theoretical concepts would work in tandem to enhance the success of diverse students. Review of the literature includes the struggles of diverse students in predominantly White institutions (PWIs), the historical racial context for higher education, challenges of gaining entry into college for minority students, and the current campus climate for diverse students. Multicultural career counseling and need for further study also situate the topic.

Much of the literature in higher education focuses on examining the lack of success and engagement of minority student populations. Hwang et al. (2014), Waterman and Sands (2016), and Winkle-Wagner (2015) have addressed the challenges and lack of progression of diverse students in traditional 4-year PWIs. Examining the trajectory of minority students not making it into colleges and universities is another topic that emphasizes the lack of success of non-majority students in the literature (Baxley, 2014; Cox, 2016; Welton & Williams, 2015). Challenges of discrimination, inequities, and negative campus climates for underrepresented students on college campuses are addressed by Karkouti (2016), Klein and Dudley (2014), Means (2017), and Parker, Puig et al. (2016). Once underrepresented students arrive in higher education institutions, the lack of diverse faculty and staff mentors in academia becomes clear (Griffin, 2016; Husband, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Examining the topic of diverse student success, on predominantly White campuses, through a proactive lens was the basis of the current study.

Student affairs professionals in higher education can work with all students, and the diversity of students they are seeing has been steadily increasing both in visibility and importance in recent years (Mitchell & Westbrook, 2016; Wilson, 2015). The study involves gaining understanding surrounding services for diverse students, specifically in diversity offices, with hopes of translating this knowledge to student affairs professionals across departments and campuses. Career counseling holds potential for collaborating with underrepresented students on a deeper level and has been explored moderately in the literature. Both the career needs of specific racial, ethnic, and cultural groups and the profession, in general, have been examined (Midgett, Hausheer, & Doumas, 2016; Roscoe, 2015; Shin & Kelly, 2015; Storlie et al., 2016). Implications of the research could provide guidance on how student affairs professionals, career

counselors, can better work with minority students regardless of their own racial, ethnic, or cultural background or personal, academic, or professional experience with diversity. Previous literature lends itself to the concept that majority population professionals can increase their capacity in diversity and social justice work, through a concerted effort in self-examination paired with increasing knowledge of the diverse world around them (Diggles, 2014; Fries-Britt & Snider, 2015; Irving, 2014). The current study goes beyond specific strategies and programming, to human interaction and engagement.

Examining how adequate training opportunities can prepare college counselors to work with students of all backgrounds additionally has been explored moderately in recent literature (Crumb & Haskins, 2017; Diggles, 2014; Ferreira et al., 2014; Roscoe, 2015; Storlie et al., 2016). Information gained from the current research project could further impact training that is offered in the region of study, with potential positioning to reach a broader scope. Not only would enhancing of inclusive practice across campuses help multicultural students who will inevitably encounter student affairs professionals outside of diversity offices but would help support the work diversity professionals are performing daily, often significantly beyond their assigned duties or counter to systemic initiatives (Husband, 2016; Watt, 2013). Additional available time for diversity professionals would provide an opportunity to affect change on an institutional level (Beyer, Moore, & Totino, 2016; Ferreira et al., 2014). Engaging in strategic planning for the university through a diversity lens holds potential to provide benefit for various university stakeholders inside and outside the organization (Diggles, 2014; Watt, 2013; Wilson, 2015).

The intent of this qualitative study was to explore how underrepresented college students at predominantly White 4-year post-secondary institutions are supported in their success by

professional staff who assist underserved student populations. Emphasis was placed on social and cultural capital, as supported by previous literature on the topic (Park & Bowman, 2015; Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2014). Qualitative studies such as those by Hotchkins and Dancy (2015) and Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) examined attributes associated with minority college student success from the perspectives of the multicultural student populations themselves. Reference to the support, particularly cultural support and mentorship, of staff and faculty is common throughout these studies and others, both qualitative and quantitative (Brown, Brown III, Beale, & Gould, 2014; Tovar, 2015). The professionals who engaged in the current study serve in a variety of 4-year institutions in one northern Midwest bi-state region. The colleges and universities included in the study represent public, private, religiously affiliated, and non-religiously affiliated 4-year institutions of varying size, yet the positions and offices under examination serve the same purpose for non-majority students in each of the institutions.

Data gathered from this qualitative case study could be shared across homogeneous campuses with those professionals not specifically trained to serve diverse student populations. Diversity-focused positions in higher education make up only a small part of student support personnel, though recent movements advocate for an institutional diversity-focus, enhancing inclusivity on all levels and in all facets of the university (Diggles, 2014; Ferreira et al., 2014). Honing diversity strategies becomes increasingly necessary when serving an ever-expanding diverse college student population in a global society (John & Stage, 2014; Roscoe, 2015; Wilson, 2015).

Already emerging themes from the existing literature in effectively working with minority students include self-efficacy and social support (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003; Griffin, Wendel, Day, & McMillan, 2016; Rawana, Sieukaran,

Nguyen, & Pitawanakwat, 2015). These themes provide guiding paradigms for further developments in career counseling where positive psychology and collaboration are already inherent (Clifton & Anderson, 2006; Gallup, 2017; Soria & Stubblefield, 2015). Diversity professionals who serve underrepresented student populations could provide insights to career counselors, and additional student affairs professionals, on the social and cultural support and motivation diverse student populations, in particular, seek based on the rationale that supporting diverse student populations is their primary role at the institution. Student affairs practitioners can, and should, approach the topic from a growth mindset, incorporating double-loop learning, versus a fixed, single-minded, static approach to college student success that may have sufficed previous generations of higher education students and staff (Argyris, 2006; Dweck, 2006). Philosophically, politically, legally, and financially, the higher education student body of previous decades and centuries did not necessitate an inclusivity focus to the extent that it does currently. The current qualitative case study incorporated questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's field notes when answering the question of how college diversity professionals support the success of traditionally underrepresented student populations in traditionally White higher education institutions, to be shared with student affairs professionals across college campuses.

Literary sources were obtained primarily through search engine databases such as Education Research Complete, Educator's Reference Complete, ERIC, JSTOR, SAGE Premier, Project MUSE, ProQuest Psychology Database, and Academic OneFile, and through books and texts. Key search terms included minority, diversity, inclusivity, underrepresented, multicultural, college students, higher education, career counseling, advising, student affairs, supportive

services, success, and mentoring. Emphasis was placed on journals highlighting career development, diversity, college counseling, or a combination.

Background to the Problem

Diversity in today's college student population is not only a growing trend in higher education but also an integral part in the continued and future success of higher education institutions in the United States (Ferreira et al., 2014; Leake & Stodden, 2014). Institutions stand to benefit from diversity in the areas of improved recruitment, retention, and matriculation rates of a growing non-homogeneous college-age population, situating their names in the minds of constituents if they can demonstrate the success of traditionally underserved college student populations. The growing diversity trend is not anticipated to reverse over the next several decades as previously considered minority populations increase at a faster rate than the majority population. This is true for racial and ethnic minority groups, African American, Asian, and Hispanic demographics, in the United States (Choi, Lewis, Harwood, Mendenhall, & Huntt, 2017; John & Stage, 2014; Roscoe, 2015; Wilson, 2015).

Presence of groups such as transgender and gender non-conforming individuals is more evident on college campuses (Garvey, 2016; Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017). Collegians with diagnosed, undiagnosed, and hidden disabilities are also on the increase and becoming more visible and prominent on American college and university campuses (Beyer et al., 2016; Cai & Richdale, 2016; Griffin et al., 2016). International student attendance at American higher education institutions has also increased in recent years (Li, Marbley, Bradley, & Lan, 2016; Onyenekwu, 2017; Yamauchi, Taira, & Trevorrow, 2016). Native American or First Nations student presence and persistence in PWIs remains relatively low, and an area for growth (Strayhorn, Bei, Dorime-Williams, & Williams, 2016; Waterman & Sands, 2016).

Postsecondary institutions stand to experience significant benefit financially and culturally from these notable diversity increases, but only if they are adequately prepared to address the shifts in the collegiate constituency (Diggles, 2014; Garvey, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

Faculty diversity has changed only minimally over the past several decades despite heightened awareness of the importance of creating a diverse, inclusive environment (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). A great opportunity exists to continually improve the racial and cultural climate on all college campuses (Diggles, 2014; Karkouti, 2016; Peteet, Montgomery, & Weekes, 2015). This is particularly relevant for those that have historically been predominantly Caucasian and homogeneous in makeup to better serve the target population, as well as their dominant culture counterparts in an increasingly diverse society, regardless of faculty/staff composition. Momentum is gaining to approach inclusivity not only from the standpoint of increased student success but as a measure of institutional quality assurance, including but not limited to diversifying higher level administration (Ferreira et al., 2014; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). The potential exists to significantly impact a university's viability, especially when accreditation is at stake. A recent shift in mindset in college and university structuring is toward inclusivity, more so than simply increasing diversity. Inclusivity is reflected in changes in educational programs, social opportunities, scholarship funding, physical facilities, and other institutional decisions (Beyer et al., 2016; Griffin et al., 2016; Seelman, 2014). Addressing diversity remains an integral part of the process in a country with a long history of racial complexity (Kaplin & Lee, 2014; Karkouti, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Creating welcoming college environments may, in turn, increase diversity on college campuses as well as retention of diverse faculty and staff, alleviating some of the need for continual targeted recruitment.

Diverse student populations in predominantly White institutions have distinctly different needs than their Caucasian counterparts. Underrepresented students face challenges worthy of addressing, to provide a better educational opportunity to all (Beyer et al., 2016; Wilson, 2015). Moreover, racially and culturally diverse students endure unnecessarily hostile environments, microaggressions, and marginalization (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015; Parker, Puig et al., 2016; Wiggan, 2014). Critical race theory (CRT), common in research on minority success, only begins to address the intricacies of the issue (Haskins & Singh, 2015; Patton, 2015; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Sustainability of the institution is also crucial in an era where there exists such a diverse array of educational options available to students from for-profit institutions to online learning programs (Daniel, 2016; Heitner & Jennings, 2016). More affordable career, community, and technical colleges, and minority-serving institutions are already known for catering to the needs of minority students (Abdul-Alim, 2016; DeLong, Monette, & Ozaki, 2016; Waterman & Sands, 2016). More so than in past decades, institutions are required to compete for student attendance. This calls for approaching diversity in higher education from a success for all, strengths-based design to not only recruit, but also retain and educate, diverse talent (Clifton & Anderson, 2006; Gallup, 2017). Institutional satisfaction is becoming crucial for both current and prospective students and their support systems, necessitating catering to diverse students and their families, the college populace of the future.

Much of the research on the achievement of marginalized students in higher education focuses on what is not working and when systems fail, from lack of student preparedness to institutional barriers and injustices (Cox, 2016; Grayson, 2014; Winkle-Wagner, 2015). Further exploring the topic of minority success in college from a strengths-based approach is well suited for a career counseling diversity movement (Clifton & Anderson, 2006; Gallup, 2017). Student

affairs professionals can affect student and institutional success in a multicultural environment, regardless of their own racial, ethnic, and cultural background, with adequate training and preparation (Diggles, 2014; Haskins & Singh, 2015; Midgett et al., 2016). Conscientious reflection on racial and cultural assumptions and stereotypes is also crucial (Haskins & Singh, 2015; Irving, 2014). This presents an assumption that adult learning is transformative and intentional in nature (Benson, Heagney, Hewitt, Crosling, & Devos, 2014; Mezirow, 1991). Further research in minority college student development, like that of the current qualitative case study incorporating diversity professionals, could affect and influence the relevance of training and development offered, thereby increasing success, effectiveness, and engagement for students, staff, faculty, and the campus community. The unique stories of present-day practice with diverse students at colleges and universities in one region can inform theoretical practice through qualitative examination and inquiry. Educating all students in higher education becomes everyone's responsibility, in which career counselors can play an integral role.

Career counselors in colleges and universities collaborate with students throughout their college experience on a variety of topics. The concept of multicultural career counseling has been gaining momentum over the past decade or two from both a theoretical and practical standpoint (Byars-Winston, 2014; Haskins & Singh, 2015; Storlie et al., 2016). Career counseling has the potential for informed enhancement to better serve diverse student populations, with continued in-depth exploration into the topic, which only research can provide. Research that captures the stories of the professionals who most directly serve diverse students in day to day practice is the proposed avenue for modeling and guidance for professional career counselors and student affairs practitioners outside of diversity offices. This qualitative case study aimed to add to the literature regarding practice in one particular region, with potential for

application and replication. All research begins with a conceptual framework, to be explored in the next section.

Conceptual Framework

Student support services exist to benefit students, much like the servant-leader role (Ferch, Spears, McFarland, & Carey, 2015). Better serving students necessitates a better understanding of the students being served, and the conceptual framework represents the entry point into the inquiry. Understanding the students being advised is essential in any educational model. This examination begins with the theoretical framework and an understanding of each of its three components, both individually and collectively.

Certain theoretical bases drive the current research project including critical race theory (CRT), sociocultural learning theory, and positive psychology. Each will be defined in the next section, along with the integrative nature of all three components. Each will be situated in a higher education context, with a diversity emphasis.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This section defines the three theoretical bases that form the conceptual framework for the current qualitative research, critical race theory, sociocultural theory, and positive psychology, in greater detail. The theory is situated in practice, and the interrelatedness of the three theories is explained. All three components are essential in examining diverse student success through a student support lens.

Critical race theory (CRT). Critical race theory has been prominent in the literature on minority student struggles and successes for decades (Haskins & Singh, 2015; Patton, 2015; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Critical race theory began as a postmodern legal theory, aimed at acknowledging delays in civil rights advancements leading to mischaracterizations of people of

color within the justice system, which later developed into a theory applied in the social sciences and higher education (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). Critical race theory is used to understand the educational experience of students of color, making it applicable to the current qualitative study examining minority collegiate student success. Ignoring critical race theory, or other critical theory, in a college or university setting potentially subjects diverse college students to microaggressions and covert and overt oppression, according to existing literature (Baxley, 2014; Desai & Abeita, 2017; Patton, 2015).

While racial misconceptions, microaggressions, and overt racism come to mind when presented with critical race theory, critical theory can be applied more broadly to pertain to critical feminist theory, critical queer theory, tribal critical race theory, and critical theory pertaining to other marginalized groups (Desai & Abeita, 2017; Griffin, 2016; Smallwood, 2015; Waterman & Sands, 2016). This poses the thought of who else may benefit from critical theory acknowledgment in educational settings. Heightening awareness of critical theory in primarily homogenous institutions is no one person's responsibility. The current research project aims to draw attention to the ongoing need to recognize critical race theory, and other iterations of critical theory, in planning services for diverse students in predominantly homogenous institutions. Career counselors and other student affairs professionals are well positioned to move race relations and inclusive campuses forward in their respective colleges and universities (Diggles, 2014; Ferreira et al., 2014; Haskins & Singh, 2015). Examining the presenting issue solely through the lens of critical race theory would be limited in scope, leading to the next component, the social nature of college student support and success.

Sociocultural theory. Social networks become an important factor in identity, development, and career aspirations for non-majority students long before they set foot on

college campuses (Cooper & Davis, 2015; Welton, Harris, La Londe, & Moyer, 2015). Students

enter college with a certain degree of prior life experience, many of these experiences culturally

influenced. Much of the existing literature on minority student success in college points to social

networks, mentoring, affirmative advising, and role modeling (Baker, 2013; Prieto-Welch, 2016;

Rawana et al., 2015; Wilson, 2014). Supportive programming considers culturally-influenced

motivation and diversity of needs and is evident in the literature on retention of a diverse student

body, including support groups, safe spaces, and culturally-relevant academic and social

programs and approaches (Beyer et al., 2016; Kant, Burckhard, & Meyers, 2018; Seelman, 2014;

Tovar, 2015). Students and professional staff can engage in mutual learning and understanding

in diverse college environments when adopting a sociocultural learning approach (Bovill, Cook-

Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cherry, 2016; Mosholder et al., 2016; Vygotsky, 1986). Some

diversity-supportive programs and connections exist on college campuses, both intentional and

happenstance. However, room exists for growth in this area until all marginalized students feel

accepted, safe, and invested in their college experience in primarily majority-serving institutions.

It is proposed that dominant culture advisors, allies, faculty, and institutions can play a

larger role in underrepresented college student success (Diggles, 2014; Hossain, 2017; Karkouti,

2016; Seelman, 2014). This is based on a tenant of adult learning that positions educator as

facilitator versus director of student learning (Brown, Killingsworth, & Alavosius, 2014;

Zarestky, 2016). In fact, the idea of student-staff partnership and inclusivity-focused co-creation

of the curriculum has been gaining momentum in recent years in post-secondary and adult

education (Bovill, 2014; Bovill et al., 2016; Zarestky, 2016). This provides limitless possibilities

in academia, particularly when embracing diversity is a focal point at the institution. Some

mentoring programs strategically match majority faculty, staff, or student mentors with non-

majority mentees for mutual learning (Giust & Valle-Riestra, 2017; Parent, Kansky, & Lehr, 2016). Both educators and students derive greater benefits when learning is a transformative experience (Benson et al., 2014; Mezirow, 1991). An integral part of the transformative experience entails the relationships that emerge during college, both intentional and accidental. Partnerships hold the potential to be stronger, more functional, and more productive when involved parties are familiar with, and can apply, their strengths in the work they perform together (Clifton & Anderson, 2006; Gallup, 2017). This strengths-based orientation will be further discussed in the upcoming section.

Positive psychology. Positive psychology has been an approach used in counseling psychology, and career counseling, for decades, both theoretically and practically. The approach promotes focusing on what is right, versus trying to fix what is wrong, with a client or situation (Clifton & Anderson, 2006; Gallup, 2017; Magyar-Moe et al., 2015). Self-assessments such as the *CliftonStrengths for Students*, *StrengthsQuest*, or *StrengthsFinder* can be implemented to help clients and counselors recognize and better acknowledge the strengths of an individual, and this information can subsequently help guide career counseling and advising sessions (Magyar-Moe et al., 2015; Soria & Stubblefield, 2015). A strengths orientation holds implications for work with diverse college students, prompting greater engagement when providing greater accessibility to self-assessments focusing on strengths and the support to interpret and apply them.

Self-assessment is an essential element in career counseling (Cunningham & Smothers, 2014; Ezeofor & Lent, 2014; Rybak, Sathaye, & Deuskar, 2015). Diverse students already face challenges such as discrimination, microaggressions, stereotyping, and other injustices in their colleges and universities, calling for a positive approach to self-assessment with support from a

variety of professionals of various backgrounds who have their best interests in mind (Diggles, 2014; Westrick & Lower, 2016). Recognition of culture, both strengths and challenges, social supports and networks, and acknowledgment of individual assets provides a more robust understanding of college student experience, specifically diverse college student experience.

Critical race theory, sociocultural influence, and positive psychology are all necessary components of understanding and encouraging diverse student success in predominantly White institutions led by predominantly White faculty, staff, and administrators. Acknowledgement of the students' own self-efficacy and capabilities in aspiring towards their goals within their own racial or cultural context, and respect for the power of their social networks and influences, are essential in examining the enduring issue (Bandura et al., 2003; Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017; Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2014). The belief that career counseling and college advising can be and should be positive and multicultural in nature are all factors in the success of this study (Roscoe, 2015; Storlie et al., 2016). Current and prior research on the topic will be discussed more extensively in the review of the literature.

Review of the Literature

Much has been written regarding minority student underachievement in post-secondary education. Disproportionate college attendance rates, lagging progression towards degree completion, underrepresentation in degree attainment percentages, and lack of engagement with faculty are represented through literature (Cox, 2016; Klein & Dudley, 2014; Waterman & Sands, 2016; Wiggan, 2014). Non-majority students in predominantly White institutions face issues such as discrimination and biases, even in a higher education setting, yet many persist and succeed in matriculating from college each year, which inspires the current qualitative research. Another negative effect or possible obstacle for minority college students, research cautions, is

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that even traditionally underrepresented college students who achieve success on the surface face challenges mentally, emotionally, and socially due to their college environments (Choi et al., 2017; Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015; Wiggan, 2014; Winkle-Wagner, 2015). Examining what helps some students in attaining baccalaureate success, despite inevitable challenges, was the focus of the study; how career counseling and student affairs support can be enhanced to serve all students is the ultimate goal. Provided in the review of existing literature is a positioning of 4-year predominantly White institutions amidst other educational options and a historical overview of discrimination and racial tensions in higher education (Abdul-Alim, 2016; Cox, 2016; Karkouti, 2016; Waterman & Sands, 2016). Academic precedents influencing college success, current campus climate, prior scholarly research on diverse college student success, and a framing of college career counseling and other student affairs practice within the diverse college student experience are also explored throughout this section.

Predominantly White Institutions

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) serving diversifying college student populations is an authentic concern for traditional predominantly White, majority-serving 4-year colleges and universities across the United States as they compete with other types of educational institutions for multicultural student patronage. Competitors such as flexible online degree programs, for-profit institutions which often cater to industry and employment-readiness, and more affordable community and technical colleges hold appeal for students (Abdul-Alim, 2016; Heitner & Jennings, 2016; John & Stage, 2014; Tovar, 2015; Waterman & Sands, 2016). Minority-serving 2-year and 4-year, degree-granting institutions provide lucrative options to students who will likely enter college already at a disadvantage culturally and socially, due to inhospitable campus climates (Abdul-Alim, 2016; John & Stage, 2014; Waterman & Sands, 2016). Predominantly

White conventional 4-year institutions face the perplexing dilemma of how to remain relevant to minority students, a predicament the current research proposed can be enhanced by inquiry into practice of trained diversity professionals at 4-year predominantly White colleges and universities, assuming the ensuing insights are considered and utilized (Brown, Brown et al., 2014; Diggles, 2014; Seelman, 2014).

Historical Background

Serving diverse student populations is not possible without an informed historical lens. American society, and subsequently the American college and university environment, presents a long history of racial discord (Kaplin & Lee, 2014; Karkouti, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). In recent history, affirmative action in higher education admission processes has been labeled a controversial topic at best and has resulted in claims of reverse discrimination by majority applicants (Kaplin & Lee, 2014; Sule, Winkle-Wagner, & Maramba, 2017). Affirmative action and reverse discrimination have controversially impacted employment and hiring policies in higher education in much the same way they have affected student enrollment, though doubts persist on whether governmental intervention is the best solution for enhancing these racially and culturally strained academic environments (Kaplin & Lee, 2014; Sule et al., 2017; Winkle-Wagner, Sule, & Maramba, 2014). Cases related to gender and other forms of diverse marginalization and reverse preferential treatment are similarly viewed. College admissions processes are difficult and complex enough for potential students, without the added societal barriers and racial and cultural undertones (Cox, 2016; Sule et al., 2017). Adversarial and ill-informed hiring processes similarly impact diverse individuals seeking employment at PWIs.

Helping prepare students to be able to work, live, and interact in diverse societies is a responsibility of higher education institutions (Diggles, 2014; Watt, 2013). Providing and

apportioning role models of various backgrounds and the moral obligation to improve past civic injustices are important aspects of college life worthy of consideration in this contentious debate (Diggles, 2014; Kaplin & Lee, 2014; Sule et al., 2017). Involving diversity professionals in genuine and meaningful discussions surrounding admission of diverse student populations and hiring of diverse faculty and staff could prove beneficial to individual institutions and as a whole. Educating additional advisors and staff on how to better serve the diverse students already on their campuses, a focal intention of the current qualitative case study, in turn, provides time for these deeper discussions among diversity professionals and policymakers to occur.

Academic Preparation

Entering the higher education realm can be more difficult for students who have faced prior struggles in academic environments. Struggles can be due to factors such as misguided judgment and pre-conceived notions possessed by educators, peer isolation, lack of family knowledge or support in the educational environment, and unfair or unjust treatment. Minority students still lag peers in K–12 public education settings, a topic worthy of further inquiry on its own accord (Cooper & Davis, 2015; Cox, 2016). Many of the struggles faced by diverse students are beyond their control. Majority population teachers and teaching candidates have biases and pre-conceived notions of racially, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse students that they may, in fact, not even be aware of (Irving, 2014; Zarestky, 2016). Intentionally incorporating multicultural students, staff, and faculty into the training and education of majority population educators and students is one documented way of addressing these issues in education (Parent et al., 2016; Seelman, 2014). Though discrepancies in access to educational opportunity occur at all levels of education, incorporating experts in minority-serving education into an inquiry on, and hopeful change to, the topic of better serving diverse

undergraduate college students in primarily majority-serving college environments was the primary emphasis of the current qualitative study.

Campus Climate

The theoretical framework for this qualitative case study merging critical race theory, sociocultural theory, and positive psychology aimed to place a positive view on minority student success (Magyar-Moe et al., 2015; Patton, 2015; Vygotsky, 1986). Assistance from staff and faculty of all backgrounds in embracing a diverse campus climate and genuine diversity-specific programming show commitment to diverse student success (Chen, 2017; Diggles, 2014; Seelman, 2014). Diversity-sensitive college counseling and advising and support from administration and academia all aid in the process of enhancing diverse college student experience (Roscoe, 2015; Watt, 2013). It is easy to rest on the inequities on college campuses, which have become even more evident and visible with the widespread use of social media (Husband, 2016; Mazyck, 2014). On the positive side, self-efficacy of students can be enhanced by faculty mentoring and social networks (Parent et al., 2016; Wilson, 2014). These connections can be facilitated with greater ease and frequency by the greater social connectedness of the current generation of college students, faculty, and staff, to be further examined through the research.

Enhancing supportive services to affect the success of diverse college students in predominantly White institutions can potentially be influenced through qualitative inquiry into the lives of those who serve the diverse student populations most directly in post-secondary institutions, professional staff in diversity offices. A qualitative case study approach captures and examines the stories of success, as well as the challenges. Much of the current literature on the topic examines the lives of the diverse students themselves or the added responsibilities of

diverse faculty and staff to mentor diverse students on top of their existing workload (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015; Wilson, 2014). Development of the research study focuses intently on increasing student success in diverse student populations by sharing the responsibility across campus with practitioners of all backgrounds and lightening the load of diverse staff and faculty by accumulating knowledge from them and their personal and professional perspectives.

Career Counseling

Multicultural career counseling has been a topic in the literature for decades. Career counseling has and will continue to be, influenced by research on underrepresented student populations from a diverse array of backgrounds (Byars-Winston, 2014; Haskins & Singh, 2015; Hwang et al., 2014; Midgett et al., 2016; Pang et al., 2013). The definition of diversity among college students has been steadily expanding, further impacting college counseling practice (Tharp, 2014). Cunningham and Smothers (2014), Ezeofor and Lent (2014), and Rybak et al. (2015) remind practitioners of the importance of self-assessment with individual counselees in a counseling relationship. A better understanding of diverse students enhances genuine and transparent counselor-counselee interactions. Furthermore, the institutional assessment movement in higher education encourages accountability of institutions to serve all students (Beyer et al., 2016; Ferreira et al., 2014; Wilson, 2015). College support and guidance systems should be examined specifically about diversity—not as separate standards related to each—in examining the functionality of higher education systems (Ferreira et al., 2014).

Diverse student perspectives, outside influences, and institutional practice all have been examined related to career counseling and enhancing diverse college student success (Ferreira et al., 2014; Kantamneni et al., 2016; Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017; Storlie et al., 2016). Previous literature, both qualitative and quantitative, has gathered student input and data on inclusive

counseling and advising practice on college campuses (Hwang et al., 2014; Mejia-Smith &

Gushue, 2017). Additionally, familial and other outside influences on career decision making for

diverse college students cannot be ignored (Kantamneni et al., 2016; Matos, 2015). Reform on

an institutional level formalizes multicultural career counseling practice (Byars-Winston, 2014;

Ferreira et al., 2014). Examining prior research on diverse student success, both inside and

outside the career counseling relationship, further influences the topic.

Critique of Previous Research

Previous literature examining minority student success, or lack thereof, examines the

narratives of those involved, quite often from the perspectives of the students (Hotchkins &

Dancy, 2015; Seelman, 2014; Storlie et al., 2016; Wilson, 2014). Further examination of staff

impact, similar to previous research by Figueroa & Rodriguez (2015), Marbley et al. (2015), and

Pang et al. (2013) provides a more consistent narrative from which other student affairs

professionals can glean insights. A qualitative research design modeled around staff responses is

used for the study of how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student

populations in PWIs. The present study attempted to identify, by directly gathering feedback

from professional staff, helpful interventions, or adaptations, when working with

underrepresented students in 4-year predominantly White colleges and universities, particularly

in the region where the study took place.

Review of Methodological Issues

Quantitative models are less represented in the acquired literature but do add value to a

growing body of literature. Quantitative analyses provide insights on the relationship between

various factors such as academic self efficacy, social capital, ethnic identity, resilience, and

career decision making, and influence the topic, but not the stories of the participants themselves

(Park & Bowman, 2015; Peteet et al., 2015; Shin & Kelly, 2015). Park and Bowman performed a series of longitudinal examinations on interracial social interactions and relationships in college (Bowman & Park, 2014; Bowman, Denson, & Park, 2016; Park & Bowman, 2015). Peteet et al. (2015) used an anonymous electronic questionnaire, but no individual contact with participants. Insights could impact future diverse student experience and research.

Mixed methods analyses are beginning to add to the conversation on diverse student success in college (Gaylor & Nicol, 2016; Karathanos & Mena, 2014; Rawana et al., 2015). Karathanos and Mena's (2014) survey design included responses to open-ended questions, providing for the voices of the student participants. Gaylor and Nicol (2016) incorporated interviews with practitioner and students along with quantitative measures in examining career education, self-efficacy, and motivation. Although quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches hold value, the current research project was more interested in participant experience and the themes that emerged than correlates or inter-relatedness of the factors. Research on the success of minority students in community college, transitioning from community college to 4-year institution, and baccalaureate degree-seeking enrollees such as the research provided by Parker, Puig et al. (2016), Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014), and Wilson (2014), lays the groundwork for further qualitative inquiry.

Synthesis of Research Findings

Qualitative research is most suited for the current study intended to gain insight on how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three northern Midwest predominantly White institutions. Research by Arroyo et al. (2016), Hotchkins and Dancy (2015), Parker, Puig et al. (2016), Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014), Vega (2016), and Wilson (2014) all incorporate a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is well represented

when examining diverse student experience and success. Participant interviews are common in

qualitative research aimed at capturing the narrative of diverse student experience in colleges

(Hotchins & Dancy, 2015; Parker, Barnhardt et al., 2016; Wiggan, 2014). Student affairs

practice in college is an ideal recipient of the benefits of qualitative research.

The heightened interest in institutional assessment in recent years is making it harder to

ignore a diversity component (Ferreira et al., 2014; Henning & Roberts, 2016). For institutions

to derive sustained benefit from recruitment, the institutions themselves must be prepared. Much

of the research on the achievement of minority students in higher education focuses on what is

not working and when systems fail (Cox, 2016; Patton, 2015). Students crave environments that

are supportive of their needs; higher education institutions need students to remain relevant and

viable in an ever-changing society (Brown, Brown et al., 2014; Seelman, 2014). Further

exploring the topic of minority success in college holds potential for a more positive, proactive

approach to student affairs on college campuses as it relates to diversity, with benefits for all

involved (Henning & Roberts, 2016).

Benefiting institutions, particularly the vibrant and diverse students who make up these

institutions, is a possible advantage of the current study with implications such as improved

student retention and satisfaction, improved staff and faculty training and practice, and a more

welcoming and inclusive campus climate for all. In summation, diversity is not enough. Higher

education institutions, especially those with primarily majority student, staff, and faculty make-

up should actively work towards improving campus climates and success for all students,

whether they be racially, culturally, gender-identified, or ability diverse (Beyer et al., 2016;

Diggles, 2014; Ferreira et al., 2014). Gathering data from professionals who work directly with

the population, much like previous research by practitioners, was proposed and implemented for

the current study (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015; Marbley et al., 2015; Soria & Stubblefield, 2015). Past research informs both current research and practice.

Summary of Chapter 2

Presence of diverse student populations on 4-year college and university campuses will only continue to expand over the next several decades (John & Stage, 2014; Karkouti, 2016; Roscoe, 2015; Wilson, 2015). Diversity includes racially, ethnically, and nationality diverse students, students with identified and undisclosed disabilities, and transgender and gender non-conforming students (Beyer et al., 2016; Cai & Richdale, 2016; Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017). Other forms of diversity may not even be identified at the time of the current study. Non-traditional age college students and veterans are additional examples of rapidly growing student populations in baccalaureate-seeking programs in the United States (Banks, Hammond, & Hernandez, 2014; McCaslin et al., 2014). Linguistically diverse students also comprise a growing population trend in higher education with lagging research on their success in academic disciplines (Cook, Perusse, & Rojas, 2015; Karathanos & Mena, 2014). Enhancing service to first-generation college students is also being visited in new and creative ways (Longwell-Grice, Adsitt, Mullins, & Serrata, 2016; Vega, 2016). Alongside the potential benefits colleges face, such as increased enrollment and tuition dollars and financial giving, comes the responsibility of serving and advancing this new diverse cohort, academically, socially, and career potential-wise. Rapidly rising costs of college tuition in recent years make multicultural student and alumni satisfaction more crucial than ever before, for both moral and financial reasons, further inspiring advancing knowledge on the topic (Garvey, 2016; Greenfield, 2015). This study proposes one way of doing just that, with the help of college diversity professionals.

The northern Midwest colleges and universities examined for suitability for the particular study can only boast approximately 10–12% of enrollees each year are students from diverse backgrounds, prompting the question of whether diverse student populations are adequately being served in primarily White institutions. There is a growing concern across colleges and universities to embrace diversity (Beyer et al., 2016; Diggles, 2014; Wilson, 2015). Not only is diversity a priority, but inclusivity and inclusive practice (Parker, Puig et al., 2016; Scott & McGuire, 2017; Seelman, 2014). It is one thing to recruit underrepresented students, another to retain them, and entirely another to provide them with a satisfying student experience that leaves them feeling prepared for their next steps in life. Creating a welcoming and hospitable environment for diverse college students could help attract and engage more students and could even help attract and retain diverse hires. Literature exists supporting the notion that reform takes place from the inside out (Kiersch & Peters, 2017; Elmore, 2007). Even small adjustments in programming can impact diverse student experience in desirable and impactful ways (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Wyatt, 2014).

This qualitative case study explored how career counseling, and additional student affairs practices, in colleges and universities could be adapted to better address the needs of underrepresented student populations, through the lens of diversity-serving colleagues. Three predominantly White institutions in a northern Midwest bi-state region served as the basis for the exploration; diversity professionals as the medium. A cultural shift is inevitable in an era of ever-evolving college student populations (Beyer et al., 2016; Bovill et al., 2016; Roscoe, 2015). Innovative and collaborative approaches are in order (Chen, 2017; Diggles, 2014; Henning & Roberts, 2016). The current study built upon previous literature on diverse college student success (Cai & Richdale, 2016; Klein & Dudley, 2014; Wilson, 2014). Incorporating the college

professional perspective expands knowledge (Chen, 2017; Roscoe, 2015; Seelman, 2014). Inquiry into the knowledge of professionals well suited to serve the population under examination, in a proactive manner, was the approach chosen for the current qualitative case study. An increasingly diverse college-age population, paired with a genuine need for institutions not historically established to serve marginalized or non-majority student populations to be adaptive to the cultural shift, motivates the study (Harris & BrckaLorenz, 2017; Husband, 2016; John & Stage, 2014; Karkouti, 2016). An increased concentration on institutional assessment in recent years further inspires the exploration (Beyer et al., 2016; Ferreira et al., 2014; Henning & Roberts, 2016).

Probing perspectives of those best positioned to serve diverse students, trained diversity professionals, in the specific northern Midwest bi-state region could inform and improve the practice of student affairs professionals in the region and eventually in traditionally primarily Caucasian 4-year colleges and universities, public, private, religiously-affiliated, and secular, throughout the United States. Methodology, data analysis, and results interpretation of the current study regarding service to diverse college student populations will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The potential for replication and recommendations for practice and further study will be discussed extensively in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions (PWIs) in the northern Midwest. Insights could be shared with college career counselors and other student affairs professionals who may, or may not, have direct experience working with the populations. Professional staff in diversity offices are in direct contact with diverse student populations daily yet cannot specialize in every function area in higher education. Often faculty and staff consult diversity professionals solely when issues in connecting with students arise. Student affairs professionals are seeing underrepresented student groups entering college in greater numbers than ever before in recent decades (Bonner et al., 2011; Husband, 2016). The diversity of staff and faculty has not increased to match the increasingly diverse student body, adding to an already busy workload for higher education professionals serving students from diverse backgrounds (Chang et al., 2013; Cole, et al., 2017; Diggles, 2014). The aim of the study was to provide opportunity and insights for shared responsibility.

Better serving diverse student populations is crucial to the continued and future success and relevance of higher education institutions (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011; Smith, 2011; Wilson, 2015). Additionally, diverse college students suffer from social isolation, stereotyping, burnout, stress, and microaggressions when staff and faculty are not adequately prepared to serve their needs (Chao & Nath, 2011; Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015; Husband, 2016). The study proposed that diversity professionals possess specialized knowledge that can be transferred to student affairs colleagues with divergent areas of expertise, in a more

efficient manner. The study used Critical Race Theory (CRT), sociocultural theory, and positive

psychology as the framework for examining how identified diverse tactics can be used to impact

multicultural career counseling. The study was directed at 4-year primarily homogeneous

colleges and universities in one northern Midwest bi-state region of the United States.

Research Question

Potential career counselors often have one course related to multicultural career

counseling or multicultural counseling is approached as an add-on to existing curricula.

Diversity has been steadily increasing on college campuses over the past several decades,

whether the staff is adequately trained or not (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Goldrick-Rab & Cook,

2011; Karkouti, 2016; Smith, 2011).

The study aimed to answer the research question:

RQ1. How do college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations

in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in one northern Midwest bi-

state region?

Insights could be shared with student affairs professionals across campuses. During the

study, themes emerged which could inform the practice of college career counselors when

working with diverse students in predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Faculty and

administrative buy-in is another potential benefit.

The remainder of the chapter outlines the methodology for answering the above research

question. Specifically, research design, selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection

and analysis, limitations, validation, ethical issues, and expected findings will be described.

Their relationship to answering the question of how college diversity professionals serve

underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in the northern Midwest bi-state region will be expounded upon in the chapter.

Purpose and Design

The purpose of the study was to explore how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in the northern Midwest. Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's field notes with diversity professionals in local colleges. A case study design examined practices of current diversity professionals in colleges and universities within the northern Midwestern region; a case study approach was chosen due to the boundaries of the geographic region, type of institution, and type of position (Yin, 2014). The study aimed to gather information on current successful practices of diversity professionals, analyze themes and patterns, and make the information available to other student affairs professionals in 4-year PWIs.

Gathering information from numerous diversity professionals in similar settings lends greater insight into individual practice patterns through commonalities (Yin, 2014). Ages, experiences, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and many other factors vary from one diversity professional to another, yet they are connected through the work they perform daily with students. Generalizability of case study research is a primary concern of the approach (Yin, 2014). However, the richness of data in explaining that unique diverse student strategies are being utilized, and potential to inform practice in the specific region of study take precedence. Due to the vastness of the topic, the case is bound by time and place. Answering the question of how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in northern

Midwest 4-year PWIs took place over the course of one semester in multicultural student affairs offices on three specified campuses.

This qualitative case study approach involved questionnaires, interviews, and researcher's field notes from interactions with diversity professionals in one northern Midwest region with three existing 4-year colleges and universities. All three institutions qualify as PWIs. Questionnaires were distributed to professionals in the area via their university email addresses; questionnaire appears in Appendix A. In-person interview times were established upon return of written questionnaires. In-person interview questions are included in Appendix B. In-person interviews took place at the employee's office or workspace as agreed upon by participant and researcher, at times that were convenient for each diversity professional. Researcher's field notes of the professional interacting with the target population or those who directly serve the target population took place after the in-person interviews. Perspective through a diversity lens and personal and professional experience with diversity were foci of the questionnaires, interviews, and researcher field notes. The sample included 10 professional staff. Diversity is defined to include racial and ethnic diversity, disability status, LGBTQIA affiliation, and international student status, to be further explored in the upcoming section.

Research Population and Sampling Method

The study utilized a purposeful sample of all full-time professional staff working in diversity positions in the northern Midwest region's three 4-year colleges and universities, public and private. Approximately 27 staff members work in potentially relevant positions in 4-year predominantly White institutions in the specified northern Midwest bi-state region and were assessed for willingness to participate in the study. Purposeful sampling aids in capturing

meaning for the particular region where the study occurred, and where any ensuing changes would likely be implemented.

Purposeful sampling is often associated with case studies (Yin, 2014). The individuals for the study were purposefully selected due to the opportunity for answering the research question of how diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations distinct to the setting and geographic location, to enhance understanding specific to the population and characteristics of the region. They included all full-time professional staff working in diversity offices, as obtained from the three university websites.

The identified region has three 4-year colleges and universities all of which have designated offices focused on serving diverse student populations from racial and ethnic diversity, disability, and gender identity to international student services. The institutions range in size from 2,600 to 10,878 total student populations with total diverse student populations comprising no more than 12% of the entire student body; two of the institutions are public, and one is private religiously-affiliated. All were explored as options for conducting interviews with diversity professionals. Ten of the area's approximately 27 professionals were identified for the case study based on their willingness to respond to the questionnaire, in-person interview, and researcher's field notes.

Sources of Data

Questionnaires (see Appendix A), interviews (see Appendix B), and the researcher's field notes (see Appendix C) were used to obtain information and data. Initially, invitations were extended to a selected group of 15 professional staff, with an emphasis on serving diverse populations in higher education, to respond to the questionnaire, and subsequent request for an interview and researcher field notes, by using their contact information listed on the university

websites. The 15 potential participants were selected from each of the diversity offices on all three campuses to maintain a balance of racial/ethnic background, leadership versus non-leadership role, and years of experience. Ten participants constituted the minimal sample and the first 10 to respond to the participation request comprised the sample. Responses were considered by participants who completed all three components.

Questionnaires were distributed as the first step in acquiring information from area diversity professionals. The questionnaires were one page in length, front and back, and included demographic and logistical information (see Appendix A). Background questions asked the professionals to indicate their position title, type of institution, number of years spent in diversity-serving college roles, population(s) served and caseload, and information on their own college experience and cultural background. Aside from the background and logistical questions, the remaining questions were open-ended. Professionals were alerted of the arrival of the upcoming electronic questionnaire via phone and email by using the contact information provided on the university websites. Questionnaires provided initial information regarding the topic as well as an opportunity for data matching, corroboration, and triangulation common in case study research (Yin, 2014).

Follow-up in-person interviews with all who participated in the written questionnaire were constructed and conducted in an open-ended format (see Appendix B). Interview duration was 1-hour in length and resembled a guided conversation format (Yin, 2014). Interviews addressed interpretations, subjective observations, and opinions of interviewees, as well as explanations and meaning from the perspective of the participants (Yin, 2014). Interviews provided an opportunity for more detailed explanations of written responses. Thirty to 60-minute researcher field notes of professionals interacting with their target population(s) followed.

The potential for the richness of data called for this multi-phased approach of questionnaires, in-person interviews, and researcher's field notes in the study.

Similar sources of data have been used in previous research on serving diverse college student populations. Participant interviews as in the research of Hwang et al. (2014) and Waterman and Sands (2016) and interviews and researcher observations in the research of Means (2017) and Wiggan (2014) have lent insight into the topic of better serving diverse student populations in past literature and inspired the current study. Questionnaires, interviews, and field notes provided an opportunity for triangulation and thorough data.

Data Collection

Data were collected over a 6-week period. Timelines were set for distribution and retrieval of questionnaires, indicated interest in interview participation, and scheduling of interviews and researcher field notes. Interviews were set during working hours or other hours indicated as convenient for the professionals. Data were analyzed for emergent patterns within the entire sample in four parts.

Initially, potential participants were contacted over a 2-week period via phone and/or email using the contact information listed on the university websites to inform them they had been identified as potential participants in the study. Questionnaires were sent out electronically through Qualtrics by the end of the 2-week period to all potential participants, excluding any who declined participation. Participants were given 2-weeks to respond to the questionnaire electronically, with scheduled reminders. Upon return of the questionnaires, all responding participants were contacted via phone and/or email to establish meeting times for in-person interviews, and researcher field notes, to be conducted over a month's period. Travel time was minimal due to the proximity of the institutions. Data from questionnaires were not entered or

formally analyzed by the researcher before in-person interviews or researcher field notes to minimize biases or tendency to provide leading questions. This was explained to participants at the beginning of the process.

After the second and third phases of interviews and researcher field notes, all data were entered into Qualtrics by the researcher and accessed from a secure server in the researcher's office. Once the entire process was completed, analysis, coding, corroboration, and triangulation occurred (Yin, 2014). The researcher coded questionnaires to identify themes and patterns. Interviews and researcher field notes were transcribed for coding by the researcher using Qualtrics software. As a final step, the three sets of data were cross-referenced to identify common themes. All data will be saved electronically as well as stored in hard copy format in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office for 3-years.

Considerations identified as relevant in previous studies apply similarly in the current study. Parental education, domestic or international status, socio-economic background, importance of racial identity, presence of multiple identities, racial composition of the high school attended, and academic performance of the students being served could all vary the strategies being used by a diversity professional (Baker, 2013; Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015; Winkle-Wagner, 2015). It is noted that some of these factors may or may not be known by each interviewee/participant. Background of the diversity professionals themselves, whether their background is similar to or different than students being served, and the type of institution attended by the professional could also be factors.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis took place in four stages post-clarification phase: questionnaires, in-person interviews, researcher's field notes, and triangulation of all three sets of data. Questionnaires

returned by participants were reviewed upon return, prior to formal analysis, to determine any

needed clarification of responses to occur during in-person interviews. The formal analysis

began once all data had been collected via questionnaires, in-person interviews, and researcher

field notes.

Phase 1 of data analysis focused on analyzing written questionnaire responses, Phase 2

focused on in-person interviews, Phase 3 focused on the researcher's field notes, and Phase 4

integrated the three data sets. Once all data were collected, the researcher began Phase 1 of data

analysis, written questionnaires, by identifying emergent themes in the responses, sorting them

into categories, and providing each with a tentative label based on common theme identification.

Tables were developed during phases one, two, and three to capture themes, categories, and

codes. Descriptive codes were assigned by the researcher during all phases to capture the key

points and essence of the written and spoken responses and researcher's field notes. Short

phrases were used to capture key themes from the data and were sorted and categorized to

identify patterns and insight into the topic of serving diverse student populations in diversity

offices.

During Phase 2, the researcher transcribed in-person interviews. Like Phase 1, the

researcher identified themes that emerged during the in-person interview transcription, sorted

them into categories, and provided each with a tentative label. Similarly, for Phase 3, the

researcher's field notes were transcribed by the researcher and themes were identified,

categorized, and labeled. Transcriptions were sent to research participants for corroboration.

Phases one, two, and three began using open coding and ended with category development.

Phase 4 of data analysis, the final phase, integrated the themes and codes from the

previous three stages to identify frequency and commonalities. During Phase 4 of the data

analysis process, axial coding occurred to prompt emergent themes. All data were entered into Qualtrics software during the four phases of analysis. A matrix was developed to demonstrate the relationship between categories. Data analysis took place over a 4-week period, and all data remained, and continue to remain stored and locked in a secure location in the researcher's office.

Limitations of the Research Design

- Purposeful sampling was used for the study due to the population being studied, and the limited number of participants who fit the criteria, therefore, generalizations are not possible.

- The interviews, questionnaires, and researcher field notes were conducted with professionals so while it was unlikely they would provide false information, or fail to follow through on their commitments, the possibility existed.

- There is a slight possibility professionals could experience burnout from being over-questioned on their area of expertise.

- A possibility of an emotional response to the questions being asked could surface, particularly if questions triggered responses from the professionals' own experiences as underrepresented students/professionals.

- There was a limited degree of contact with non-minor students during the field observation phase, which could have caused minor inconvenience or stress to the students.

- Data collected could potentially be inadequate.

- The case is bound by time and place.

The limitations were few when compared to the potential benefits of the study for diversity professionals, career counselors, and students. However, it is important to remain mindful of the limitations.

Validity

The credibility and dependability of the data stem from the relationships with the professionals who serve the population of interest and their willingness to share their responses via their experiences. A report was provided to participants at the conclusion of data gathering for the study for accuracy checking, thereby increasing the credibility and validity of the study. The richness of data and the willingness of professionals from multiple institutions in the geographic region to participate allowed for the deeper study of the topic. Data and information gathered can be used as a point of reference for future scenarios involving work with diverse student populations in college.

Using a qualitative research approach captures the narrative of professionals working with their students in an identified region on a day to day basis. The purpose of social network exploration and research is intended a change in societal patterns (Rice & Yoshioka-Maxwell, 2015). A qualitative research design is ideal for a study striving to capture and understand the practice of diversity professionals in an ever-changing higher education landscape (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011; Smith, 2011). Deeper analysis and comprehension of a relevant topic can serve to move higher education forward at a crucial time, creating the need for a multi-phased qualitative approach to examining the topic. Further examination of staff impact, like previous research by Hughes et al. (2012) and Pang et al. (2013), was perceived to justify the time commitment and ethical considerations inherent in the current qualitative study.

Ethical Issues in the Proposed Study

Diversity is increasing in student populations alongside a lack of increase in diverse faculty and staff (Hughes et al., 2012; Smith, 2011). This contributes to an already taxing workload for student affairs professionals who serve diverse student populations (Chang et al., 2013; Cole et al., 2017; Diggles, 2014; Husband, 2016). Adding to the strain or stress of busy professionals is a concern when asking for their participation in any study. Often professionals performing jobs related to social justice come from marginalized populations themselves (Husband, 2016; Marbley et al., 2015). Questioning diversity professionals on their work with diverse students may evoke memories or emotional responses due to their own experience as a student and professional. Confidentiality of the professionals and the students they serve is always a concern when working with human subjects. The above considerations were of utmost concern during all phases of the study, and potential harm is deemed to be minimal.

Summary

Remaining relevant in an ever-changing higher education landscape is crucial to the success of diverse students and the sustainability of the institution (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011; Smith, 2011). The study aimed to provide useful and relevant information to student affairs professionals by exploring techniques already being implemented by professionals who continuously serve diverse college student populations in the northern Midwest region. The study explored current practices of diversity professionals in one specified region in hopes of transferring the knowledge to the general student affairs community in the identified region, with a recommendation for replication throughout regions of the United States. Data are analyzed, and results presented in the next section, Chapter 4. Summarization, conclusions, implications, and recommendations make up Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

Colleges and universities often have strategic plans and goals related to diversity and inclusivity amidst ever-changing demographics and globalization of the academy (Ferreira et al., 2014; McShay, 2017; Stephens, 2017; Wilson, 2015). The question of whether diverse student populations are being served in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) led by predominantly White administrators, faculty, and staff remains a topic in the literature. Despite the challenges for underrepresented students at PWIs, many diverse students are persisting and succeeding (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015; Fries-Britt & Snider, 2015). Diverse college students often gravitate to multicultural centers on White campuses in search of identity mentors and role models (Kiyama, Museus, & Vega, 2015; McShay, 2017). The problem this qualitative case study explored was how college diversity professionals specifically support diverse student populations in their success at PWIs in one northern Midwest region with three existing 4-year PWIs. A diversity professional is defined as a student affairs professional in a college or university whose position is dedicated to providing support to students who are in the minority on campus (Watt, 2013). For the purposes of the study, the term diversity is defined to include racial and ethnic identity, disability identification, LGBTQIA affiliation, international student status, and multiple underrepresented identities (Tharp, 2014). Insights from the study could be shared with career counselors, and additional student affairs professionals, who may or may not have experience working with the target populations and can work with students throughout their educational journeys.

The current study aimed to answer the research question of how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in PWIs (public, private, religiously-affiliated, secular). The following research question framed the study:

RQ1. How do college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in one northern Midwest bi-state region?

Data for this qualitative study were gathered in three phases: questionnaires, in-person interviews, and researcher field notes. Data were analyzed in four phases: questionnaires, interviews, researcher field notes, and the integration of the three data sets. Questionnaires were coded by the researcher, and interviews and researcher field notes were transcribed and coded, using Qualtrics software. During Phases 1, 2, and 3 of data analysis, themes were identified, categorized, and labeled. During Phase 4 of the data analysis process, axial coding occurred to prompt and identify connections between themes. Common themes and patterns were identified during the three phases and during the triangulation of the data sets. Key findings including connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy captured the impact of diversity professionals at the northern Midwest PWIs identified for the study and are elaborated on in the chapter.

Multicultural career counseling has been explored in the literature over the years, justifying further study (Byars-Winston, 2014; Morgan Consoli et al., 2016; Storlie et al., 2016). Previous and on-going work related to equity and diversity at the practitioner level prompted a deeper study of the topic, which formal research can provide. Critical race theory, sociocultural theory, and positive psychology were used to frame and develop the study.

Chapter 4 outlines the sample for the study including demographics, research

methodology and analysis, a summary of findings, data and results, and a summary of the

chapter. Distinctive characteristics of the study sample, suitability of qualitative case study

design for the particular study, presentation of the data and findings, and differences between

data subsets substantiate the chapter.

Description of the Sample

The sample for the study constituted a purposeful sample of diversity-serving

professionals at 4-year PWIs in one northern Midwest region with three qualifying colleges or

universities. The institutions identified for the study, ranging in size from approximately 2,500

to 11,000 total student populations, contain diverse student populations encompassing 10–12%

of their entire student bodies, as obtained from the websites. All three institutions have

dedicated offices focused on serving underrepresented student populations including racial and

ethnic diversity, disability, gender identity and orientation, international student status, and

multiple intersecting identities. Selected offices were designated as departments of diversity and

inclusion, equity and diversity, multicultural affairs, disability resources, gender equity,

American Indian resources, First Nations centers, or international student services.

Ten of the area's approximately 27 professionals working in relevant positions, obtained

from the university websites, comprised the sample based on their willingness to respond to the

questionnaire, interview, and researcher's field notes. Their institutions, public, private, and

religious, share a geographic region. Purposeful sampling was used for this study. The

individuals were selected from all three campuses due to the opportunity for answering the

research question of how diversity professionals serve multicultural student populations distinct

to the setting and geographic region. Keeping a balance of racial/ethnic identity, gender or

gender identity, leadership versus non-leadership role, and years of experience was part of the process.

The sample was representative of diversity professionals in the region. Demographic information was collected as part of the questionnaire. The sample had a balance of professionals working in director or mid-level director roles with direct reports (50%) and professionals working in advising, counseling, or specialist roles (50%) within their departments. Examples of titles were director, associate director, assistant director, student advisor, disability counselor, disability specialist, and program coordinator. The sample contained a balance regarding gender. Some of the professionals' lead programs within their respective units and several supervise student organizations specifically for students of marginalized identities and/or oversee student employees. All roles focus on serving diverse students in their success.

Identities of participants included: American Indian, Black/African American, Caucasian, Latinx/Chicanx, and LGBTQIA. Students they serve include American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, international students, Latinx/Chicanx, LGBTQIA, and students with disabilities. Some professionals shared other identities with students served such as being a first-generation immigrant to the United States, having experienced a temporary disability, being bilingual, or having been a first-generation college student, as obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. Furthermore, some professionals identified as non-traditional students, which is not an uncommon characteristic of the students they serve in diversity offices. Minority students often take a non-traditional path when earning college degrees (Vega, 2016; Waterman & Sands, 2016). Stated Participant 4, who took a non-traditional path as a student and is now in a position to inspire and mentor underrepresented students, "I was obviously able to navigate it eventually."

Some multicultural offices serve students from more than one background or multiple identities and some offices serve a specific population (American Indian, international students, students with disabilities). Length of time professionals have worked in positions focused on serving diverse student populations ranged from two years to thirty years, with the mean being 8.5 years. Some worked in other positions prior to becoming a diversity professional in a college, typically in fields such as education and human services. The professionals in the sample serve anywhere from 26–100 students per year to greater than 300 students per year, with the mode answer being 201–300. None of the 10 professionals in the study serve less than 25 students per year. Information was obtained from the questionnaire responses.

The sample was appropriate for and effective in answering the research question of how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in PWIs in one region. All 10 participants completed all three phases of the research project. Methodology and data analysis will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Research Methodology and Analysis

This qualitative case study aimed to answer the question of how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in their success in three PWIs in a northern Midwest region. Honing diversity strategies becomes essential when serving an increasingly diverse college student population in the United States (John & Stage, 2014; Roscoe, 2015; Wilson, 2015). A case study design enabled examination of the practice of 10 diversity professionals in the identified 4-year PWIs in the bi-state area. The study aimed to gather data on current successful practices of diversity professionals, analyze themes and patterns, and make the information available to other student affairs professionals in 4-year PWIs, specifically in the region of study.

Case Study Design

A qualitative case study approach was chosen due to the boundaries of the geographic region, type of institution, and type of position (Yin, 2014). Understanding complex social phenomena in progress justifies a qualitative case study approach due to the persistent nature of the topic (Yin, 2014). This qualitative case study research took place over one semester with diversity-serving professionals in three PWIs in a northern Midwest bi-state region. The researcher set timelines for contacting potential participants via phone and email, distribution and retrieval of questionnaires, scheduling of interviews and researcher field notes, and analysis of data. Interviews and field notes were set during working hours, or other hours indicated as convenient for the professionals and provided for the triangulation of data. Participants were provided with transcripts to enhance the accuracy and validity of data. The richness of data resulting from examining the unique, diverse student strategies in multiple phases, and potential to inform practice in the specific region of study, called for this qualitative case study approach.

Data Analysis Stages

Data were collected over a 6-week period. Data were collected and analyzed in four phases: Phase 1) Questionnaires, Phase 2) In-person Interviews, Phase 3) Researcher Field Notes, and Phase 4) Integration of Data Sets. The four phases are described below.

Questionnaires. Initially, potential participants were contacted via phone and/or email over a 2-week period, using the contact information listed on the university websites, to alert them that they qualified for participation in the study. Consent forms were distributed and returned via the employees' email addresses. Questionnaires were distributed, using Qualtrics software, to professionals who agreed to participate at the end of the 2-week period via their university email addresses; the questionnaire appears in Appendix A. Once all data were

collected for the study, the researcher began phase one of data analysis, written questionnaires, by identifying emergent themes in the responses, sorting them into categories, and providing each with a tentative label. Tables were developed during Phases 1, 2, and 3 to capture themes, categories, codes, and frequency. Key findings from the questionnaire data, including connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and resilience strategies, were captured and are elaborated on in Appendix D.

Interviews. In-person interviews were established between the researcher and participant upon return of each questionnaire. Questionnaires were reviewed prior to formal analysis to determine any needed clarification of responses to occur during interviews. Interviews were conducted with the 10 diversity professionals in the sample at their places of employment; interviews were 60-minutes in length. The interviews were open-ended and resembled a guided conversation (Yin, 2014). Interview questions appear in Appendix B. In-person interviews were audio recorded for transcription, which was explained to each diversity professional at the beginning of the interview. The researcher transcribed the interviews and entered the data. Transcriptions were sent to research participants for corroboration, enhancing the validity of data gathered. Themes emerged in the responses and were sorted into categories and provided with a label. Themes including connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy surfaced and are expanded upon in Appendix E.

Researcher field notes. Researcher's field notes followed in-person interviews and served as the final stage in data collection and the third stage in data analysis. All field notes were captured and compiled at each diversity professional's place of employment and lasted 30 to 60-minutes; examples can be found in Appendix C. Settings and scenarios included pre-scheduled one-on-one meetings with students, group advising meetings, and formal or informal

drop-in hours or workshops. Several diversity professionals indicated having an "open door

policy" with students, meaning students were welcome to drop in at any time. Consequently,

several of the researcher's interviews with diversity professionals took place with the door open,

allowing for availability of diversity professional to students. Audio recordings were paused

when students entered the room, to further protect their confidentiality and anonymity. In some

cases, colleagues of diversity professionals were present during field observation data collection

as collaborators. Field notes were transcribed and entered by the researcher; themes emerged

and were sorted into categories and provided with a label. Key themes of connectedness, support

networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and affirmation emerged through field notes data

and are detailed in Appendix F.

Integrated data sets. Examination of all three data sets collectively was the final step of

data analyses. The data from all three stages including questionnaires, in-person interviews, and

researcher field notes, were compiled by the researcher for cross-referencing of data and

triangulation; axial coding was performed at this stage and a matrix was developed to

demonstrate the relationship between the categories. Key findings including connectedness,

support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy were captured and

compiled, and relationships identified. Further details can be found in Table 1 and Appendix G

and in the presentation of data and results. The comparison of data sets can be referenced using

Table 2.

The collective data provide a framework for understanding and applying gathered data,

help ensure thorough coverage of a robust and persistent topic and enhance the usability of data.

Key points captured during all three phases are also illustrated, through specific quotes and

phrases of diversity professionals, in Appendix H. Data were analyzed over one month and will

remain secured in the researcher's office for a 3-year period. Data collected were complete and

appear to be accurate and valid to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Results are further

elaborated on in the summary of findings.

Summary of the Findings

The study findings addressed the research question of how college diversity professionals

serve underrepresented student populations in their success in three predominantly White 4-year

higher education institutions in one northern Midwest bi-state region. Key findings, including

connectedness, support networks, validation of cultural lived experience, holistic advising, and

advocacy, emerged during data analysis. Previous literary themes of self-efficacy and social

support in the success of diverse students were evident in the current study (Bandura et al., 2003;

Griffin et al., 2016; Rawana et al., 2015). The importance of support networks, connectedness to

resources on campus and in the community, and advocacy were evident throughout the

questionnaires, in-person interviews, and researcher field notes, further supporting the notion of

self-efficacy and the integral nature of social networks and connections. Involvement in

organizations related to identity or to an area of interest, "building relationships with other

students that are going through the same thing," connecting with on-campus resources or

employment, or having a faculty member take a student "under their wing," were all indicated by

Participants 8, 6, and others as having an impact on diverse college student success and

persistence, from their perspectives.

Holistic advising was an emergent theme within the current study. Holistic advising is

defined as guiding and empowering students in their academic, personal, and professional

success (Fernandez, Davis, & Jenkins, 2017). Participants in the study indicated counseling and

advising underrepresented students entails academic, personal/social, financial, career, strengths-

based, and family counseling as well as intrusive advising. When a student comes in for a specific concern, explained Participant 2, "it's important to make sure they're doing okay in the other areas of their life as well." Holistic advising has been moderately represented in the literature on advising diverse undergraduates (Lee & Metcalfe, 2017; McShay, 2017; Museus & Ravello, 2010).

Cultural acknowledgment and understanding, for both students and the professionals serving them, was indicated as important in developing relationships throughout the current study. The importance of cultural awareness and competency is well represented in the literature on diverse college student success from counselor education and training, to collegiate programming and structure, to institution-wide assessment (Ferreira et al., 2014; Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015; Mitchell & Westbrook, 2016; Seelman, 2014). Representation of cultural competency and application in literature related to diverse college student success is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Several of the diversity professionals in the current study referenced their own mentors, advisors, faculty/staff, and families in achieving their success. Many of the professionals participating in the study share at least one identity with students served; the desire to provide mentorship similar to what they received as a student was evident through the data. Participant 8 explained it as "wanting to be that for somebody else motivates me."

Key characteristics diversity professionals perceived in successful minority students, through their relationships and interactions with them in a college setting, were social connectedness, motivation, resiliency, and involvement. Identification of the characteristics of successful underrepresented college students further reinforced the strategies identified and recommended, specifically encouraging connectedness, development of support networks, resiliency, and self-advocacy. All diversity professionals in the current study mentioned the

underrepresented students they serve as motivators in doing their jobs, further illustrating the importance of culturally respectful and holistic partnerships, connectedness, and support networks in the achievement of success for multicultural students.

Generalizability is not possible due to the selected research design of qualitative case study and the purposeful sampling (Yin, 2014). Insights into the success of diverse college students in PWIs through the lens of those who intentionally serve them including connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy can be shared with student affairs professionals in the region where the study took place, with a recommendation for replication. Key qualities in advising and counseling diverse college students, including empathy, active listening, understanding, cultural humility, and a genuine interest in student success, provide further direction for student affairs professionals interested in elevating underrepresented college student populations. Greater detail can be obtained through the presentation of data and results.

Presentation of the Data and Results

College diversity professionals in PWIs possess specialized knowledge in serving underrepresented student populations (Watt, 2013). The results of the current study supported this assertion. The question remains how to transfer the knowledge to the broader campus community in a manner that is both effective and efficient (Diggles, 2014; Ferreira et al., 2014; Seelman, 2014). According to Participant 4, being mindful of applying the information for the purposes of continual improvement, and not just to increase numbers or gain recognition for faculty and staff, is essential. The current qualitative study aimed to capture ingrained knowledge of trained diversity professionals that could be shared with student affairs

professionals across specialty areas to collectively enhance the success of diverse students in PWIs in the region of study.

Common themes emerged during all phases of data analysis: questionnaires, in-person interviews, researcher field notes, and the integration of the data sets, with slight variations. Themes, categories, patterns, and examples are presented in this section in both narrative and table format to further illustrate findings. Connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy surfaced as emergent themes and are detailed in this section. The insights address the research question of how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three predominantly White 4-year higher education institutions in a northern Midwest bi-state region and could be used to positively impact diverse student experience. Results from the current qualitative study could be used to inspire and enlighten student affairs professionals across departments who have a genuine interest in motivating the success of diverse students.

Summary of Emergent Themes

Table 1 indicates the most common themes among the three data sets collected by the researcher in collaboration with diversity professionals (questionnaires, interviews, researcher field notes). These include: Theme 1) Connectedness, Theme 2) Support Networks, Theme 3) Cultural Validation, Theme 4) Holistic Advising, and Theme 5) Advocacy. The top five themes, in order of frequency, are elaborated on extensively in this section, individually and collectively. Connectedness to campus and community resources, social support networks, validation of lived cultural experience, a holistic advising experience, and advocacy by both student and others are all important considerations when supporting diverse college students, according to the diversity

professionals. Each theme is defined and illustrated in this section. Greater detail can be found

in Appendices D-G.

Table 1

Summary of Emergent Themes From Integrated Data Sets

Emergent Themes From Integrated Data Sets	Categories	Examples
1. Connectedness	Familiar with resources Tutoring Leadership prog's Student org's Cultural events Access to resources Scholarships Work study Community/Tribal Resources	-getting involved in a student organization whether it be related to something they are interested in or to their culture/race/ethnicity -having a "home base" (a club, resource, on-campus employer, etc.)
2. Support Networks	Staff/Faculty Identity mentors Advisors Peers Family Community	-many students express the importance of building relationships with other students going through the same thing -a faculty who has taken them under their wing
3. Cultural Validation	Cultural competency Intercultural communication Navigate more than one culture Intersectionality Abroad experience	-underrepresented students struggle with personal identity growth in PWIs -faculty and staff with similar identities who can mentor student -tailoring programming -not "one size fits all"
4. Holistic Advising	Academic advising Personal/Social advising Immigration advising Disability counseling Career counseling Intrusive advising	-helping students get their "ducks in a row" (financial aid, housing, academics, involvement, work, health, peers, etc.) -family counseling on the decision to attend college -track students down

(Continued)

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Emergent Themes From Integrated Data Sets	Categories	Examples
5. Advocacy	Encouraging self-advocacy Advocating for students Universal design	-we advocate for our students with the bureaucracy: programs and services, faculty, and the administration -together we reduce or eliminate barriers - get the students comfortable going to bat for themselves

Theme 1: Connectedness. Connectedness with both mainstream and identity-specific campus and community resources was consistently determined throughout the four data sets to be the top influence regarding diverse student success (i.e., tutoring, identity groups, student services, financial resources). Connectedness is defined as availability and attainment of resources to enhance student success, regardless of having a personal connection to the resource. Resources can encompass services (i.e., tutoring, counseling, advising), student organizations (i.e., identity, major-specific, leadership programs), financial supports (i.e., scholarships, work-study) and community or tribal affiliations. Connectedness to resources can be of a transactional nature, and not tied to any one person or people directly, as long as students receive the support they seek. Asking for help can be a challenge for students from marginalized backgrounds, according to the participants, so finding access to resources or even a "home base," as indicated by Participant 6, greatly enhances success. Stated Participant 9, "it is hard for our people to ask for help." Many diversity professionals oversee programming, clubs, leadership cohorts, scholarship committees, or student employment specific to underrepresented student needs and some provide programming for all students, typically under a social justice umbrella. Participant 8 emphasized, "getting involved in a student organization, whether it is related to something they are interested in, or it is related to their culture/race/ethnicity" provides great benefit to students they serve.

Students may begin by using the services provided by diversity centers and then become more comfortable branching out to outside services. Participant 4 explained they refer to the services they provide through their center in "familial terms." The sense of belonging was indicated as an important factor throughout the questionnaires, interviews, field notes, and in scholarly literature (Baker, 2013; Masika & Jones, 2016; Strayhorn et al., 2016). The same concept applies to leadership skills according to Participant 7; underrepresented students often begin by practicing their leadership skills in identity-specific organizations and then branch out to the broader campus community. "In general, there's a big range, depending on students' interest, but when students are able to find programs, clubs, or activities that they're interested in and can make genuine connections with, this helps them feel engaged and like part of the community," according to Participant 5. Participant 6 identified a pattern with connected students, "most often I hear students report one of two things: either having some 'home base' (which can be anything – a club, a campus resource, an on-campus employer, etc.) on campus has been critical to their success, or they've connected with a faculty member who has taken them under their wing." Support from faculty and other key individuals is discussed in the following section, support networks.

Theme 2: Support networks. Secondly, the support networks the students maintain and develop has a substantial impact on their retention and advancement, according to the participants in the study. Students learn and grow in a social context (Vygotsky, 1986). Support networks can include faculty, staff, identity mentors, peers, job supervisors, family, and community members, and consistently appeared as the second most indicated theme throughout the questionnaire, interview, and field notes data. Building relationships with other students in the same situation, having a mentor as a first-year student, connecting with a faculty member

who takes an interest in their success, and continuing support of family were all cited by the professionals as impactful in diverse student success.

Identity often plays a part in relationships that are developed during college for marginalized students (Cooper & Davis, 2015; Welton et al., 2015). Stated Participant 8, "many students I work with express the importance of building relationships with other students that are going through the same thing." This idea was emphasized by other participants in the study. Participant 4 recommended "as early and as often as possible have students meet with students who share similar identities and experiences" as a retention strategy.

The importance of supportive individuals outside of diversity offices was also highlighted by participants. Dominant culture mentors, and potential mentors, should be informed on the challenges diverse students face in PWIs. Participant 4 shared one such example, "underrepresented students often struggle to form and work through personal identity growth, particularly in regard to race and intersectionality, while attending predominantly white institutions." The individuals can demonstrate support for traditionally underrepresented college students through empathy, active listening, understanding/compassion, and cultural humility, according to the professionals. "I share with students some of my struggles during college," explained Participant 10 when connecting with students, "this seems to make their situation less scary." Participant 6 both inspires and cautions majority population supporters with the statement, "the fact that a student trusts someone enough to share their story is important."

Supportive relationships can aid students in identifying and advocating for what they need, which will be elaborated on in Theme 5. To maintain supportive and respectful relationships, recognition of cultural similarities and differences and unique individual characteristics is crucial, to be discussed in the next section.

Theme 3: Cultural validation. Cultural validation is defined as recognizing and appreciating students' unique cultural backgrounds. According to Participant 5, "success in working with students requires cultural competency – both awareness of your own culture and of other cultures, patience, empathy, and being able to provide support to students in ways that take those things into account." Participant 9 shared similar information, specific to the population they serve, "they're not going to ask for help, and if they do ask for help, you need to be sensitive, understanding, empathetic to what they need." These competencies can be developed and honed through cultural competency training, attending diversity events on campus and in the community, intentionally interacting with others who have diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and talking with staff in diversity-focused positions, according to the questionnaire, interview, and field notes responses. Having role models "with similar identities who can mentor students" can also be helpful to underrepresented students according to Participant 7. Dominant culture staff can assist in arranging these connections, or even in the recruitment of diverse colleagues if in a position to do so. In Participants 7's words, "we need to increase our workforce diversity." Similarly, Participant 2 asserts, "hiring more diverse people would be a huge step in the right direction." This is the emphasis of Participant 4's work on hiring committees, justifying the time spent on the process due to the benefits for underrepresented students. Finding spaces where students can be themselves, such as multicultural centers, additionally can be of assistance to multicultural students seeking cultural validation (Kiyama et al., 2015; McShay, 2017).

All staff and faculty, particularly those in service-oriented roles, can begin by listening, truly listening, to students' stories without judgment. Advises Participant 6, "the strategy I use most often is encouraging the student to report their lived experience without questioning their

validity of those experiences." Pairing this attentive listening with increasing knowledge in working with students from a variety of backgrounds could prove beneficial in serving diverse students (Watt, 2013; Wilson, 2015; Yamauchi et al., 2016). Participant 4 cautions against solely asking students what they need, stating "if they were the experts, they would be in the reverse position." Interacting with people from various backgrounds, researching best practices with underrepresented students, and taking a genuine interest in personal growth in cultural competency could help all staff in better serving students of diversity, regardless of their own background or experience. All staff, faculty, and departments can consider making changes that are welcoming and inclusive for students with varied needs. Diversity professionals in the study consistently made the point that "anything one size fits all just does not work."

Theme 4: Holistic advising. Holistic advising entails advising students not only academically, but personally, socially, financially, professionally, and otherwise and has been moderately represented in the literature on diverse student success (Lee & Metcalfe, 2017; McShay, 2017; Museus & Ravello, 2010). "I assist students of color with registration, student engagement, and any other academic or personal concerns they may have" explained Participant 8. Additionally, "problem-solving, stress management, time management, and study skills" surfaced as advising topics, elaborated Participant 1. Participant 3 delineated one of their assigned duties as providing family counseling for students and their families on the decision to attend college. This level of family involvement is atypical for college counseling and advising positions but could be examined in better serving diverse student groups. Immigration advising is also relevant for some participants. It was common for diversity professionals in the study to advise their students on a variety of topics using various styles.

Intrusive advising, also known as proactively advising, entails requiring regular meetings with students, early alerts, and long-term monitoring of grades and was also considered appropriate and effective in advising underrepresented student groups (Museus & Ravello, 2010). Diversity professionals indicated frequent communication with students via email, text, social media, or in person. "Walking with students to resources on campus," and "using data to flag high-risk students" are intrusive yet supportive practices routinely implemented by Participant 4 when working with underrepresented students. Participant 4 further stated, "I track students down and make them talk to me." Previous literature and the current study present opportunity for broader implementation of a more comprehensive advising approach with underrepresented students. Supportively advising students provides an opportunity for students to practice self-advocacy skills and for identifying areas of campus that could benefit by enhanced universal design, to be explored in the upcoming section.

Theme 5: Advocacy. The fifth emergent theme prompted by diversity professionals was advocacy. Advocacy can be defined as either self-advocacy of students or advocating for students, for the purposes of the study. Underrepresented students face challenges such as financial stressors, culturally-normed reluctance to ask for help, and the stigmas attached to their education, according to the professionals. Since students can be reluctant to ask for help, diversity-serving professionals may hear that a student is struggling through a third party. Modeling self-advocacy skills could be a part of the holistic advising process. Advises Participant 7, "start with first getting the student comfortable going to bat for themselves, then step in when needed."

Despite efforts to build self-advocacy skills within students, diverse student advisors are placed in a position to champion for their students. Participant 9 described an aspect of the job

as, "we advocate for our students with the bureaucracy: programs and services, faculty, and the administration." When underrepresented students need a champion, they typically seek out diversity offices. The conversations that ensue provide an opportunity for collaborative partnership if done in a proactive versus reactive manner. The current study provides a platform for a less siloed and more collaborative delivery system for student services. Differences between the data sets and additional recommendations are explored in the next section.

Comparison of Data Sets

A slight variation occurred among the three gathered data sets. Breakdown by theme of each of the three datasets gathered, through questionnaires, interviews, and researcher field notes can be viewed in Table 2. More detail can be found in Appendices D-F. Differences and rationales are presented in this section alongside additional frequent themes.

Table 2

Comparison by data From Questionnaires, Interviews, and Researcher Field Notes

Emergent Themes	Questionnaires	Interviews	Researcher Field Notes
Theme 1	Connectedness	Connectedness	Connectedness
Theme 2	Support Networks	Support Networks	Support Networks
Theme 3	Cultural Validation	Cultural Validation	Cultural Validation
Theme 4	Holistic Advising	Holistic Advising	Holistic Advising
Theme 5	Resiliency Strategies	Advocacy	Affirmation

Questionnaire data. Questionnaire data represents the first stage in data collection and analysis and yielded themes of connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and resilience strategies. The themes of connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, and holistic advising match the total data. Resiliency strategies for students, while represented in the interviews and field notes, was more prominent in questionnaire data ending as the fifth most common theme. Resiliency has been highlighted in past research on diverse student success as well as underrepresented faculty success in PWIs (Griffin, 2016; Shin &

Kelly, 2015). Resiliency admonishment could potentially be influenced by the background of respondents. Resiliency also teams well with advocacy.

Interview data. The interview data yielded themes consistent with the total data. Connectedness to resources, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy all were emphasized as important components in supporting diverse college students in their success, similar to the data acquired during other phases. Presence of the White researcher, in predominantly White institutions, could have slightly influenced an advocacy mindset in interviewees who all work in offices serving diverse students.

Field notes data. Data gathered through researcher field notes derived similar themes including connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and affirmation. The presence of students during this phase could have affected the outlier, affirmation, as it is difficult to consider larger initiatives or systemic change while being present in the moment with advisees. Individual styles and personalities of diversity professionals surfaced more evidently during researcher field notes. Variation in responses could also be attributed to individual personality type of respondents (Tieger, Barron, & Tieger, 2014). "I feel like I just come at it as who I am," explained Participant 5. This mirrors one recommendation of diversity professionals which is "be genuine" or "be yourself."

Data collected for the current study supported previous themes in the literature on serving diverse student groups in higher education, identified themes and practices specific to the study and sample, and illustrated the unique personality traits or approaches of diversity practitioners. All 10 diversity professionals were motivated by helping students and many referred to service-orientation, giving back to the community they came from, or remembering the staff, faculty, and

mentors who aided them in their success, as they applied their servant leadership in various settings across one northern Midwest region (Ferch et al., 2015).

Chapter 4 Summary

Underrepresented student groups are being served by diversity professionals in multicultural offices on three predominantly White campuses in the northern Midwest bi-state region identified for the study. Staying relevant to diverse student populations in higher education is crucial to the sustainability of the institution, and the moral and ethical obligation to ameliorate past inequities (Diggles, 2014; Ferreira et al., 2014; Garvey, 2016; Kaplin & Lee, 2014). Better serving diverse students on college campuses is everyone's responsibility from administrators, to faculty and staff outside diversity offices, to fellow students, in a diverse, global society (Diggles, 2014, Ferreira et al., 2014). Faculty diversity has changed only minimally over the past several decades, despite the emphasis on the importance of creating a diverse, inclusive environment (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015). Dominant culture staff and faculty are presented with an opportunity to improve the racial and cultural climate on college campuses and student affairs professionals are well positioned to do just that, empowered by knowledge on the topic (Banks et al., 2014; Diggles, 2014; McShay, 2017). Insights such as connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy when supporting diverse students, from the current study, provide a framework and catalyst for exploration and improvement in the area.

The study was successful in gathering and identifying current successful practices of 10 diversity professionals in one northern Midwest region serving underrepresented students from a variety of backgrounds. Counselors and student affairs professionals can assist underrepresented students in connecting to resources and support networks, while honoring their individual

cultural frameworks and self-advocacy skills, using a holistic approach. Insights from diversity professionals in PWIs in one region could inspire exploration in other institutions, advancing the success of diverse students across institutions. Characteristics, years of experience, racial/ethnic backgrounds, the make-up of the institution, populations served, and many other factors varied for diversity professionals included in the study yet common themes presented themselves. Suggestions for application and replication are included in the summarization, conclusions, and recommendations in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 provides suggestions for the future, for both research and practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Summary of the Study

Multicultural affairs centers on college campuses have provided a sense of safety and security for students of Color on predominantly White campuses (PWIs) for decades (McShay, 2017). Diversity professionals participating in this qualitative case study presented their perceptions of how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in three PWIs in the northern Midwest. Encouraging and providing connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy were some of the themes identified. Better serving diverse student populations is crucial to the continued and future success and relevance of higher education institutions, particularly in PWIs which have not historically been known for serving minority student populations (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011; Smith, 2011; Wilson, 2015). Financial, moral, and institutional improvement-oriented reasons for augmenting diverse student success in PWIs are represented through the literature on the topic (Ferreira et al., 2014; Garvey, 2016; Kaplin & Lee, 2014). The current qualitative study aimed to add to the literature by examining the practices of 10 diversity professionals, student affairs professionals specifically designated to serve diverse students, in supporting marginalized students in their success at PWIs in one region.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

Unique approaches are being used by diversity professionals in this study. The purposeful sampling in this qualitative case study lent greater insight into individual practice patterns through commonalities (Yin, 2014). Attainable practices for student affairs professionals outside of diversity offices included encouraging and providing connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy when working with

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underrepresented student populations in colleges, according to the current study. Generalizability is not possible due to the case study design (Yin, 2014). Recommendations are provided for student affairs professionals in the region of study, with the possibility for adaptation and application in additional regions.

Practical implications. One implication of the current study is that anything one size fits all does not work. Enhancing individuality of programs is one specific and manageable strategy that departments could begin implementing to increase connectedness for traditionally marginalized student populations. Participant 2 stated, "we need to address that the system might not work for various populations and make adjustments accordingly." Consulting with diversity experts, getting to know individual students, and looking at the data for guidance all can assist with planning appropriate and accessible programming. Developing relationships, taking a holistic and culturally-sensitive approach, and advocating for change when systems are or are not working are worthwhile strategies that all take time and genuine effort. Requiring use of resources for students who have demonstrated need is also a strategy to consider by "limiting choice for students who may need resources but may not voluntarily reach out for them," according to Participant 4.

The diversity professionals included in the study demonstrated a commitment to best serving their students and the desire to enhance the inclusivity of their college campuses. The 10 diversity professionals included in the study were ardent supporters of their students. Participant 4 supported this point through the declaration, "I'm a big believer that if we set high expectations for students, they will achieve them." Simply beginning with this growth-oriented, strengths-based mindset is a huge step in the right direction of better serving underrepresented students in PWIs (Clifton & Anderson, 2006; Dweck, 2006; Soria & Stubblefield, 2015). Participant 2

advises getting away from a deficit mindset. This is not counter to strategies that would enhance the success of all students.

Future implications. Colleges need to remain relevant to retain patronage as diversity continues to grow in the United States (Brewer & Tierney, 2011; Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011; Smith, 2011; Wilson, 2015). Creating and adapting professional development opportunities to allow and encourage greater opportunity for interaction, reflection, and application of learned cultural competency could change how training is delivered to staff and faculty. Participant 4 describes taking diversity training to the next level, "Training can not only be presentations and webinars, training should also focus on building skills. Content knowledge is not sufficient." "Telling stories, that's how we teach" explained Participant 9 specific to their identity group. Moreover, Participant 6 recommends professional development opportunities that put people outside of their comfort zones. Implications are further discussed in the recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommended changes, based on this research project, could impact both future research or change on a broader level as well as human interactions and changes that impact the individuals involved. Participant 4 summed up their recommendations with this statement, "it's a careful balance of using data to inform what we do, but on the same hand being very intentional about developing that human relations experience." The recommendations in the current study of connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy create opportunities for serving individual students, while simultaneously considering universal design and systemic change. "Tailoring programs and services to meet individual needs," in the words of Participant 2, requires gathering data and input and then connecting with individuals to ensure that the implementation is effective.

Recommendations for further research. Future research could examine practices of

diversity-serving professionals at 4-year PWIs in various regions across the United States, to

further identify patterns of successful practice. Future studies could also include an examination

of practices of diversity professionals at 2-year institutions, either collectively or separately.

Additionally, research could examine diversity practices at minority-serving institutions such as

historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Tribal colleges and universities

(TCUs), for comparison purposes. Future research could delineate service to specific

underrepresented populations or identities. Student voices could also be included alongside the

voices of the professionals who serve them. A quantitative design could compare practices of

underrepresented student advisors with advisors who do not specifically advise diverse student

populations.

Recommendations for further practice. Advisors and counselors are not unfamiliar

with the concept of holistic advising in theory (Lee & Metcalfe, 2017; McShay, 2017; Museus &

Ravello, 2010). Holistic advising could become more ingrained in practice with diverse college

students in PWIs. A comprehensive advising approach could aid all professionals in better

understanding students and their needs, and potentially becoming part of their support networks

and arsenal of accessible resources. Enhancing and expanding cultural competency knowledge

and application is continually recommended. Getting to know students and fellow professionals,

and demonstrating transparency, is recommended by study participants and the researcher.

Examples of how diversity advisors advocated for students with majority staff, faculty,

administration, and other students were through educational training, hosting drop-in's and

question and answer sessions, social media, being welcoming and available to staff and faculty,

and embracing "teachable moments." Future training could be provided in PWIs on serving

diverse student populations through connectedness, support networks, cultural validation, holistic advising, and advocacy. Enhanced practice of student affairs practitioners is not a substitute for continuing to recruit, hire, and retain diverse faculty, staff, and administration; a vast need exists in higher education for representation and role models for diverse students (Chang et al., 2013; Husband, 2016; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

Conclusion

Student affairs professionals specializing in serving diverse student populations are not the only individuals responsible for diverse student success on college campuses. Diversity has been steadily increasing on college campuses over the past several decades, whether staff is adequately trained or not, and the trend is not expected to reverse in the near future (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017; Wilson, 2015; Yamauchi et al., 2016). Dominant culture staff, faculty, and mentors in a variety of roles are in a position to play a bigger part in commitment to diverse student success, particularly in times of increased diverse student presence (Diggles, 2014; Hossain, 2017; Seelman, 2014). The success of diverse college students is a topic that has been relevant to many but owned by few. This study advocates shared responsibility across campus, empowered by knowledge, understanding, empathy, and action.

This qualitative case study set out to prompt inquiry, insights, and a call for further training, education, and program enhancement. Study participants in traditionally White institutions in one northern Midwest region answered the question of how diversity professionals serve underrepresented students in their success at PWIs. The curiosity of the participating diversity professionals in viewing the collective collegial responses, and their gratitude for the sheer existence of the research study, solidified the value of the study in the researcher's mind. The definition of diversity among college students has been steadily expanding, further

impacting college counseling practice (Tharp, 2014). The study of successful practices in advising diverse students in higher education does not end here. "In Indian country, when somebody asks you to step up, whether you think you're qualified or not, they think you're qualified, so you think long and hard about it" (R. Smith, personal communication, March 21, 2018). If even one person is intrigued or inspired, or one positive campus climate change occurs, the current qualitative case study examining how college diversity professionals serve underrepresented student populations in 4-year PWIs in one region will serve its purpose. The study would not have been possible without the willingness of diversity professionals to share their insights and craft with the researcher, and the broader community. The researcher will specifically use the results of the study to be a better career counselor.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

(For the purposes of this questionnaire the terms diverse/underrepresented/minority are used interchangeably and are defined broadly to include racial and ethnic identity, disability status, GLBTQIA affiliation, international student status, and multiple underrepresented identities.)

1. Which college student population(s) do you primarily serve?

2. Please describe your primary duties in working directly with diverse college students.

3. What are some strategies you have found to be successful in encouraging success within minority student populations?

4. What are some strategies you have witnessed (by you or others) that have not been as successful in working with diverse student populations?

5. What are some desired qualities of a professional who serves diverse student populations?

6. What are some personal characteristics you perceive in successful underrepresented students? (Successful can be defined by any of the following: remaining academically eligible, remaining on track to graduate, graduating.)

7. What are examples of programs/activities you deliver or encourage participation in for minority students?

8. What are examples of programs, clubs, activities, etc… the students you serve have reported as being helpful to them in persevering/succeeding while in college?

9. What are any outside factors minority students have indicated to you as being helpful in their success in college (i.e., family, financial, peers, etc.)?

10. Please list any other strategies or techniques you have tried when encouraging success of underrepresented students.

11. How specifically do you provide support to faculty/staff at your institution regarding working with diverse students on campus?

12. What are typical questions you are asked by staff/faculty who are struggling to connect with diverse students they encounter?

13. What advice do you have for other professionals wanting to better serve diverse student populations?

14. What specific knowledge/trainings do you think would be helpful for all staff/faculty in working with diverse students?

15. Which of the following describe you (please mark all that apply)?

o   Black/African American

o   Latinx/Chicanx/Hispanic

o   Asian/Pacific Islander

o   Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native

o   Caucasian

o   Identify as LGBTQIA

o   Person with a visible or invisible disability

o   First generation college student

o   First generation immigrant to the U.S.

o   Other: _____

16. Approximately how many students do you typically serve per year?

o   0-25

o   26-100

o   101-200

o   201-300

o   >300

17. How long have you been in a position primarily focused on serving underrepresented student populations?

18. Please describe your own experience as a college student.

This information will be kept confidential and non-identifiable and will not be shared with any other parties

Appendix B: In-Person Interview Questions

1. What do your job duties entail in your current position?

2. What brought you to work with underrepresented student groups in a college?

3. Describe your own experience as a college student.

4. What are some strategies you have found to be helpful in serving the population you work with?

5. What are some strategies you have found to not be helpful in serving the target population?

6. What are some examples of questions other professionals ask you in regard to serving the target population?

7. What are other examples of services, support, or extra-curricular activities that have been helpful in the success of the population you serve?

8. What are some qualities of successful students you serve? Please explain.

9. What motivates you to do your job?

10. What professional resources do you use or recommend?

11. What professional development activities have been helpful in better performing your job duties and why?

12. Which professional associations or groups are you involved in?

13. Describe any situations you have witnessed that have been detrimental in the success of the population you serve?

14. What are some recommendations you would have for changing higher education to better serve the population you work with?

15. What would you like others to know when working with the population you serve?

16. Any final thoughts or anything else you would like to add to the conversation?

Appendix C: Examples from Researcher's Field Notes

greets student by name

nodding

smiling

arms crossed in contemplation

silent, looking reflective

leans forward in chair

closes door

verbalizes pulling up computer

laughs

clasps hands

shares story as an example

explains process, paperwork

sips coffee

self-disclosure, similar experience in college

clarifying process

shows visual

asks question

promotes workshop

compliments

asks clarifying question

hands flier

offers office hours

talks about Spring break

uses technological resource

talks about family

listens to story about class project

discussion about clubs

repeats comment from earlier

asks about internship plans

paraphrases

repeats back what student said

hands paperwork

affirms behavior

student enters, grabs snack

walks around the space

opens box of supplies

redirects the conversation

asks about day

listens intently, eye contact

looks on student's computer, nods

hands posters to student

answers phone

introduces self, shakes hand

staff member enters

students get coffee

directs student to sit down

asks about committee meeting

offers advice

keeps door open

closes meeting, half hour is up

student leaves then returns with comment

asks about research paper

Appendix D: Questionnaire Data

Themes	Categories	Participant examples	Label	Frequency

1. Connectedness/ Involvement	-Familiar with resources
	    Tutoring
	    Leadership prog's
	    Student org's
	    Cultural events
	-Access to resources
	    Scholarships
	    Work study
	-Community resources
		-getting involved in a student organization whether it be related to something they are interested in or to their culture/race/ethnicity
		-having a "home base" (a club, resource, on campus employer, etc.)
			Connectedness	122

2. Social Support Networks	-Advisors -Staff/faculty -Identity mentors -Dominant culture mentors -Peers -Family -Community	-many students express the importance of building relationships with other students going through the same thing -a faculty member who has taken them under their wing	Support Networks	91
3. Cultural Validation/ Validation of Lived Cultural Experience	-Cultural competency -Intercultural communication -Navigate more than one culture	-having faculty and staff with similar identities who can mentor student -encouraging students to report their lived experience without questioning their validity of those experiences	Cultural Validation	56

Themes	Categories	Participant examples	Label	Frequency
4. Holistic Advising	-Academic advising -Socio-emotional advising -Financial advising -Immigration advising -Intrusive advising -Motivational interview techniques -Strength based	-provide personal, financial and academic counseling -meet with prospective students and parents to provide individual counseling on their decision to attend college	Holistic Advising	29
5. Encouraging Resiliency	-Staying on track -Admitting mistakes -Asking for help -Talking about challenges	-struggle with personal identity growth -financial stress -stigmas of education	Resiliency Strategies	18
6. Demonstrating Empathy	-Relating -Student perspective	-put yourself in someone else's shoes	Empathy	17

Appendix E: Interview Data

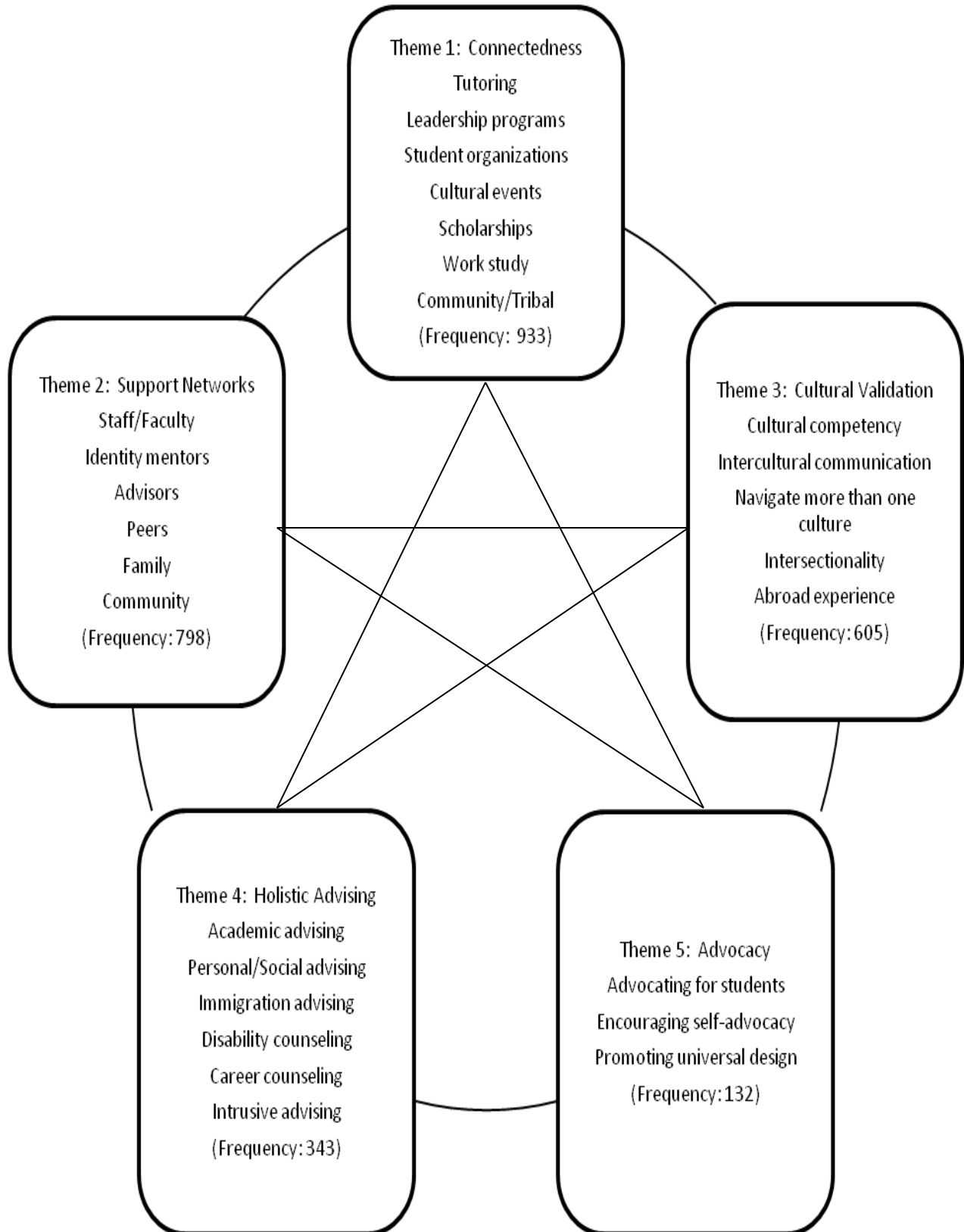| Themes	Categories	Participant examples	Label	Frequency

1. Connectedness/ Involvement	-Familiar with resources
	    Tutoring
	    Leadership prog's
	    Student org's
	    Cultural events
	-Access to resources
	    Scholarships
	    Work study
	-Community/Tribal resources
		-we talk about our services in familial terms
		-a mix of White students and Students of Color in the program
		-office has own tutoring program
		-provide services to all
			Connectedness	541

2. Social Support Networks/Belonging	-Staff/Faculty -Identity mentors -Advisors -Peers -Family -Community -Networking	-we talk about our students as family -getting people face to face -creating intentional community -developing that human relations experience	Support Networks	502
3. Cultural Validation/ Lived Cultural Experience	-Cultural competency -Intercultural communication -Abroad experience -Intersectionality	-normalizing the situation -tailoring programming, not "one size fits all"	Cultural Validation	407
4. Holistic Advising	-Academic advising -Personal/Social advising -Financial advising -Immigration advising -Intrusive advising -Career counseling -Strength based	-watching students figure out life -track students down who aren't coming in -students have financial, personal, and academic concerns	Holistic Advising	191

Themes	Categories	Participant examples	Label	Frequency
5. Advocacy	-Advocating for students -Encouraging self-advocacy -Promoting universal design	-get the students comfortable going to bat for themselves -step in when needed -accessible campus should be barrier-free to the largest degree possible	Advocacy	113
6. Resilience Strategies	-Persisting -Admitting mistakes -Seeking out help -Talking about challenges/struggles	-our students aren't going to ask for help, if they do, be sensitive to what they need	Resiliency Strategies	64

Appendix F: Field Notes Data

Themes	Categories	Participant examples	Label	Frequency
1. Connectedness/ Involvement/Resources	-Familiar with resources Tutoring Leadership prog's Student org's Cultural events -Access to resources Scholarships Work study - Community/Tribal resources	-planning cultural events -gradually taking on more responsibility in student job -serving on committees	Connectedness	270
2. Social Support Networks	-Staff/Faculty -Identity mentors -Advisors -Peers -Family -Community -Networking	-faculty are very familiar with the language we speak -I don't anticipate any pushback from this faculty member -you're working with a counselor to put a name to this	Support Networks	205
3. Cultural Validation/Lived Cultural Experience	-Cultural competency -Intercultural communication -Navigate more than one culture -Intersectionality -Abroad experience	-help students who are in my own situation -pronouncing students' names accurately -give me a narrative of what's going on	Cultural Validation	142

Themes	Categories	Participant examples	Label	Frequency
4. Holistic Advising	-Academic advising -Personal/Social advising -Immigration advising -Disability counseling -Career counseling -Intrusive advising	-helping them get their "ducks in a row" (financial aid, housing, academics, involvement, work, health, peers, etc.) -Helping students navigate process and paperwork	Holistic Advising	123
5. Affirmation	-Reinforcing -Affirming -Agreeing	-you're on the right track -I don't think you have a problem either	Affirmation	89
6. Frequent Communication	-In-person meetings -Check-in's -Email -Social Media -Phone/Texts -Newsletters	-Open door policy -Frequent emails -Using social media	Communication	58

Appendix G: Total Data

Theme 1: Connectedness
Tutoring
Leadership programs
Student organizations
Cultural events
Scholarships
Work study
Community/Tribal
(Frequency: 933)

Theme 2: Support Networks
Staff/Faculty
Identity mentors
Advisors
Peers
Family
Community
(Frequency: 798)

Theme 3: Cultural Validation
Cultural competency
Intercultural communication
Navigate more than one culture
Intersectionality
Abroad experience
(Frequency: 605)

Theme 4: Holistic Advising
Academic advising
Personal/Social advising
Immigration advising
Disability counseling
Career counseling
Intrusive advising
(Frequency: 343)

Theme 5: Advocacy
Advocating for students
Encouraging self-advocacy
Promoting universal design
(Frequency: 132)

Appendix H: Quotes and Phrases

"The strategy I use most often is encouraging the student to report their lived experience without questioning their validity of those experiences."

"We provide personal, financial and academic counseling; we advocate for our students with the bureaucracy: programs and services, faculty, and the administration."

"I assist students of color with registration, student engagement, and any other academic or personal concerns they may have."

"Intrusive advising, walking with students to resources on campus, using data to flag high risk students, limiting choice for students who may need resources but may not voluntarily reach out for them."

"Frequent communication via email or during one on one sessions."

"I normalize their challenges without minimizing them, and then assist them in making a plan to address those challenges."

"Ask instead of assume."

"Many students I work with express the importance of building relationships with other students that are going through the same thing."

"Assist students in recognizing and achieving their educational goals through program exploration and strength analysis."

"I feel like I just come at it as who I am."

"Most often I hear students report one of two things: either having some "home base" (which can be anything – a club, a campus resource, an on-campus employer, etc) on campus has been critical to their success, or they've connected with a faculty member who has taken them under their wing."

"The most critical skill, in my opinion, is being able to genuinely and emphatically listen to a student's story."

"Having faculty and staff with similar identities who can mentor students."

"Success in working with students requires cultural competency – both awareness of your own culture and of other cultures, patience, empathy, and being able to provide support to students in ways that take those things into account."

"Getting involved in a student organization, whether it be related to something they are interested in, or it be related to their culture/race/ethnicity."

"In general, there's a big range, depending on students' interest, but when students are able to find programs, clubs, or activities that they're interested in and can make genuine connections with, this helps them feel engaged and like part of the community."

"Food related events to provide the cultural aspect and bring students into the office."

"Tailoring programs and services to meet individual needs."

"Anything one size fits all just does not work."

"Focus on successes as well as challenges (not coming at it with a deficit mindset)."

"It is hard for our people to ask for help."

"The primary purpose of this position is to retain students and act as a resource for students to utilize throughout their journey in higher education."

"Trying to understand the student's perspective, asking questions to better understand what the student means, where they're coming from."

"Motivational interviewing techniques, strength based approach, empowerment approach, recognizing differences, student centered and person focused."

"Together we determine what accommodations would most effectively reduce or eliminate the barriers they experience."

"I track students down and make them talk to me."

"Students come in for a specific concern, but it's important to make sure they're doing okay in the other areas of their life as well."

"We talk about our students as family; we talk about our services in familial terms."

"Underrepresented students often struggle to form and work through personal identity growth, particularly in regards to race and intersectionality, while attending predominantly white institutions."

"We need to address that the system might not work for various populations and make adjustments accordingly."

"Our students won't ask for help, we'll hear it through a third party."

"I have an open door policy."

"It's a careful balance of using data to inform what we do, but on the same hand being very intentional about developing that human relations experience."

"Be genuine. If you don't know something, then be willing to admit that. I think students want help but don't expect you to have all of the answers."

"Focus on building community and relationships. Get to know students' stories. Be yourself."

"Our students aren't going to ask for help, and if they do ask for help, you need to be sensitive, understanding, empathetic, to what they need."

"Our systems are not set up for marginalized students."

"Hiring more diverse people would be a huge step in the right direction."

"Let them know you really want to see them succeed."

"Know that one size doesn't fit all."

"You need to make them feel welcome first to help take down that wall."

"There's no opting in; all the students who meet these criteria would be required to do these programs."

"The students motivate me."

"I don't think you have a problem either, I think the course has a problem."

"We have to be willing to open up our minds to other ways of doing things."

"Ask them if they're getting what they want out of the conversation."

"Sometimes White people want the recognition, without the follow-through."

"We work with the students who are most likely to help themselves; we need to completely change our model."

"We spend more time wanting to improve the numbers than the systems."

"We're going to work through this together."

"It's about creating intentional community and getting people face-to-face."

"We may be different, but we're okay."

"Do it because it's the right thing to do."

"We need to be data-driven."

"A misconception is lack of academic preparation of underrepresented students."

"The fact that a student trusts someone enough to share their story is important."

"Professional associations, resources, and training don't carry much weight without the networking and connections that happen because of them."

"I'm a big believer that if we set high expectations for students, they will achieve them."

"Start with first getting the students comfortable going to bat for themselves, then step in when needed."

Appendix I: Request for Participation

Dear Student Affairs Professional,

Thank you for the work you do with students! You are being contacted because you qualify for participation in a research study. The purpose of the study is to explore strategies used by student affairs professionals specializing in working with traditionally underrepresented student populations in one of the region's three 4-year colleges and universities. Information you provide could help additional student affairs professionals to better serve diverse student populations in the future.

To participate, you will answer a 1-page questionnaire and participate in a 1-hour interview and 30-60 minute field notes, based on your own experience working with underrepresented student groups. Doing these things should take a total of 2-2.5 hours of your time over the semester, and can be arranged at your convenience.

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration! Please feel free to contact me with any questions. If you agree to participate, please sign the attached consent form and a questionnaire will be sent to you via your email address. I will contact you upon completion to set up a time for the interview and field notes.

Sincerest thanks,

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Research Study Title: *Cultural Brokering: Insights to College Career Counselors from Colleagues in Diversity Offices*
Principal Investigator: Sherrill Yeaton
Research Institution: Concordia University - Portland
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Donna Graham

Purpose and what you will be doing:

Confidentiality:

      The purpose of this study is to explore strategies used by student affairs professionals specializing in working with diverse student populations, in hopes of sharing insights with additional student affairs professionals. We expect 10 volunteers in applicable positions. No one will be paid to be in the study. We will begin enrollment on 01/29/2018 and end enrollment on 04/09/2018. To be in the study, you will answer a 1-page questionnaire, participate in a 1-hour interview and a 30-60 minute field notes, based on your own experience working with diverse student populations. Doing these things should take a total of 2-2.5 hours of your time over the semester and can be arranged at your convenience.

Risks:

      There are no risks to participating in this study other than providing your information. However, we will protect your information. Any personal information you provide will be coded so it cannot be linked to you. Any name or identifying information you give will be kept securely via electronic encryption or locked in a locked cabinet inside a locked office. When we look at the data, none of the data will have your name or identifying information. We will only use a secret code to analyze the data. We will not identify you in any publication or report. Your information will be kept private at all times and then all study documents will be destroyed 3 years after we conclude this study.

Benefits:

      Information you provide can help student affairs professionals to better serve all students. You could benefit this by providing information that could help student affairs professionals to better serve diverse student populations. Further educating student affairs professionals on serving diverse student populations could save time for you and others later on if professionals are more adequately prepared to assist students.

      This information will not be distributed to any other agency and will be kept private and confidential. The only exception to this is concern for your immediate health or safety.

Right to Withdraw:

      Your participation is greatly appreciated, but we acknowledge that the questions we are asking are personal in nature. You are free at any point to choose not to engage with or stop the study. You may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. This study is not required and there is no penalty for not participating. If at any time you experience a negative emotion from

answering the questions, we will stop asking you questions. Resources will be provided in the case of any emotional distress.

Contact Information:

You will receive a copy of this consent form. If you have questions you can talk to or write the principal investigator, [redacted] at email [redacted]. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email [redacted] or call [redacted]).

Your Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I asked questions if I had them, and my questions were answered. I understand that I can ask questions at any point during the study, decline to respond, or withdraw at any time. I volunteer my consent for this study.

_____   _____

Participant Name   Date

_____   _____

Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____

Investigator Name   Date

_____   _____

Investigator Signature   Date

Investigator: {redacted} email: {redacted}
c/o: {redacted}
Concordia University – Portland
2811 NE Holman Street
Portland, Oregon 97221

Appendix K: Statement of Original Work

The Concordia University Doctorate of Education Program is a collaborative community of scholar-practitioners, who seek to transform society by pursuing ethically-informed, rigorously- researched, inquiry-based projects that benefit professional, institutional, and local educational contexts. Each member of the community affirms throughout their program of study, adherence to the principles and standards outlined in the Concordia University Academic Integrity Policy. This policy states the following:

Statement of academic integrity.

As a member of the Concordia University community, I will neither engage in fraudulent or unauthorized behaviors in the presentation and completion of my work, nor will I provide unauthorized assistance to others.

Explanations.

What does "fraudulent" mean?

"Fraudulent" work is any material submitted for evaluation that is falsely or improperly presented as one's own. This includes, but is not limited to texts, graphics and other multi-media files appropriated from any source, including another individual, that are intentionally presented as all or part of a candidate's final work without full and complete documentation.

What is "unauthorized" assistance?

"Unauthorized assistance" refers to any support candidates solicit in the completion of their work, that has not been either explicitly specified as appropriate by the instructor, or any assistance that is understood in the class context as inappropriate. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Use of unauthorized notes or another's work during an online test

- Use of unauthorized notes or personal assistance in an online exam setting

- Inappropriate collaboration in preparation and/or completion of a project

- Unauthorized solicitation of professional resources for the completion of the work.

I attest that:

1. I have read, understood, and complied with all aspects of the Concordia University-Portland Academic Integrity Policy during the development and writing of this dissertation.

2. Where information and/or materials from outside sources has been used in the production of this dissertation, all information and/or materials from outside sources has been properly referenced and all permissions required for use of the information and/or materials have been obtained, in accordance with research standards outlined in the *Publication Manual of The American Psychological Association.*

Digital Signature
Sherrill J. Yeaton

Name (Typed)
08/02/2018

Date

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