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Utilizing the Arts as a Tool for Re-Humanization within a Neoliberal University: A Call to Student Affairs Practitioners

Catherine Purcell
cp966743@wcupa.edu

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Utilizing the Arts as a Tool for Re-Humanization within a Neoliberal University:
A Call to Student Affairs Practitioners

A Thesis

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Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies

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Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs

By

Catherine M. Purcell

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all of the arts educators who have helped me make meaning throughout my life, and to those who strive to provide access to the arts in education.

Acknowledgements

I'd first like to acknowledge those who have supported me before and throughout this journey, most especially Katie and Maria for continuing to spend time with me while I talked about neoliberal ideology for the last four months, my partner Leah for her unwavering support and patience, and my parents for many things, but most especially for giving me access to the arts from a very young age.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the history and impact neoliberal ideology has had on the arts and humanities within the North American University, specifically noting how access to the arts continues to dwindle in college curriculums. In turn, this thesis calls on student affairs practitioners to integrate longitudinal, arts-based methodology into programming in order to counter the continuing diminishment of the arts within the classroom. As supported by the works of John Dewey, Paolo Freire, and Maxine Greene, I propose an intervention that gives students of all majors access to a year-long engagement with art making that responds to an issue of social justice (for example, incarceration or environmental racism). This thesis strives to advocate for the arts in a way that is not linked to career outcomes, as prescribed by neoliberal ideology, but rather centers its advocacy on the arts as a tool for re-humanizing students within a university system that reduces their humanity to numbers and outputs.

Keywords: neoliberalism; the arts; aesthetic education

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Thesis

"The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world"- Maxine Greene

Introduction

I have a degree in theatre. Yes, I invested four years of my life, a great deal of my parent's money, and even more of the federal government's money– which has turned into my debt– to learn how to sing, dance, and play pretend. No one expects me to find the cure for cancer or solve world hunger with a degree in theatre. Much of my adult life has been spent in exhaustion as I explain my choices to folks outside of the 'arts world' or in a brief relief as I connect with another like me who, too, made the choice at 17 years old to pursue their passion. Outside of arts spaces, I have felt like an irresponsible anomaly: someone who, despite my parent's financial struggles or the litany of cautionary tales advising me to pursue something more 'practical,' chose to study acting because I loved the art form and it filled my days with meaning. As I turned from student artist to professional, my love for performing began to wane: the monetization of my passion and my struggle to swim upstream as an artist in a society that does not value the pursuit of one's passions (unless those passions are lucrative) took its toll.

Since I left my artistic career, I have nearly completed my time in the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs program at West Chester University, which has provided me with an education on power and ideology. This education has helped me understand that my desire to pursue the arts was not shameful or irresponsible: it was simply antithetical to neoliberal ideology, or the dominant ideology of the United States and, therefore, not economically valuable to society at large. On neoliberalism, Wendy Brown writes, "neoliberalism is best understood not simply as economic policy, but as a governing rationality that disseminates market values and metrics to every sphere of life and construes the human itself exclusively as

homo oeconomicus" (2015, p. 176). Under neoliberalism, humans have been reduced to quantifiable metrics; the quality of our lives is not measured by our joy or flourishing, but by how much wealth we can generate through our personhood. Similarly, the American university is no longer a place for the development of humanity for the sake of societal betterment and knowledge, it has become one of the greatest sites of the production of human capital. What was once a place to pause and study, to learn for the betterment of self and soul, has become a place where one goes to guarantee future employment. Students are no longer scholars, thinkers, and humans, but rather they are capital, future employees, debtors, investments, and competitors. The university dehumanizes students and educators alike in the current, neoliberal business model. Further, "liberal arts education is eroding from all sides: cultural values spurn it, capital is not interested in it, debt-burdened families anxious about the future do not demand it, neoliberal rationality does not index it, and, of course, states no longer invest in it" (Brown, 2015, p. 180). According to neoliberal rationality, pursuing the arts and humanities as a course of study is either for the wealthy or the foolish as such disciplines do not equate to a worthy return on investment. The limiting and prescriptive view neoliberalism has placed on humans, education, and the university extends equally into the arts and artistry.

Just as human worth has been reduced to monetary value, the arts are often pillared as simply a means to an end for economic futures: *if we expose children to the arts at a young age, they will become more creative adults with better ideas to contribute to a business. If we enroll all middle schoolers in the band, they will learn how to make music together which will eventually make them more harmonious employees and office mates. If we give shy college students the opportunity to perform, perhaps they will graduate with enough confidence to lead meetings in the boardroom.* Such goals are completely reductive to not only the life-changing

capabilities of the arts, but the imaginative powers of those who have the opportunity to engage with them. To harken back to the quote from Maxine Greene that began this chapter: objectively, the arts will not directly lead to the cure for cancer or end world hunger. However, the arts have the power to change the lives, minds, and hearts of those who fight to solve humanity's greatest struggles. The arts have the capacity to intervene into the university in a way that shifts its purpose from being a site of production of human capital to being a site of production of compassionate, introspective, and concerned citizens. Throughout this thesis I will challenge the state of the university and the lack of access to meaningful, artistic educational experiences for students.

Expanding Our Definitions of Art

On art, writer Ambrose Bierce asserts, "art, n. This word has no definition" (1909/2000, p. 68). Humanity has struggled to define 'art' since the earliest civilizations and there never has been a singular definition to encapsulate what art is. However, I believe that our appreciation and validation of art and art making is defined by our conditioning under the ideology by which we are governed as a society. It is imperative for me to address that my understanding of art has been shaped by a neoliberal, capitalist, and colonial value system, particularly as a white person. Growing up, when I thought of the 'arts,' I imagined paintings kept inside the walls of museums with inordinately expensive admissions prices or the spectacle theatre that is produced on Broadway. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey emphasizes how capitalism has distorted the purpose and quality of art in modern society. He argues, "the mobility of trade and populations, due to the economic system, has weakened or destroyed the connection between works of art and the *genius loci* of which they were once natural expression" (1934/2005, p. 8). Much of the art making I have witnessed or participated in has been significantly distorted by economic

priorities, and therefore, I encourage myself and those considering this thematic concern to expand their perspective on how we conceptualize 'the arts.'

Art is paintings, illustrations, music compositions, plays, musicals, novels, photographs, sculptures, and clothing. Perhaps, more importantly, though, art is the process rather than the product. Art is the time spent in a space with other people. Art is other people. Art is the silence when no one is sure what to say or do next. It is the collaborative experience itself. In her critique of the commercialized art world governed by neoliberal ideology and colonial values, *Art on my Mind: Visual Politics*, bell hooks writes, "there are times when I hunger for those days: the days when I thought of art only as the expressive creativity of a soul struggling to self-actualize. Art has no race or gender. Art, and most especially painting, was for me a realm where every imposed boundary could be transgressed" (1995, p. 11). Here, hooks is referring to her time spent engaging with art in educational settings before she came to understand the strictures our capitalist society places upon artists, particularly Black artists, particularly Black women artists. As a student affairs professional hoping to implement an arts-based intervention, I strive to center art making as a process with no agenda or goal for a final product excepting that the work and collaboration within my proposed intervention contributes positively to the growth of student participants. This hope is certainly a perceived challenge as I endeavor to intervene into the neoliberal university.

The Neoliberal University vs. Arts & Humanities

Since neoliberalism has emerged as a dominant ideology in the United States, steadily, the ambitions of many American citizens have been defined solely by income, wealth, and economic status. Neoliberalism has made every facet of life a competition, and for one to survive, we must transform ourselves into the most efficient, well-equipped, savvy piece of

human capital possible. In turn, the university is now a place where we gain power and status and many see the value of education as inextricably linked to career outcomes. As Wendy Brown writes, "knowledge is not sought for purposes apart from capital enhancement, whether that capital is human, corporate, or financial. It is not sought for developing the capacities of citizens, sustaining culture, knowing the world, or envisioning and crafting different ways of life in common" (2015, p.177). I will elaborate further on my educational philosophy and my beliefs behind the true purpose of the university in Chapter 2, but I believe the centering of career futures in education above authentic learning experiences is one of the greatest disservices we perform as American education professionals, not only in respect to the humanity of our students, but also in regard to our future as a global community.

The neoliberal value system is almost directly contradictory to the purpose of the arts and humanities. Neoliberalism seeks to isolate, individualize, and necessitate competition, whereas the arts and humanities seek to promote community, understanding, and evolution for the greater good. Within the last 5 years alone, we have witnessed protests at The University of Montana, The University of Vermont, The University of Wisconsin, SUNY Stonybrook, and Kansas University, to name a few, in response to the cutting of arts and humanities programs. With a deeper understanding of neoliberalism, one can see that the arts and humanities are not only economically disadvantaged in neoliberal society, they are a true threat to the functioning of and compliance within the system.

The arts and humanities are the tools that allow us to recognize oppressive systems and structures, they force us to think critically and beyond the scope of what we can see, and, in turn, prioritize humanity over productivity, money, and competition. Therefore, keeping the arts and humanities alive in the university is vital, so long as there is the small hope that the university

stays true in some way to its original, purest intention: education, or a pause in life to think, contemplate, explore, argue, commune, and grow. With these beliefs in mind, I was driven to develop an intervention that gives students access to art making at university level. More specifically, I will propose an intervention that utilizes the arts as a tool for civic engagement, asking students to respond artistically to social issues within and surrounding their communities.

One could argue that the arts do exist in common, student affairs programming: certainly students have ample access to tie-dying on the quad or a night of arts and crafts in their residence halls, but access to a true, artistic process is limited. At my own undergraduate institution, for example, access to performance opportunities was so limited that students majoring in theatre or musical theatre sometimes graduated without having a chance to perform in a full-length play or musical. Further, the student-run theatre company, which was open to students of all majors, was often dominated by performance majors who were not cast in departmental productions. This left little to no opportunity for students outside of the theatre arts departments to engage in theatre-making processes. Further, the university had, what appeared to be, such a disregard for theatre arts, that the student-run company often mounted their performances in the cafeteria in front of a Quizno's sandwich shop: art in any space is art, but this was not exactly the most dignified or aesthetically pleasing environment for Sondheim's *Company*. Each semester, my peers and I better understood the reality that our passions were unsupported by our institution. The ability to make art during my undergraduate career was a competition, which has shaped my belief that all need and deserve access to art making opportunities.

The work in this thesis does not intend to negate the value of tie-dying or arts and crafts– such events can build community and soothe students– but the type of programming I am most interested in challenges student affairs as an entity to devote time and resources to an

organization that carries larger, systemic weight. In a time where quick, terminal programming is abundant in student affairs, I challenge professionals to consider developing an organization or program that considers time as a gift, rather than a threat, and sees their students as possibilities needing outlets rather than half-finished humans with gaps to be filled.

Preview of Thesis & Intervention

In this thesis, I plan to challenge the notion that the arts are simply a conduit for enhancing other, more economically advantageous disciplines. What would happen if we saw the arts as a tool for helping university students make meaning of their lives? Could the arts be a form of glue that grows a community among seemingly disparate populations? How can we utilize the arts as a form of rebellion against dominant power and as a form of care for our students as student affairs practitioners? NASPA, one of the leading professional organizations for student affairs professionals, states, "student affairs is a critical component of the higher education experience. The work done by student affairs professionals helps students begin a lifetime journey of growth and self-exploration." (NASPA, n.d.). If this is the case, could the arts not be one of the most relevant educative tools in aiding our students in growth and self-exploration? Why is arts and culture not a recognized functional area within the student affairs profession?

My proposed intervention, "The Creative Campus Collective," is an organization open to students of all majors facilitating engagement in socially-conscious art making. At the start of each semester, staff advisors and students will choose a cause or issue of social justice to respond to via art, which can include but is not limited to, visual art, music, literature, and performance. The semester culminates in a final showing in which the larger community is invited to come and experience the work created by students over the course of the semester; however, the focus of

the collective is not on the final product but rather on the collaborative process. At the start of each semester, students will be charged with reflecting on past CCC cycles and showcases and consider how their current work will inform the future directions of the collective. I am drawn to the work of John Dewey, Maxine Greene, and Paolo Freire to further illustrate my educational philosophy and how such an intervention lends itself to growth and positive education. I will assess my intervention through non-traditional measures such as poetic or artistic responses. I am most interested in connecting with alumni of the program in order to discern how engagement with art making at the university level has shaped their lives beyond college and if they still seek and create art and beauty in their lives. This thesis is both a call to student affairs practitioners and higher education professionals seeking to make meaning alongside their students and a form of advocacy for the arts in a society that does not always see their inherent value.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have introduced my thematic concern surrounding the necessity of access to artistic engagement for the development of university students, I have posed questions that I will attempt to answer throughout this thesis, I have introduced my intervention and assessment plans, and I previewed my value system surrounding education and the purpose of co-curricular educative experiences.

In the next chapter, I plan to articulate my philosophy of education and highlight how my proposed intervention is buoyed by this philosophy. Additionally, I plan to address critical action research as an apparatus for higher education practices and how it interfaces with the study of my thematic concern. In Chapter Three, I will explore relevant literature and the current state of my thematic concern. Within Chapter Four, I introduce my intervention, the Creative

Campus Collective, and examine how the work in previous chapters, particularly Chapters 2 and 3, directly supports the features and goals of my proposed intervention. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will elaborate on details related to the timeline and budget of my intervention, how I plan to assess and evaluate goals and outcomes associated with my intervention, and conclude with future directions and limitations.

Chapter 2: Philosophy of Education

"We are interested in education here, not in schooling. We are interested in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable or the quantifiable"- Maxine Greene

Introduction: A University's Purpose

As I emphasized in Chapter 1, with support of Wendy Brown's *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*, the university today has become a site for production of human capital and almost exclusively a training ground for future employment. The modern, North American university is a business. However, the present reality of what the university is does not align with my beliefs surrounding its true purpose. My value system on this issue situates itself more closely with the definition put forth by English philosopher Michael Oakeshott, who writes "a university, moreover, is a home of learning, a place where a tradition of learning is preserved and extended, and where the necessary apparatus for the pursuit of learning has been gathered together" (Fuller, 2003, p. 24). The university is a rare place: one where minds and identities from around the world are gathered for an extended period to learn communally. I argue that the purpose of a university is to serve as a place of transformational exploration: one that provides resources and tools to students that aid them in deepening their senses of self and their roles within the communities in which they are situated. Oakeshott also articulates, "the characteristic gift of a university is the gift of an interval…. Here is a break in the tyrannical course of irreparable events; a period in which to look round upon the world and upon oneself without the sense of an enemy at one's back or the insistent pressure to make up one's mind" (Fuller, 2003, p. 28). Though it is fantastical to imagine that all students can luxuriate in the pause a university provides– as many today are engaged in jobs or other

commitments to support themselves– educators can hold a view that university's purpose is a cessation for perception.

Rather than focusing entirely on students' futures, university educators should concern themselves more fully with the present moment: who are our students right now? What are their interests and passions? How can we help them better know themselves and the world around them? Further, it is my belief that student affairs practitioners wield significant power in contributing to students' learning in a way that is holistic and humane. We, as co-educative experience creators, are not confined to classrooms and desks: student affairs learning can and should take place in varied spaces and shared among diverse populations. There is great opportunity within student affairs to develop educative experiences that challenge and work in opposition to what the university has become. This chapter contains two main parts: first, I will articulate my educational philosophy. Then, I will explore critical action research as a lens and methodology to frame my research and intervention. Exploring both my education philosophy and critical action research as a practice will illustrate how these two components are crucial to the development of my thematic concern and intervention and how they best serve its growth and evolution.

Introduction to My Educational Philosophy

In his 1934 book, *Art as Experience,* North American philosopher and educator John Dewey asserts, "whatever path the work of art pursues, it, just because it is a full and intense experience, keeps alive the power to experience the common world in its fullness" (1934/2005, p. 138). As an educator and artist, I am particularly drawn to the work of Dewey, and his belief that daily, human life has aesthetic value. He not only asserts that art helps us to experience life

in a richer sense, but that pedestrian function and our interaction with society is art within itself.
In this chapter, I hope to develop a philosophy of education utilizing the works of Dewey and
Freire that moves both educator and students toward mutual humanization through experience
and the arts. Additionally, I will explore the work of Maxine Greene to support the integration of
aesthetic philosophy within my philosophy of education.

Foundational Tenants of my Philosophy of Education

As an educator working within the university, it is imperative for me to first make clear
that it is my hope to be in the university but not of the university (hooks, 1994); I aspire to be an
educator who seeks to revolutionize and abolish rather than perpetuate. Regarding the concept of
a necessary revolution within the university, bell hooks writes:

> The call for a recognition of cultural diversity, a rethinking of ways of knowing, a deconstruction of old
> epistemologies, and the concomitant demand that there be a transformation in our classrooms, in how we
> teach and what we teach, has been a necessary revolution-one that seeks to restore life to a corrupt and
> dying academy. (1994, pp. 29-30)

The philosophy of education I have developed possesses three, primary tenants that I believe are
relevant to my practice, largely inspired by John Dewey's writing in *Experience and Education:*
first, it is my belief that educative experiences must be democratic and humane. Secondly, these
educative experiences must foster growth in a positive direction. Finally, educative experiences
must utilize the educational continuum, meaning that they should be cognizant of the past,
predictive of the future, and vital to the present. I believe that these three, core tenants are
further supported by the integration of aesthetics into my philosophy of education. Within
philosophy, aesthetics relates to one's ability to perceive beauty, or to find beauty in experience.

On aesthetics, Dewey writes, "scenes of life are made more intelligible in esthetic experience; not, however, as science renders things more intelligible by reduction to conceptual form, but by presenting their meanings as the matter of a clarified, coherent, and intensified or 'impassioned' experience" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 302). In other words, Dewey is articulating that aesthetic experience has the capacity to teach us about our days in a way that makes our moments richer and more meaningful. I believe within the United States education system, there is deep need for the appreciation of the aesthetic or aesthetic experiences: those experiences that ground our students in the present moment and teach in a way that is unquantifiable and expansive rather than reductive as a means to an end.

It is imperative to make clear what I define as an "experience." At its most base form, I believe an experience to be an interaction between any human being and the other humans, living beings, and the environment in which it is situated. Therefore, education itself is an experience. This definition is inspired by sentiments shared by Dewey, when he writes, "an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment" (1938/1997, p. 43). However, educative experiences are not limited to the classroom: I believe that an educative experience is any interaction between students, educators, and environment that fosters positive learning and growth.

Democratic and humane educative experiences are ones that directly contradict what Paolo Freire describes as the "banking model of education." Freire asserts that in the banking model of education, the "scope of action allowed to the students extends only so far as receiving, filing, and storing deposits" (1968/2014, p. 72). It could be said that, largely, the United States education system thrives on the banking model: from a young age, daily, students are told to sit in desks and to heed their teacher, who is likely regurgitating information that the students are

expected to memorize and access during testing. Democratic and humane educative experiences challenge this model of teaching: a democratic and humane experience is one that humanizes both the teacher and the student, and places equal import on all participants in the learning process. Additionally, a democratic learning experience challenges systems and assumed learning environments, bolstering the idea that learning can, and should, happen anywhere, and that learning is an active process that engages the mind, body, and spirit of those who participate in it. A democratic learning experience should be one that involves the thoughts and perspectives of all participants in decision-making processes: the opinions of the educator carry equal weight to those of the students or participants.

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey elaborates on a concept called "mis-educative experiences." He asserts that "Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (1938/1997, p. 25). To that end, it is my view that all educative experiences should be developed with the intention of fostering growth in a positive direction. There are certainly ways for educative experiences to be static or trend in a negative direction: for example, creating educative experiences expressly for the purpose of needing students to pass an exam or obtain a job in the future is mis-educative. It is my belief that educative experiences that foster positive growth are those that create experience for both student and teacher that lead to a co-construction and sharing of knowledge that contributes to future learning and development. These experiences should strive to expand rather than narrow and limit. When discussing the role of teacher, Freire claims that "his efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power" (1968/2014, p. 75), supporting the idea that educators should be guided by the belief in the potentiality of their students' abilities.

Finally, educative experiences should not be disassociated from the past nor should they be blindly unaware of the future. Dewey writes, "just because traditional education was a matter of routine in which the plans and programs were handed down from the past, it does not follow that progressive education is a matter of plan-less improvisation" (1938/1997, p. 28), emphasizing the need for reference to the past in order to plan for the future. In order to create educative experiences that are progressive, one cannot rely solely on what has been done in the past, but, similarly, cannot succeed in creating an educative experience that does not reflect on what has been executed before. Additionally, educators are charged with creating educative experiences that rely on foresight, or, consider where students might be headed in the future, rather than situating experiences entirely on what is current or present. If an educative experience is limited to fulfilling a goal that is terminal in the present, the experience itself does not contribute to any further growth or learning, and is therefore, mis-educative. However, Dewey also cautions against developing educative experiences that entirely focused on forcing the present to meet a future goal. He writes, "when preparation is made the controlling end, then the potentialities of the present are sacrificed to a suppositious future. When this happens, the actual preparation for the future is missed or distorted" (1938/1997, p. 49). Perhaps, one could argue, that the present moment is the most powerful when it is lived in, not distorted to contribute to an unpredictable future. Certainly, educators should be aware of what might be relevant to students beyond their time together in a given educative experience, but creating an educative experience entirely oriented toward a future, untenable goal is irresponsible and mis-educative. Within the neoliberal university, we see innumerable educative experiences being crafted in order to bolster a student's resume or contribute to their career future in some way. This is inherently mis-

educative, as it is solely focused on a future outcome rather than being grounded in the present reality that students are in school to study, not to labor or prepare for labor.

Aesthetic Philosophy of Education

In addition to the aforementioned educational philosophers that have helped me shape the root of my philosophy, I have also been driven to explore the work of the late Maxine Greene, leading aesthetic philosopher and Professor Emeritus within Columbia University's Teachers College. In philosophy, aesthetics center on the perception of the beautiful. Art is a medium by which one can produce beauty, and aesthetic philosophy is a lens by which to appreciate and better witness the arts. In education, an aesthetic philosophy moves beyond the centering of beauty as it forces students and educators to perceive, inquire, and experience beauty in their lives, interactions, peers, environment, and studies. Greene defines aesthetic education as:

> An intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful. (2001, p. 6)

I believe there are three words in this definition that deepen and bely my own philosophy, or, what I hope my practice becomes: intentional, achieve, and meaningful. An aesthetic philosophy of education leads one to be intentional about crafting their educative experiences in order to collectively and democratically achieve, or actively work toward, meaningful learning among teachers, students, and environments.

I am drawn to working with aesthetics in education not only because of my background as a theatre artist and musician, but because I know the appreciation of beauty or art requires participants to delve into self-reflection and intense questioning of systems, traditions, and held

truths, a skill that I hope to develop with and among my students. Dewey writes, "what is called the magic of the artist resides in his ability to transfer these values from one field of experience to another, to attach them to the objects of our common life and by imaginative insight" (1934/2005, p. 123). Dewey, reflecting on emotional value in art in this moment, helps me to begin to illuminate my belief that the arts and artistry is not limited to what society has deemed as 'good,' but that experiencing, examining, appreciating, and creating art can be a useful and tactile mechanism in educative experiences in a variety of fields and in our daily lives. An aesthetic philosophy supports the challenge I have posed to myself surrounding the definition of art: through an aesthetic philosophy, I believe educators and students can more easily find the beauty in their work and collaboration, transcending what has been prescribed as worthwhile or valuable. In appreciating the beauty of what exists around us and who we are in a given moment, I believe we can slowly move away from the learned, incessant desire to quantify the validity of experience in education. Additionally, though I am emphasizing the relationship between an aesthetic philosophy of education and the arts, I believe that an aesthetic philosophy can be transferable to educative experiences concerning any field of study.

I maintain that the core tenants I previously outlined should bely any philosophy of education, but holding an aesthetic philosophy is a way to work that constantly endeavors to uphold and achieve these core values. An aesthetic education should be one that is democratic and humane, does not distort growth but contributes to positive growth, and makes use of the educational continuum. I would like to make use of an aesthetic philosophy of education because, as Maxine Greene describes, it is "integral to the development of persons—to their cognitive, perceptual, emotional, and imaginative development" (2001, p. 7). In a moment where there is great urgency in developing programming and educative experiences that seek to abolish

or revolutionize, I believe it to be most useful to employ a school of thought that constantly, rigorously, and actively seeks to mutually humanize. This educational philosophy directly supports my work as a co-curricular educative experience creator, or student affairs professional.

Philosophy of Education in Relation to Student Affairs & My Intervention

The role of the student affairs professional within the university is one of nuance: student affairs professionals are often referred to as administrators, but one could argue that educator is a more relevant descriptor. Certainly, student affairs professionals are charged with administrative work that keeps the university operating on a larger scale. However, student affairs professionals have an equal hand in the development of students at the university as faculty. As I articulated within my educational philosophy, I believe that learning can, and should, take place beyond the classroom: student affairs educators have the gift of situating their educative experiences in settings that are not limited to desks and the four walls of a classroom. When discussing education as a practice of freedom, Freire writes, "authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world" (2014, p.81). I believe that positive educative experiences within student affairs reflect Freire's sentiments: a growth-inspiring co-curricular experience is one that encourages mutual humanization through connecting participants to the environments and communities in which they are situated. As I have previously stated, neoliberal ideology has had a limiting effect on educative experiences within student affairs in that we frequently see growth-distorting or terminal programming . However, I believe that the goal of mutual humanization and the deepening of connection to the greater community takes time: ideally, it is unlimited and never ending. These beliefs

surrounding student affairs educative experiences and my educational philosophy have been the springboard for the intervention I will be proposing in this thesis.

Though Chapter Four will be exclusively dedicated to the exploration of my intervention, I feel it is crucial to highlight features of my intervention that directly correlate with my philosophy of education. In crafting an intervention, I sought to develop a group or organization that fostered a sense of community among participants and challenged students and educators to work in collaboration with one another. While there are professional advisors and graduate assistants attached to the Creative Campus Collective, students are equally important decision-makers within the organization: the role of the advisor is to guide and provide an overarching vision, while the students work together to create and respond to an issue of social justice. Additionally, I have leaned into the concept of a collective, emphasizing the value of relying on all participants to create resources and contribute to the goals of the group. For example, I imagine that students working within literary arts might provide text for performing arts students. Performing arts students might work with students creating visual art to aid them in communicating the meaning behind their work with others. Students within musical arts might be responsible for underscoring the evening as guests walk through the gallery of work provided by visual arts students. Though there are different disciplines within the collective, it is imperative that the efforts be as interdisciplinary as possible. "Success" of the collective is not measured by the quality of art produced by individuals according to traditional metrics, as its aim and purpose is centered on providing opportunity for communal artistic expression and exploration.

Perhaps, above all, it was crucial for me to develop an intervention that centered on the notion of the educational continuum. A true educative experience is one that appreciates and

utilizes time, and does not seek to rush learning. I am proposing a collective rather than a singular event or program as I believe such an intervention is more sustainable and fruitful for growth. Though the academic year is geared toward a final event, the collective will rely on work that has preceded a given semester or academic year and be cognizant of contribution toward future academic year. Ideally, the collective will retain participants for all four years who help share the past and it continuously obtain new members who provide fresh perspectives that allow for continual evolution of the organization. Details surrounding my plans for retention and assessment of program goals will be articulated in depth throughout Chapters 4 and 5. The collective is not concerned with the quality of the work or final product, but rather the quality of the experiences that lead to the 'final product.' Have students had time and resources to explore a topic through art? Have they been inspired to create or imagine something that was not there before? Have they felt a sense of community as they worked within the collective? These are all questions I will try to find the answers to as I assess the quality of my programming and ensure that I am creating a humane and growth fostering educative experience.

My educational philosophy has been crucial in providing a framework for the type of intervention I plan to propose. Similarly, I have relied and will continue to rely on action research, particularly critical action research, as a methodology for better understanding my thematic concern and creating an intervention that responds to a perceived need and facilitates participatory experiences. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I will articulate my views on critical action research and explore how this form of research aids me in the development of my thematic concern and intervention.

Introduction to Critical Action Research

When charged to concretely define action research, scholars have posited varying answers centering on concepts such as collaboration, participation, community, ethics, and intervention. Ernest T. Stringer (2014) asserts that action research is "a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems that they confront in their everyday lives" (p. 1). Whereas, Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury define action research as a "participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes" (as cited in Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, Maguire, et al., 2003, p. 11). One could argue that the existence of a singular definition of action research is impossible, as each process is unique and specific to a specific group of people in a distinct place and time. Therefore, the summaries provided by Stringer, Reason and Bradbury, and other scholars working in the field of AR, are equally valid and valuable. In conjunction with the aforementioned definitions, it could be said that action research is a form of largely qualitative research that allows one to identify a problem that affects everyday lives, and, in collaboration with a consenting, affected community, gradually develop and workshop an intervention involving the thoughts, fears, dreams, goals, and voices of the community.

Who is Involved in Action Research?: Defining Roles and Duties

As action research is a largely qualitative, social form of research, it is imperative for one to clarify and define the roles of those involved in the process. A critical distinction in executing AR is that the researcher should be an unobtrusive participant in their study. On the role of the action researcher, Stringer (2014) writes, "titles such as facilitator, associate, and consultant are more appropriate in action research than director, chief, or head" (p. 19). Additionally, action researchers must constantly question their own subjectivity; while it is impossible to be completely subjective, it is imperative to be aware of one's own biases and experiences so as not

to influence the study or group on a personal level. When executed correctly, with democratic, bottom up decision-making, "action research becomes a form of self-emancipation" (Teachers TV/UK Department of Education, 2006, 23:20).

After developing a potential research question or problem through observation, the researcher must make initial, neutral contact with all stakeholder groups potentially involved in the process. Stakeholders are those who are endemic to the identified problem but are not always actively involved in the study. Engaging neutrally with all potential stakeholders creates a sense of ease for participants and allows for the researcher to get a better sense of the community they are serving. This is critical as "a stranger who is heard speaking to some groups about issues of concern to other groups may arouse suspicion, antagonism, and fear" (Stringer, 2004, p. 76).

In choosing participants and in discerning who might be affected by the research process, it is the researcher's duty to follow a guiding set of ethical principles in order to properly engage with the affected community. In April 1979, The Belmont Report was issued by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. This report was commissioned in order to "address ethical concerns in research in both medical and social science disciplines" (Brydon-Miller, 2008, 201). The three core principles identified in the Belmont Report, which are guideposts for ethical practice in AR, are: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. These principles appear in AR in a variety of ways; for example, one might be guided by respect for persons in providing an informed consent process, thoroughly instructing participants on what they are consenting to, granting the right to refuse participation, and providing information on how to exit the study. Beneficence appears at the core of action research through the notion that the work must be a democratic process by which the affected better their own communities, rather than imposing ideals and solutions upon them via an outside

force. Concerning justice, action researchers should be aware that this principle "must extend to participation in decisions regarding the funding of research, the application of research findings and the generation ownership, and dissemination of knowledge" (Brydon-Miller, 2008, 202). Ethical practice is a core value of the AR process and it is critical for all participants to be treated with respect and beneficence.

The Action Research Process

Once the roles of researcher, participants, and stakeholders have been established, a question or problem has been identified, and all participants have engaged in an informed consent process, the first steps of action research are, theoretically, complete. Some scholars assert that at its most base form, AR can be broken down into a three-step process that first utilizes observation to identify a question or problem and establish the roles of those involved, then collects and analyzes data, and finally, reflects on its findings. Ernest T. Stringer (2014) more simply summarizes this process through the words "look, think, and act" (p. 8). However, these step-by-step guides could be considered reductive, and potentially counterintuitive to a fruitful AR process without additional clarification. These steps, while all critical to the action research process, might be executed in various orders and repeated based on the journey of the given study. Through its diverse origins and the varying opinions of those who engage with it, action research is a process that is impossible to define concretely.

Embarking on an action research project is not a clear-cut journey: one could argue that the biggest challenges that action researchers face are embracing the mess and proving the validity of their own work. However, each action research process, particularly a critical action research process, is guided back to course with the underlying intention to better the lives of

those participating in it and a commitment to democratic, social change. With a continued spirit of openness and collaboration, an ever-changing social climate, and a commitment to societal betterment, action research and critical action research will continue to evolve, develop, and shape its own form and the lives of those who encounter these processes.

Critical Action Research and Higher Education

In the Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs (HEPSA) program at West Chester University, we approach our work, particularly our thesis, through the lens of critical theory. "Critical theory is a form of theorizing motivated by a deep concern to overcome social injustice," (Kemmis, 2008, p. 125) which is invaluable in our work as educators. Critical theory, when used as a lens applied to action research, is also referred to as critical action research; like other forms of action research, critical action research is a process by which a researcher and participants identify a question or a problem that needs to be solved through observation, then they democratically work toward a solution, and then they note on their findings. However, the 'critical' distinction enters when we focus on situations that desire solutions driven by emancipation or the need for emancipation. CAR is when researchers and participants discern that a situation is unsatisfactory or oppressive and collectively endeavor to find solutions, while also reflecting on how these conditions came to be.

As educators, we can implement this lens and process into our own work when striving to better the lives of our students and the system in which we work. CAR and critical theory allow educators to be in the university but not of the university: refusing to homogenize into the system but aiming to critically approach and abolish traditions, standards, and systems designed to oppress within the university. "The emancipatory impulse springs from the eternal hope that

things might be otherwise—more rational, more legitimate, more caring, and less apt to produce differential consequences of suffering and dissatisfaction" (Kemmis, 2008, p. 134). My thematic concern and intervention not only springs from a desire that things can and should be otherwise within the university, but also a desire that we as student affairs educators are preparing students to think about solutions and possibilities yet unknown.

As I have articulated previously, the modern, North American University has become a business that devalues the humanity of both students and educators alike. The need for student affairs educators to develop programming that fully centers and celebrates the humanity of those learning and working within the university is a critical one. Recognizing the urgency of this problem has further solidified the value of critical action research as the form of methodology utilized when approaching my research. Additionally, I believe the nature of my thematic concern and intervention lends itself seamlessly to a CAR project. The arts are used as a common tool within AR for inquiry, the dissemination of knowledge and as an intervention. Though one of the greatest hurdles of my thesis comes with proving the validity of my research and work, action research historically has demonstrated the value of the arts in programming and interventions.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

Maxine Greene writes, "we are interested in education here, not in schooling. We are interested in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable or the quantifiable" (2001, p.6). In continuing to develop, hone, and practice as an educator, I will strive to find the openings and unexplored, appreciating that my own philosophy of education is ever changing and unable to be entirely concluded. As we seek to connect what we have come to realize has

been disconnected for quite some time, I aim to be an educator who sees the beauty and humanity in my students and turns the lens for them to do the same. It is my belief that an aesthetic philosophy of education is a vital contribution to the revolution in education, one that seeks to inspire students to see the world around them in new, more beautiful ways and to leave room for the impossible to become possible. Additionally, I am confident that utilizing the lens of critical action research further enhances the quality of my work and research as a methodology that encourages democratic, participatory, humane, and creative interventions. I believe that working with the arts and aesthetics in our education system as a means to appreciate our present moments and temporalities—allowing students to rest in the notion that who and what they are is unquantifiable and not in need of investment, but rather, internal discovery—is counter to neoliberal influence on education. I seek to create educative experiences utilizing the arts that bring forth one's inherent capabilities rather than educative experiences that validate our students based on quantifiable performance. The notion that "success" in an educative experience might look like a student developing a deeper appreciation of self and the world around them through art is radical in a neoliberal society.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

Budget cuts in education are not a rarity, particularly in the public sphere. Even less rare is finding that these budget cuts include reductions to funding for the arts in schools: the arts are often first on the chopping block when it comes time to strip resources away from schools. Dr. Steve Seidel, founder of the Arts in Education program at Harvard and former director of Harvard's Project Zero has studied the history of cuts to arts funding in education throughout American history and asserts that the first cuts can be traced back to 1957 when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik. "Sputnik was the wake-up call to America as a society but also to American education. Science in schools was pushed to the forefront, and the notion that we might not be up to par with the Soviet Union brought intense scrutiny. More funding was put toward science in education" (Tamer, n.d., para. 14). Regardless of the exact origins of the first cut to the arts in public education, the rationale behind the Sputnik-related cuts directly correlates to the arguments made within this thesis regarding the threat of neoliberalism to the arts and the arts in education. Even before neoliberalism emerged as a dominant ideology in the United States, American leaders were more concerned with competing against and overpowering the Soviet Union than providing a well-rounded education to citizens. Further, through understanding this moment in history, one can see how education was identified as a place where human capital could be developed that would allow for the United States to compete on a global scale. The value of the arts in education is largely unquantifiable, and therefore, has historically been seen as lesser than to other disciplines.

When introducing readers to his 2017 novel centering on student protests and movements in North American higher education, *We Demand*, Ferguson states: "For all their seeming newness, our present-day troubles are not entirely different from the ones that students struggled over. Like everything "new," they have part of their genesis in bygone battles" (p. 15). Through this point, Ferguson begins to illustrate the necessity of a retelling or writing of history that is comprehensive and critical in order to better understand the issues of the modern university in the United States. In this chapter, I will be constructing a historiography, or a deliberate retelling of history, of seminal moments in the United States and the university in relation to my thematic concern. I will begin by exploring the roots of neoliberal ideology in the United States and the academy. In turn, I will examine and utilize these moments and related movements of protest to better understand the role that neoliberalism has played in the gradual diminishment of arts, culture, and humanity within academia and how student response has impacted the life of these disciplines within the university. After exploring the history of my thematic concern, I will examine the current state of my concern and construct a literature review of the research I have conducted in relation to my thesis and intervention.

The Nixon Administration & the Militarization of Campuses

In order to understand the roots of neoliberalism within the US Academy, one must have a brief understanding of student protests and movements in response to the Nixon Administration and the climate his presidency fostered. Leading up to and during Nixon's tenure, the United States saw an uprising from college students in response to, largely, issues of racial inequity and unrest that was met with augmented police and military presence on campus. Two notable events that characterized the American campus during the Nixon Administration were the murders at Kent State and Jackson State. In both instances, groups of students met to protest and

demonstrate, and were then faced with the deployment of the National Guard and the police. At each institution, students were murdered by military and law enforcement, though Nixon and like-minded politicians used these events as grounds advocate for the maintenance of "social order:"

> The events at Kent State and Jackson State set in motion a series of interrelated processes—including the criminalization of students, the extension of university administration, the use of ideologies of diversity and tolerance against social insurgencies, and the expansion of police forces on campus yards—all of which created this peculiar institution of the current American academy and its particular view of student protest, an institution and a view that have helped to authorize ideological forces and repressive powers that shape our present day. (Ferguson, 2017, pp. 29-30)

Students across the nation began to approach universities with a set of demands calling for institutional changes that reflected the humanity of its students. Student activists urged for diversity when they "called for greater numbers of people of color in universities, along with the creation of curricula that would be relevant for a world riddled by war, racism, sexism, poverty, and colonialism" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 31). In a sense, one could argue that Nixon capitalized on these demands, weaponizing "diversity" against those demanding it.

Nixon's work surrounding diversity and social programs called for an integration into the system, one that would allow the United States to maintain "law and order" and to facilitate hegemonic inclusion: not true diversity work in creating equity for those with marginalized identities. Nixon criminalized students and their activism in an attempt to incite fear in the so-called "average American." Throughout his presidency, Nixon would make "use of discourses of civil rights to refortify and extend the powers of the US government and to preserve the dominant social order" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 33). Today, in 2021, we still see a strong

representation of Nixon's legacy in the form of militarized campuses: ones rife with police presence and military recruitment strategies particularly targeting marginalized students. These limiting tactics aiming toward submission and assimilation of the marginalized or activists for a more equitable institution planted the seeds for neoliberal ideology to seize upon the American university. The arts and humanities, disciplines that can serve as a vessel for transcending boundaries became antagonists of those in power in their quest to maintain order. Throughout the decades that followed Nixon's presidency, academics, particularly those of marginalized identities, rallied for the creation of a more diverse and expansive curriculum.

Open Admissions Movement

In the 60's and 70's, there were several student movements that took strides to impact the curriculum of the university and counter dominant, conservative thought, particularly calling for humanity in admissions and coursework. These student movements insisted upon "considering the possibilities of human personhood and environmental well-being, a consideration that might install a new—albeit long-dreamed—ethical, intellectual, and political identity in the American academy" (Ferguson, 2017, p.53). For example, examining the Open Admissions Movement at the City College of New York gives one a better understanding of the demands put forth by students, particularly Black and Latinx students, and how their efforts have created the pathway for academic areas in the humanities such as Ethnic Studies. As a result of the protests, not only did CUNY enact an open admissions policy, the school "agreed to expand the SEEK program and to establish more Ethnic Studies programs. CUNY quickly became the largest degree-granting institution for Black and Latino students in the United States" (Jones, 2020, para. 11). Through the work and struggle of this marginalized population of students and their allies, their demands were met and paved the way for a richer humanities curriculum and the existence of a

true, public university. Activist June Jordan indicates that "movements such as open admissions and the emergence of black studies were historic opponents of the human devastation…exhilarating attacks against the degeneration of human possibility" (Ferguson, 2017, p 53).

The open admissions movement, the protests at Kent and Jackson state, and most of the student movements from the 60's and 70's were direct counters to conservative, capitalist power in the US: each of these protests called for the university to see the humanity in every student and each aspiring scholar. Certainly, the demands from students to see a university population and a curriculum that reflects the diversity of society has had a lasting impact on the American Academy: without the efforts of past generations of students, we would likely not have access to areas of studies such as Ethnic Studies and Women and Gender Studies in humanities departments today. However, the Powell Memorandum, which was penned in 1971, placed further strain on the arts and humanities in higher education.

The Powell Memorandum

As Nixon's administration demonized the American campus and purported it to be a place of violent, dangerous activism, The Powell Memorandum singled out the United States Academy, particularly elite institutions of higher learning, as the greatest threat to the economy and big business. **"**Like the Nixon administration's report and its impact on the institutional and ideological uses of diversity and security regimes, the Powell Memorandum helped to disrupt the social transformations called for by students" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 50). The Powell Memorandum was crafted by Supreme Court Justice Louis Powell in 1971 and asserted that capitalism and our economy was threatened by the radical left thought being promoted in the US University, in turn,

claiming "capitalist economic production as the most important and valuable entity in US society" (p. 53). In his memo, Powell attempted to paint the economy as a living entity, striving to humanize neoliberal ideology and dehumanize disenfranchised humans. Additionally, as a result of Powell's memo, "funding moved away from curiosity-based research, which in the United States has had a harmful effect on interdisciplinary scholarship" (Ferguson, 2017, p. 56). The Powell Memorandum might be one of the greatest influencers in the university's transition of purpose: what once was a place to pause and study, the university was set to become a place where students are viewed as human capital and must be educated for the sake of economic growth. Students on United States campuses struggled against this device and dogma, primarily countering with protests and activism surrounding "the dignity of minority personhood and the preservation of the earth itself" (p. 53). The positive reception of the Powell Memorandum from American leaders paved the way for neoliberalism to seize upon the academy in the next decade.

The Arrival of Neoliberalism: The Reagan Presidency

Though certain principles and values within neoliberal ideology have been seen in US leadership since the turn of the 20th century, the true arrival of neoliberalism in the United States came under Ronald Reagan's presidency. In addition to the other definitions set forth throughout this thesis, neoliberalism is "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey, 2007, p. 2). Reagan, staunchly anti-big government and pro-individual choice and private sector economic growth, implemented an economic practice known as 'supply-side economics.' Supply-side economics was "based upon the assumption that long-term economic growth depends on 'freeing up' the amount of capital available for private investment"

(Steger & Roy, 2010, p. 51). In other words, Reagan made devastating cuts to social programs and public goods, which harmed lower and middle classes, and lowered tax rates, which benefited the wealthy. These cuts provided even more capital for the wealthy to invest privately and grow private-sector business. In turn, goods that once were deemed public rapidly began to face privatization: higher education was no exception.

Before Reagan served as President of the United States, he was the Governor of California: a tenure in which he demonstrated his beliefs surrounding the government's responsibility for educating the public. During his time as Governor of California, Reagan "called for an end to free tuition for state college and university students annually demanding 20 percent across-the-board cuts in higher education funding, repeatedly slashed construction funds for state campuses, and declared that the state 'should not subsidize intellectual curiosity'" (Clabaugh, 2004, p. 256). Reagan single-handedly privatized the once-public and renowned educational system that was the University of California school system. Though the UC system still purports one of its main goals is to provide an affordable education, Reagan's legacy still lasts today with statistics indicating "About 44 percent of the class of 2019–20 graduated with debt, with an average amount of $19,200" (University of California, 2021). Reagan's belief that the government is not responsible for funding "intellectual curiosity" mirrors the principles of the Powell Memorandum: throughout the 1970s and 1980s, education was only seen as valuable if it provided benefit and capital to business and economic growth. Herein, disciplines such as the arts and humanities became significantly less accessible to those in lower and middle classes.

Conclusion: Historiography

In the Clinton presidency that followed Reagan's, we saw the maintenance of neoliberal economic values and a favoring of more liberal social values; this period is often referred to as the second-wave of neoliberalism (Steger and Roy, 2010). Clinton saw the "necessity of ridding first-wave neoliberalism of its neoconservative accretions – hyperpatriotism and militarism, attachment to antiquated 'family values', disdain for multiculturalism, and neglect of ecological issues" (Steger & Roy, 2010, p. 76). However, Clinton was still anti-big government and continued to further privatize the university and other public goods. Higher education has never recovered or reverted back to a purpose that is disassociated from economic gain since the Reagan Presidency. Even Barack Obama, though quite ideologically moderate in reality but perceived as one of the most radical US presidents, centered his policy surrounding higher education on return on investment; Obama's presidency introduced 'College Scorecard' a tool "featuring data on post college earnings and how well students are repaying their loans," (Stratford, 2015, para. 1) reemphasizing the notion that attending a university only has benefit when one can make enough money to pay back the government, who has no true responsibility in providing funding for furthering the education of the citizens.

From exploring the history of the United States beginning with Sputnik and the Cold War Era, one can see how the purpose of the university, and education at large, has been distorted: education is a place where one can be controlled and molded into the citizen the government desires in order to elevate the economy. Similarly, by examining protest movements which countered dominant ideology and power, one can see that humanity within the university is not lost among constituents. If one is an educator who responds to the students rather than the university– to people rather than systems– we must continue to fight for the place of the arts and humanities within a system that does not see their value. Further, as student affairs professionals,

we must leverage our power through the freedom that comes with creating co-curricular experiences by integrating arts-based methodology authentically and with as much frequency as we can in order to re-center the humanity of our students.

Current State of Concern

Despite the great efforts from student protestors throughout US history, university constituents still struggle to keep the arts alive on college campuses across the country. On February 18, 2022 the University of Kansas announced plans to cut 42 academic programs. It is no coincidence that at the time this thesis was being written, a prominent, state institution announced massive cuts to their arts and humanities departments: this news is commonplace in the United States (Moody, 2022). Within the last 5 years alone, we have witnessed slashes to arts programs and departments at The University of Montana, The University of Vermont, The University of North Carolina, The University of Wisconsin, SUNY Stonybrook, and Kansas University, to name a few, recognizable institutions. In this section, I plan to elaborate on the situation at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point and the efforts of the school's students to save these programs in order to elucidate the power behind collective, student organization attempting to preserve the arts and humanities within higher education. Additionally, I plan to highlight two, existing socially conscious art making programs within student affairs departments at the University of Michigan and the University of Oregon. The work being executed at both schools has provided great inspiration and context for my intervention.

University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point

In 2018, the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point announced a proposal that would cut 13 majors within the humanities including: art, sociology, music literature, philosophy, and

more. UWSP, a state institution in Wisconsin, cited the reasoning for cuts as a projected 4.5 billion-dollar deficit. However, school leaders such as Chancellor Bernie Patterson were explicit in their intentions to remove certain majors from curriculum as they did not aide in career outcomes. In lieu of the majors the school intended to cut, UWSP planned to "add programs deemed to provide technical skills wanted in the job market" (Strauss, 2018, para. 1). As a result of this proposal, hundreds of students and allies came together in a sit-in referred to the "Save Our Majors" protest. In a letter to the UW Chancellor and administration, students wrote, "for years, the legislature in Wisconsin has perpetuated the belief that education is only valuable when it leads to specific career paths. We were disheartened to see the attitude of our academic affairs conform to that belief" (Strauss, 2018, p. 3), succinctly identifying the influence neoliberal ideology has had on their education and institution. Days later, the school drafted a new proposal that would retain six of the previously threatened humanities majors, a victory that undoubtedly was a direct result of efforts put forth by students.

The efforts put forth by these students demonstrate their desire to engage in artistic programming and studies; therefore, if we are educators who respond to the students, I believe student affairs professionals can play a role in access to such opportunities beyond the classroom. Arguably, there is a significant amount of privilege one must have to major in the arts: access to training throughout childhood for admission, supportive parents, and capital to support oneself in an often underpaid profession, to name a few factors. However, simply because a student is not majoring in the arts does not mean they do not deserve access to quality, artistic engagement. Student affairs professionals have a real opportunity to fill in the gaps where academic departments are closing their doors and can counter neoliberal initiatives through their programming.

Socially Conscious Art Making Models in Higher Education

While, nationally, our universities are not rife with the type of programming I am hoping to develop in my intervention, there are certain institutions creating opportunities for students to create socially conscious and collaborative art. Two organizations that have helped me shape my intervention are The Prison Creative Arts Project at The University of Michigan and Rehearsals for Life at the University of Oregon.

University of Michigan: Prison Creative Arts Project

Educators within the University of Michigan in conjunction with their students have sought to humanize prisoners domestically and abroad in Brazil through art making and theatre, specifically Agosto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. In line with prison and institutional policies, students and educators will enter prisons and collaborate with incarcerated folks through various forms of art and devised theatre: it is a value of PCAP that all humans are capable of being artists. The program is beneficial for all participants in that it destigmatizes incarceration for those not close to incarcerated populations, it provides all participants the opportunity to connect via art making, and it creates a community where, perhaps, there was not one before.

The University of Michigan states that the "The Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) brings those impacted by the justice system together with the University of Michigan community for artistic collaboration, mutual learning, and growth." (PCAP, n.d.). PCAP is lead by Associate Professor, Ashley Lucas, but holds partnerships with Engaged Michigan (the school's hub for civic engagement), Study Abroad Programs, and local and international organizations centered on justice for incarcerated populations. The nature of this program, one that is dependent on

several departments, stakeholders, and populations of people from diverse communities, is in and of itself sustainable and a model for the intervention I am working to develop. In reading interviews conducted with Director Ashley Lucas, she asserts that the work that this program conducts is vital as it restores some sense of agency to its incarcerated participants. She states, "we see it as a key part of our mission to return as much agency as possible to those in our workshops, as long as we can continue to operate within the rules and policies of the prison" (Lucas, et al., 2019, p. 87S). This notion and driving belief stood out to me as instrumental in developing socially conscious art making programs in education: working with arts based methodology can restore agency and humanity to even the most dehumanized populations. Through this organization, one can see how access to making art is restorative of one's agency, and mutually humanizing for both incarcerated folks and students.

Rehearsals for Life, University of Oregon

Another university program that is engaging their campus community in art making oriented toward issues of social justice is Rehearsals for Life at the University of Oregon. In a peer reviewed article centering on the organization, authors Fox and Leeder explore the effectiveness of different forms of applied theatre as tools for dismantling systemic oppression on college campuses. The forms of theatre utilized are Theatre of the Oppressed, Playback Theatre, and Autobiographical Theatre, which are all unique subgroups of applied theatre grounded in storytelling. The authors assert that storytelling is, perhaps, one of the most powerful forms of activism as it has the power to create community, dissolve stereotypes, and call for the recognition of humanity. At the University of Oregon, Leeder directs a group called Rehearsals for Life (RfL), which was borne out of a graduate student survey distributed in 2009. Students cited that they were experiencing cultural insensitivity within their departments and

found that faculty members were not prepared to educate diverse populations. "Since its

inception in 2009, RfL has become a critical player in campus efforts to reduce bias and

discrimination within the university community and has been recognized nationally as a model

for diversity education on college campuses" (Fox & Leeder, 2018, p 104). RfL leads interactive

workshops for the University of Oregon community that expose students and faculty to personal

stories and struggles, bystander scenarios which serve as bias training, and post-workshop

evaluations. RfL has not only contributed to the growth of those who participate in the

workshops, but the members of the group as well. Students who create with RfL have noted that

the organization provides an "intimate, dynamic, creative, and safe space to engage in the

complexities and nuances of social justice work" (Fox & Leeder, 2018, p. 107). At

Manhattanville College, Fox runs the Peer Education Theatre Group, which engages

undergraduate students in using monologues to examine Title IX issues and unconscious bias.

Fox then chronicles the structure of her organization and the theatre styles utilized, which

ultimately culminate in a black-box, community performance. Audience members who attended

the community event noted feeling moved by the performance, and felt inspired to engage with

issues of social justice as they arise in their lives.

The work executed and studied at Rehearsals for Life proves that engaging students and

the greater community in difficult conversations can be eased utilizing arts-based methodology.

The arts are a non-threatening way to educate diverse populations on issues that may be seen as

polarizing or difficult to understand. The authors of this article help to demonstrate that when we

engage our communities and students with a tool such as the arts that can act as an equalizer or

form of expression that holds space for both vulnerability and the mask of performance, we can

educate in a way that is gentle and memorable.

Introduction to Relevant Factors in Higher Education

In discerning my thesis topic, I was concerned there would be little research surrounding the arts, aesthetics, and student affairs as my desire to develop my intervention was borne out of a perceived lack or absence. In a sense, this proved to be true: within my research, I primarily found articles dedicated to higher education classrooms and the arts, and a smaller portion surrounding the arts and co-curricular engagement. There is certainly a gap in student affairs literature related to my thematic concern. My research contains articles from educators in visual art classrooms, to social work and medical undergraduate programs, theatre makers at the university level, and a few student affairs organizations dedicated to art as a tool for social change and civic engagement. In my search, I attempted to examine articles that centered different mediums of art such as sculpture, performance, music, and poetry in order to give as much support as possible for the different artistic mediums I plan to utilize within my intervention.

Within Chapter 1 of my thesis, I posed several, interrelated questions that have helped me center and ground my research: "What would happen if we saw the arts as a tool for helping university students make meaning of their lives?" "Could the arts be a form of glue that grows a community among seemingly disparate populations?" "How can we utilize the arts as a form of rebellion against dominant power and as a form of care for our students as student affairs practitioners?" "Could the arts not be one of the most relevant educative tools in aiding our students in growth and self-exploration?" In utilizing these questions as a lens through which to structure my research, I discovered three, emergent themes I found most useful and relevant to my own work: 1. The powerful relationship between the arts and civic engagement and service learning, 2. The arts as a tool for centering student humanity and supporting identity

development, and 3. The contradictory nature of assessment within the arts. In addition, I have found exploring theoretical frameworks of leadership, particularly transformative leadership, crucial in the development of the educators leading my proposed intervention.

Relevant Factor: The Arts and Civic Engagement

While it is less common to find student affairs offices and centers dedicated entirely to arts and culture programming, most colleges and universities are equipped with a center for civic engagement and service learning opportunities. When searching for studies and articles surrounding student engagement with the arts in higher education, the majority of results centered on art making that was either oriented toward issues of social justice or was used as a means to motivate students to become more civically engaged. In the US and abroad, there have been studies proving engagement with the arts encourages students to be more informed citizens and increases their propensity to engage with arts activism beyond the university. Across articles centering on this topic, researchers found that the tactile, physical nature of engaging with an art making process had a significant imprint on students' learning.

In McPherson and Mazza's article, *Using Arts Activism and Poetry to Catalyze Human Rights Engagement and Reflection*, the authors chronicle the experiences of undergraduate social work students involved in an arts activism project centering on mass genocide and violence. The project, One Million Bones, has been executed across the US and internationally to represent the victims of mass violence in countries such as Burma, Sudan, The Democratic Republic of Congo and more. In the case described in McPherson and Mazza's article, the One Million Bones project was carried out by students and faculty at an US school of social work. The project involves the making of bones representing the lives lost to genocide through paper mache, glass,

and other materials, and then an assemblage and display of the bones in a public place for community viewing. The authors emphasize the impact such a project has on participants, due to the tactile nature of forging bones with hands and the time allotted to contemplate the meaning of the work. "Students were asked to slow down and contemplate the bones that they were making, they were encouraged to empathize with the suffering of individuals, and they were educated about past and current global mass-violence events" (McPherson & Mazza, 2014, p. 949). The authors, believing it was also critical to have students reflect on their engagement with One Million Bones, added several writing exercises after the completion of the bones display. Most notably, the educators led their students in developing a collective poem in response to the installation of their One Million Bones project, sampling the poem in their article. Upon review, the authors found that each student participating in the project indicated that they planned on having a lifelong engagement with the issues centered in their art activism project.

Another similar study described by Gubner, Smith, and Allison has been equally helpful in identifying the connection between student engagement with the arts and societal issues; the authors' piece chronicles a three-semester long qualitative analysis of a service-learning course for undergraduate students within a public university. The course was developed by a professor of music at the university and aimed to engage students in music-making, filmmaking, and creative writing in order to aid their understanding of and relationship with local dementia patients at a care facility. Data from the course included student films, reflective essays, and course evaluations. Over the course of three semesters, 52 students participated in the course and 28 of them identified as health science majors. Researchers had three main hypotheses confirmed by the study and one unexpected result. As anticipated, the researchers found that music fostered a meaningful connection between students and participants with dementia, student filmmaking

allowed for person-centered stories to be captured that empowered those with dementia and brought awareness to the illness, and reflective writing exercises helped students to process their experiences, relationships, and discover new lessons learned. Unexpectedly, researchers found that after the course, students wrote to their professor about the ways in which they continued to engage with people with dementia in their careers, families, and communities. The authors close by stating: "we found that arts and music courses have the potential to shift undergraduate perceptions about dementia and create new educational opportunities for engagement in identifiable and reproducible ways" (Gubner, et al., 2020, p. 1088).

Through these articles, the authors demonstrate how the marriage of the arts and civic engagement gives greater purpose to both areas, one 'why' lending itself to the other. If we utilize the arts in response to a cause that needs our attention, both the art making process and the cause simultaneously become more personal and meaningful. Additionally both McPherson & Mazza's and Gubner, Smith, and Allison's studies serve in proving that tactile engagement and facilitating an art making process for students is more effective than simply witnessing art or performance. An additional feature of both studies that is helpful in informing the development of an arts-based intervention is the utilization of time. Both studies engaged students in at least a semester-long project, the latter for three semesters. One could conclude that students' reported desires to engage with the issues that they interfaced with throughout these studies beyond their time in the university could be attributed to the gift of space and time in which they were engaged in these processes. Finally, as the authors articulated, utilizing reflective tools in order to help students synthesize their experiences and assess the effectiveness of programming proved to be advantageous in socially conscious art making.

Relevant Factor: Student Identity Development and Re-humanization through the Arts

Literature from Baxter Magolda & Welkener, Wright & Pascoe, and Gaines surrounding the arts, identity development, flourishing, and re-humanization indicates that the arts can be used as a tool of empowerment, self-reflection, empathy, and the discovery of community. Within this thesis, I define re-humanization as an act which centers the dignity and humanness of those who have been reduced to numbers and figures: in this case, students within North American universities. Discourse among higher educators encouraging the utilization of the arts in student affairs and beyond has further compelled me to believe the pursuit of integrating the arts in programming has boundless benefits for molding compassionate and well-rounded citizens.

Self-Authorship in Identity Development

An identity development theory that has been relevant to my thematic concern is the concept of self-authorship. As cited in Patton's *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice,* self-authorship is "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 269). The concept of self-authorship, or one's ability to construct identity and purpose throughout their time in college, has been enhanced through art making opportunities, as researched by Baxter-Magolda.

Baxter-Magolda and Welkener focus on utilizing the arts as a tool for self-authorship. The scholars found that utilizing self-portraiture when studying self-authorship among college students brought forward unrecognized truths among participants. Students were supplied with various art materials such as paint, paper, and cutting tools and were instructed to create a self-portrait based on their own ideas and perceptions. Additionally, students were encouraged to focus on their thoughts rather than their artistic abilities. In addition to the creation of the self-

portrait, students participated in a free-writing exercise and an interview in which they explained their processes. The article gives an example student, Vivian, and illustrates how her portrait revealed that she was not the author of her own life at the time of the exercise, as she created two portraits: one of the person she feels she needs to be and is in her daily life due to familial pressure, and one for the person she wants to be and believes she can be. This study supports the notion that engagement with the arts can be a powerful tool in aiding students' understanding and construction of self.

Re-humanization in a Neoliberal University

In their article, *Eudaimonia and Creativity: The Art of Human Flourishing*, authors Wright and Pascoe argue for the interconnectedness of the arts, education, creativity and well-being. The scholars begin by asserting that much of human inquiry is driven by our search for meaning within our existences. Wright and Pascoe describe a 'hidden wealth' within the arts, arguing that they "bring connectedness and meaning-making together through the human impulse to create and express human experience and flourishing" (Wright, et al., 2015, p. 296). The authors then articulate that since educators play a significant role in the development of their students and their students' abilities to make meaning, engagement with the arts can restore true purpose to education- contradictory to the view that education is solely for the purpose of obtaining a job. Wright and Pascoe claim that the arts deepen a student's capacity to imagine new worlds and better futures, ultimately contributing to the wellbeing of the student and their community. The scholars then go on to outline the 'Five Paths to Wellbeing,' which are: 1. Connect 2. Be active 3. Take notice 4. Keep learning 5. Give. Wright and Pascoe assert how the arts can contribute to each of these five steps and how each of these five steps are intrinsically a part of engagement with the arts.

The authors then describe two case studies of how arts-based methodology enhanced teacher education processes in Australia. In the first case, teacher education students worked across four months with a resident artist, the school students, and the greater community to enhance creative skills for all participants. Most notably, the participants engaged in activities utilizing textiles, digital imagery, music, and storytelling that connected them to the Indigenous communities and the land on which they were situated, developing awareness, respect, curiosity, and connection among communities. The second case centered on an "Arts Barometer," an online survey, distributed to Bachelor of Education students and mature educators and students. Those participating drew connections from engagement with the arts to the ability to make and sustain friendships, social development for shy students, unity among peers, and heightened creative and critical thinking skills. Ultimately, both cases "make tangible for students the generative possibilities of access to high-quality arts, consequently developing wellbeing that is life-enhancing, human flourishing and addressing what matters in their teaching life" (Wright & Pascoe, 2015, p. 304).

In further exploring Maxine Greene, whose work I have utilized throughout this thesis to bolster my educational philosophy, I have found additional evidence of the humanizing and healing power of the arts in education. Dr. Gaines, a former student of Greene's and a practices therapist, argues within his work for the healing power of art and how the arts and aesthetic experience can be part of a remedy for what Greene described as "apathetic sickness" (Gaines, 2016, p. 28) in United States education and society. In his article, Gaines contends that educators who "embody Maxine's ideals of aesthetic education will improve overall service to students while becoming more engaged and better-informed citizens themselves" (Gaines, 2016, 2016, p. 25). Gaines also comments on Greene's belief that the US education system is rife with apathy

due to capitalism, and its centering of efficiency and quantifiable measurement. He argues that educators and teaching artists who engage students in artistic and aesthetic experiences, when possible, can facilitate feelings of freedom, empowerment, and conscientization or an awakening. Gaines likens the experiences of a teaching artist's ability to bring students to a new consciousness to that a of a therapist working with a patient with depression: we must make our students or patients aware of the complexities of pre-existing oppressions and systems of injustice, and through art or therapy, conceptions of a better future will likely follow.

Each of the aforementioned scholars have executed research and writing that further validates my belief that the arts can serve as a tool of re-humanization within a neoliberal university. This research has also led me to consider the notion that if we re-humanize our students, we create a society with more empathetic, concerned citizens while simultaneously re-humanizing ourselves as educators. In this way, as I have argued throughout this thesis, utilizing the arts in student affairs practice is vital in cultivating concerned and caring citizens beyond the university, as opposed to "successful" human capital: I believe this sort of programming counteracts neoliberal subjectivity. Neoliberal subjectivity is the notion that a life is best served by shaping it in a such a way that one's identity, interests and pursuits is inextricably tied to becoming a competitive, economic asset. Connected to this idea, Brown writes, "human capital is constrained to self-invest in ways that contribute to its appreciation or at least prevent its depreciation" (2015, p. 177). Devising programming in student affairs that facilitates community connections and fosters friendships without networking aims, heightens creative skills that are not cultivated expressly for benefitting capitalism, and provides a sense of freedom awakes our students to beauty and purpose outside of neoliberal demands. Surely, one program alone cannot free our students from neoliberal subjectivity, but implementing access to meaningful

engagement with the arts provides an avenue for students to contemplate 'more' and 'better' through a life-enhancing lens that is disconnected from the neoliberal value system.

Relevant Factor: Assessment in the Arts

A question or concern I have posed throughout this thesis centers on the notion that the value of the arts is largely unquantifiable, and, therefore, challenging to assess. Further, my educational philosophy and value system calls for a means of assessment that is not driven by metrics or quantifiable features, but assessment that is measured on adding value to students' quality of life. In my research, I was drawn to work that has called into question assessment in the arts and poses thoughts for alternative ways of measurement.

Gaztambide-Fernadez's article, or self-titled 'rejoinder,' is the final product of a dialogue he began in his writing of *Why the Arts Don't Do Anything: Toward a New Vision for Cultural Production in Education.* The aforementioned piece paved the way for a forum among leading arts educators and policymakers in the United States, and the rejoinder I have examined is the response to the conversations held within the forum. In this rejoinder, the author clarifies several points on his stance surrounding the language around the arts in education, primarily advocating for a shift toward a mindset he describes as a 'rhetoric of cultural production.' Gaztambide-Fernandez argues that in arts education, we currently utilize a 'rhetoric of effects' in order to describe, validate, and measure the impact of the arts. He goes on to caution that the 'rhetoric of effects' is reductive, idealizing arts and diluting their complexities, particularly marginalizing cultural practices that are not held as 'art' in our society. The notion of a 'rhetoric of efforts' correlates to the notion I have presented throughout this thesis that the arts are a means to an end rather than a valuable entity of their own. Further, within this rhetoric, the author believes that

what is considered the arts is guided by "Eurocentric, hierarchical notions of aesthetic experience" (Gaztambide-Fernadez, 2013, p. 636). He then calls for a shift toward a rhetoric of cultural production, particularly for educators who claim a commitment to issues of social justice. "This rhetoric begins from the assumption that culture is constantly being made and remade through the symbolic work that pervades people's lives and that it is in this making and remaking that lay the prospects for social transformation" (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013, p. 639). The author argues that utilizing this type of rhetoric when describing the arts will move arts educators away from the quantification of the nearly unquantifiable, such as how the arts subvert hegemony and hierarchy. Gaztambide-Fernadez asserts that a rhetoric of cultural production maintains the notion that every community has a culture and creative existence, and utilizing already existing, cultural experiences should be the course of action for devising educational experiences in the arts. Gaztambide-Fernandez closes by stating: "such a rethinking requires not only time but attention to the details and complexities of teaching and learning "on the ground," as well as a commitment to the possibility that things can be otherwise" (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013, p. 643).

Belluigi's work further supports my line of questioning surrounding assessment in her research on the development of student artists, and how academic assessment shapes their artistry and metacognition, inextricably tying their sense of self as an artist to eventual, professional practice. Belluigi executed an exploratory study which centered on student-artist authenticity and how it is affected by assessment culture and institutional structures. The study followed art students as they worked toward their final showcases at two different higher education institutions, one in England and one in South Africa, indicating the influence of English, colonial assessment on both spaces. In her findings, Belluigi states that "data from both

schools indicated that whilst some students were engaged with and sometimes even proud of their creative work, most often there were strong experiences of alienation as the artwork became a product of exchange for assessment purposes" (Belluigi, 2020, p. 20). The researcher also indicates that students who worked more explicitly for approval during assessment in their art making suffered alienation from their artistic identities. In connecting with supervisors and educators at these institutions, the researcher found that most educators indicated an internal struggle between a moral obligation to support students and their duties as assessors.

Both Gaztambide-Fernadez's and Belluigi's articles help me explore the dialogue among educators working within the arts regarding assessment. As Gaztambide-Fernandez calls for alternative ways of knowing, I am inspired to develop assessment measures for my intervention that measure success that does not subscribe to hegemonic standards; for example, my assessment will not call for a measurement of how engagement with the arts impacts test scores, but will strive to measure how artistic engagement has enhanced participants' quality of life. Belluigi's piece provides additional framework, emphasizing the notion that assessment should not be focused on the art itself, but rather the experiences within the collective. The goal of the collective is not to produce art that is "good" by the measures of society, but to provide space for students to engage with the arts in a tactile way that brings additional fulfillment and meaning to their educational experiences.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have illustrated the history of my concern, beginning with the emergence of neoliberalism under the Nixon Presidency through the Obama era. Further, I explored the current state of my concern, noting the severity of the potential extinction of the arts

and humanities within the American university. Additionally, I argued that as we continue to witness the cuts in arts curriculum, student affairs professionals have an even greater responsibility to provide meaningful, artistic, co-curricular engagement to students. Finally I explored several facets of relevant HESA literature: the relationship between the arts and civic engagement, the arts as a tool for student identity development, and the contradictory nature between arts and assessment. The research and work examined throughout this chapter has had a direct impact on the development of my intervention, which I will explain in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Introduction: Chapter 4

In the previous chapters of this thesis, I have discussed my positionality, my educational philosophy and beliefs around Critical Action Research, and provided the history of and examined literature surrounding my thematic concern. These efforts have directly impacted and shaped my proposed intervention: The Creative Campus Collective. To reiterate, my thematic concern centers on the threat neoliberal ideology poses to the arts within the university. As Willard Dix writes, "amputating sociology, English, history, philosophy, the classics, and art and music, is always done in the name of economizing…In reality, the motivation is often trying to get rid of troublesome departments that sometimes inspire students to think critically about social systems, culture and history" (2018, para. 1). As the North American university continues to "economize" in the name of producing competitive human capital, I charge student affairs professionals to replace what is being lost in the classrooms by integrating arts-based methodology in their programming. More specifically, I challenge student affairs professionals to create opportunity for students to engage in art making which responds to and creates awareness surrounding societal issues. Out of this concern and my own belief that the arts deserve a greater presence in the student affairs space, I devised the Creative Campus Collective.

Intervention Overview

My proposed intervention, The Creative Campus Collective (the CCC), is an organization open to students of all majors facilitating engagement in socially-conscious art making. Before the start of each academic year, staff advisors, graduate assistants and student ambassadors will choose a cause or issue of social justice to respond to via art. For example, in the 2023-2024 academic year, all art created within the CCC could respond to the privatized prison system in

the United States and awareness surrounding incarcerated populations. Artistic mediums practiced within the collective can include but is not limited to, visual art, music, literature, and performance. The spring semester culminates in a final showing in which the larger community is invited to come and experience the work created by students over the course of the academic year; however, the focus of the collective is not on the final product but rather on the collaborative process. At the start of each academic year, students will be charged with reflecting on past culminations and consider how their current work will inform the future directions of the collective. Additionally, well before each semester begins, professional staff will be responsible for contacting professors who might be interested in embedding CCC participation in their curriculum. All members of the CCC will be provided with space and resources on campus to create, interact with each other's' work, and to receive guidance from professional staff and graduate assistants. Additionally, there will be programming embedded within the semester that invites local artists to campus for talks and critiques of students' work. Ultimately, the Creative Campus Collective will challenge students and the community to face issues of social justice in a tactile and engaging manner and provide greater access on campuses to longitudinal, artistic engagement within student affairs.

Theory to Praxis: Philosophy of Education

In Chapter 2, I detailed my philosophy of education which was largely supported by the work of Dewey, Freire, and Maxine Greene. Within my philosophy, I address the notion of the educational continuum (Dewey, 1938/1997) and how it is my belief that positive educative experiences require time and space. In developing the Creative Campus Collective, one of the features I was most conscious of was devising a program that took place over the course of the academic year and allowed for students to join for every year they are enrolled in school. In

describing mis-educative experiences, Dewey writes, "an experience may be such as to engender callousness; it may produce lack of sensitivity and of responsiveness. Then the possibilities of having richer experience in the future are restricted" (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 26). The notion that an experience is mis-educative if it does not allow for student and educator space and time to evolve and improve has resonated with me in developing this year-long, program model. Though students may not be able to participate for the full academic year or their artwork might be completed before the year is through, I believe the gift of a full year to engage with art making and the issue the art is responding to creates a deeper impact and more meaningful campus engagement.

Another key concept from my philosophy of education that has significantly impacted my intervention is the desire to counter what Freire refers to as the "banking model" of education. (Freire). The banking model is one that sees students as merely repositories for knowledge and teachers as those holding all knowledge and power in the educative experience. Freire cautions, "the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less the develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (Freire, 1968/2014, p. 73). Traditional, classroom learning is rife with educative experiences that embody the features of the banking model. Therefore, I find it imperative for student affairs professionals to devise programming that creates a democratic and collaborative experience for students and educators alike. The Creative Campus Collective has professional staff dedicated to supporting the work of the students: however, the professional advisors and graduate assistants are not embedded in the program in order to restrict or place demands upon the students regarding the production of art, but rather to support through critique and guidance and to serve as conduits between potential student collaborations. Additionally, the arts as

methodology develop this 'critical consciousness' Freire refers to, which is part of the reason why they are significantly underrepresented in American education. The Creative Campus Collective provides a space on campus for students to develop a critical lens surrounding the issues in their community through artistic engagement.

Finally, the work of Maxine Greene surrounding aesthetic philosophy shaped the ethos of my intervention and several of its goals. Greene writes, "when so many forces are working to thrust young people into passivity, the open-mindedness and sense of exploration fostered by aware aesthetic involvements may well move them to break with the 'cotton wool' of dailyness" (Greene, 2001, p. 22). As argued throughout this thesis, the university has become a place where dominant power can contribute to the production of human capital—students are molded into who powers wish them to be for the betterment of our economy and ideological order. However, as Greene articulates, artistic and aesthetic engagement has the ability to open minds and encourage us to think beyond the scope of what is apparent, expected, or pedestrian (Greene, 2001). If the purpose of a university classroom remains tethered to career futures, student affairs professionals must create opportunities for students to expand beyond such limited or narrow-minded goals and expectations. It is unrealistic to think that the North American university will ever be detached from career goals at this moment in time, but there can and should also be space for the notion that the university has equal purpose in broadening perspectives and creating openings for students to think beyond current systems and structures. As Greene writes, "a curriculum in aesthetic education is always in process as we who are teachers try to make possible a continuing enlargement of experience" (Greene, 2001, p. 28). The Creative Campus Collective seeks to inspire students to innovate beyond what is prescribed or evident—to not settle for what they are told they can and should do but, through art, give voice to the yet

unimagined. This sort of freedom of artistic expression, particularly when responding to societal ills, can spark those surrounding to join or feel inspired to engage similarly.

Theory to Praxis: Literature Review

As previously articulated in Chapter 3, I found great inspiration for my intervention through existing programming at colleges integrating the arts in student affairs programming that mirrors the values of my educational philosophy. It has also felt crucial to me to develop an intervention that specifically allows for students to engage in art making that is socially conscious or responsive to salient, societal issues. The Prison Creative Arts Project, at the University of Michigan, in particular, has provided great inspiration for the beginnings of the Creative Campus Collective and future directions. Leaders at the PCAP write:

> The Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) brings those impacted by the justice system together with the University of Michigan community for artistic collaboration, mutual learning, and growth. Founded in 1990 with a single theatre workshop, PCAP has grown to include courses, exhibits, publications, arts programming, and events that reach thousands of people each year. (PCAP, n.d.)

Within my current intervention, I have attempted to center community: not only is the Creative Campus Collective open to all students regardless of major or class year, I plan to embed community involvement through inviting local artists to be guest critics and lecturers and to offer opportunities for cultural immersion at local nonprofits and museums for those CCC participants. I believe that this integration of community members at large provides two-fold benefit: allowance for students to gain diverse perspectives beyond the institution and to grow the notoriety and impact of the Creative Campus Collective. I will detail hopes surrounding future directions of the CCC that are beyond the scope of this thesis in Chapter 5, but I believe drawing

on these community-based elements from organizations such as the Prison Creative Arts Project

at the University of Michigan has deepened the quality and impact of my programming.

I also found studying articles centered on the relationship between the arts and engaging

students in civic and social issues proved critical to the development of goals, assessment, and

length of programming within the Creative Campus Collective. The study executed by

McPherson and Mazza surrounding the "One Million Bones Project," which is detailed in

Chapter 3 helped me affirm several notions I had when crafting my intervention. First, the

findings of this study confirmed my belief participatory, artistic engagement in relation to issues

of social justice can create a long-term impact in ways that bearing witness to art cannot

necessarily provide. Further, this article has helped me craft my assessment measures through

utilizing reflective poetry as a feature within the study after students had engaged in the paper

mache, art making process. Utilizing an assessment measure that is in itself artistic allows for

two benefits: a greater deepening and understanding of the experience for students and it allows

for educators to assess in a way that is aligned with the values of the collective. As I have

emphasized throughout this thesis, I believe the arts and their benefits are nearly unquantifiable,

however, using artistic processes as the assessment measures themselves allows for a

deconstruction of positivist findings and a more creative, collaborative approach to the

betterment of future Creative Campus Collective cycles. Greater detail surrounding assessment

will be provided in Chapter 5.

Relevant Professional Competencies

When considering the ACPA & NASPA competencies in relation to centering students'

humanity, my leadership style and my proposed intervention, I draw the most inspiration from

the challenge to "think critically and creatively, and imagine possibilities for solutions that do

not currently exist or are not apparent" (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 21), which is considered a foundational leadership outcome. While I hope this is something I do in my own work, this competency applies more directly to this mission of the CCC itself. As educators, I do not believe there is meaning in our work if we cannot imagine a better future, and if we are not preparing our students to be able to do the same. This proposed intervention was borne out of my passion for the arts in educational setting, the communities I have built while engaging in the arts, and the understanding of self I have gained from art making processes. Beyond this, I also believe that creating this space for students to work toward a goal that benefits the community at large strips away the sense of competition that is so heavily fostered within the neoliberal, academic environment. It is my ultimate hope that students utilize the organization as a space for community building, exploration of self, and the discovery of a purpose beyond themselves and within a greater community. The fostering of such an environment allows for students to create and imagine without the pressures of superficial success and gives them the resources to think imaginatively beyond perceived barriers and realities.

It is my belief that the CCC is best served by educators and leaders who embrace a transformational leadership style, which is detailed more extensively in Chapter 5. In examining my intervention through a leadership lens, it is my belief that there are many leaders within the Creative Campus Collective. The co-directors and graduate assistants exist as leaders within the organization who serve as a conduit between the students and the institution and provide professional insight on creative processes, collection of resources, and work surrounding issues of social justice. However, the ultimate goal of the organization is for the educators to take a back seat, allowing the students to become leaders of the organization. The CCC is set up in such a way that the students in the CCC are artists, activists, educators for their community,

entrepreneurs, resource generators, and leaders themselves. It is my intent that the organization be adjacent to a co-op, relying as much as possible on the talents and strengths of the students to create supplementary resources and support each other's' projects, from rehearsals, community engagement events, and the final showcase itself. In this internal reliance, students will be able to collaborate effectively, deepen their self-efficacy, and hone leadership skills that are transferrable to many fields outside of the arts.

Related Personal and Professional Experience

As I articulated in Chapter 1, my background before turning toward a career in higher education and student affairs was grounded in theatre and the arts. Being an artist will always be a part of my own identity regardless of whether I am pursuing the arts professionally and, therefore, I seek opportunities to embed the arts in my current line of work as frequently as I can. This past summer, I served as a graduate intern at Brown University where I worked in activities and programming for their Pre-College & Summer Undergraduate Division. Though, time was not a luxury afforded to me in developing my program, I was able to integrate some arts-based methodology in my work. For example, I offered a reflective, collage activity to all students, which provided me with some non-validated, anecdotal data. I noticed a few, relevant factors when engaging students in this activity: 1. Several students reported that they never felt like 'artists' or had true artistic training, but expressed feelings of pride in their finished product and a desire to continue engaging in similar arts-based programming 2. Students were generally eager to celebrate the work of their peers or collaborate on a collage in groups or pairs. 3. The collage materials provided to students was sourced from magazines, with a focus on magazines that were political or academic in nature such as Time or college quarterly magazines. In this way, students were perhaps, unconsciously, engaging with salient news and societal issues

through the construction of their art. I prompted students with a theme or question before each session such but also encouraged them to create whatever they desired and to use the theme as a suggestion. Students who partook in this activity often produced meaningful and personal pieces that they were allowed to keep beyond their time at Brown.

I mention this experience as, though this was not a formal research project and nor did I conduct formal data, I was able to engage students interested in disciplines other than the arts in an artistic process and witness the impact. Largely, this activity was incredibly well received and requested several times throughout the summer. In relation to my intervention, I found anecdotal feedback surrounding the notion that students did not "feel like artists" prior to the collage session but, after, felt inspired to keep experimenting with arts most relevant. It is my belief that everyone is an artist, and when we give students the tools to create, they discover avenues for expression and an expansion of identity. This experience was significant for me as an educator to witness my students try something new and leave the activity feeling inspired or more confident in their abilities. I believe work within the Creative Campus Collective could have similar impact on individuals and create a positive, supportive community among peers the way that this simple, terminal activity managed to do in one session.

Program Proposal

In the following section, I will extensively detail components of my intervention including: program goals and outcomes, roles and recruitment of relevant stakeholders, programmatic events, and perceived challenges.

Program Goals and Outcomes

Program goals for the Creative Campus Collective include:

Program Goal 1: Participants in the Creative Campus Collective will be inspired to pursue art making and incorporate the arts into their lives beyond their time spend in the university.

Program Goal 2: The Creative Campus Collective will create a collaborative space and provide resources for students to engage in a long-term, artistic process rooted in community.

Program Goal 3: Students participating in the Creative Campus Collective will be compelled to become more engaged civically in their communities beyond their time in the CCC.

Program Goal 4: Campus and community members attending the final showing will be report feelings of inspiration as it relates to becoming involved with the centered cause or to participate in more artistic and cultural events as a result of witnessing student work.

Programmatic outcomes for the Creative Campus Collective include:

Programmatic Outcome 1: At least 80% of students surveyed upon exiting the Creative Campus Collective indicate that they hope and plan to continue to engage with the arts and seek out art making opportunities throughout the rest of their time in college or post-graduation

Programmatic Outcome 2: 80% of student respondents will indicate feelings of belonging to an artistic community on campus and report that time spent with the Creative Campus Collective helped them form new relationships they hope to maintain

Programmatic Outcome 3: 60% of students will be able to identify how their art making within the CCC has enhanced and deepened their understanding of the issue of social justice the art is responding to.

Relevant Intervention Component: Stakeholders

Professional and Graduate Staff

Within the Creative Campus Collective, I propose roles for two, professional staff members, approximately five to ten graduate assistants (1-2 per discipline: music, performance, visual art, technical art, and literary art). Please see Appendices A and B for detailed job descriptions of each role. The two professional staff members serve as co-directors of the organization, one director overseeing the work within visual and technical arts, the other director overseeing the work with performing, literary, and musical arts. Directors have a primary responsibilities of selection of the centered relevant social issue or topic for the academic year, in

collaboration with the graduate assistants and student ambassadors, securing all resources for the collective to succeed, including but not limited to rehearsal and studio spaces, materials such as textiles, machinery, paint, cameras, kilns, etc. for student work, forging campus partnerships with faculty for potential embedment within course curriculum and academic departments housing the relevant disciplines within the collective for collaboration on the sharing of resources and spaces, and finally, developing relevant connections within the greater community in order to bring guest artists to campus for workshops and in order to expose students to cultural entities outside of campus.

Graduate assistants are required to have formal training in or be currently pursuing a graduate degree in the discipline in which they educate in and oversee. The graduate assistants are contracted to attend all open studio sessions, which happen three times a week, in order to aide students in the development of their work through guidance and critique. The graduate assistants are also required to collaborate with the students on how they plan to house their projects, if necessary, and to ensure the maintenance of campus spaces and materials throughout the academic year. Graduate assistants also serve as a conduit between the students the directors, placing budgetary requests beyond initial proposals for required materials and gathering feedback for requested workshops and excursions. Graduate assistants are also required to collaborate across disciplines, identifying possible intersections between student work and talents: for example, graduate assistants in literary arts, might identify and collaborate with the students and graduate assistants in performing arts to develop a script for students participating as theatre artists to perform.

Student Recruitment and Involvement

First and foremost, all students, regardless of class year or academic discipline, are invited to join the collective. It is helpful to have experience in disciplines they might be interested in pursuing as staff educators are not teaching students technical skills such as how to use a kiln or how to compose music and play a violin. More accessible disciplines for students without formal or technical training might be found within literary arts, collaging, drawing or painting, and performance. There are two avenues in which students can get involved in the Creative Campus Collective. The first is through submitting a project proposal alongside, at least, two other peers. Due to the nature of the collective, students are required to be collaborators and cannot self-submit as an independent artist. If a student approaches the collective as an independent artist, their skillset and interests can be matched with an appropriate group submission. Groups can submit project ideas with students in varied disciplines that will result in a cohesive piece at the end of the year or they can work with other students interested in the same discipline and create one piece within their shared medium. Please see Appendix C for the "Project Proposal Application Form." Before submitting their proposal, interested students have the month of September to confer with a graduate assistants and program directors to ensure their project responds to their collective's theme, that their project expectations are realistic and achievable, and that the collective has access to their requested resources or can make a budgetary request if not available at the time of submission.

The second way in which students can join the Creative Campus Collective is through enrollment in a course which embeds work within the CCC into the curriculum. This is a shorter engagement with the collective, as participation is dictated by the term of the course and the submitted project is restricted to a collaborative piece constructed by the entire class (some project ideas for a class project might include a mural, a large collage, or a co-constructed poem

or play). Further details surrounding class participation are detailed later in this chapter in the section detailing professor partnerships.

As previously mentioned, though the collective is open to all students, CCC leaders will strategically target students majoring or minoring in the arts and participants in other arts-based student organizations such as student theatre companies, art clubs, dance troupes, and more. Students falling within these categories will receive directed outreaches within the first week of the academic year, classroom visits from CCC leaders and graduate assistants, and incentives to join such as connection to valued artists in the greater community, a space for their work to be displayed and exhibited, access to free resources and spaces, and publicity from campus and local news sources. Targeting relevant populations and hosting participating courses should generate a substantial amount of projects that can be developed throughout the academic year and displayed or performed at the final showing. For the first year of execution, a realistic goal for participation in the CCC might look like three pieces submitted via partnered classes, and at least ten submissions from student collaborative groups. Graduate assistants are also welcome to submit work they might develop in open studio time.

Student Ambassadors

After one cycle of the Creative Campus Collective, professional staff and graduate assistants will be able to identify those students hoping to return to the collective the following academic year and nominate them as student ambassadors for the program. Student ambassadors have the opportunity to serve in this junior leadership role through assisting in the selection of the year's thematic concern, tabling and recruiting students to join the collective, and through serving as helpers to the graduate assistants during open studios and other events. Student

ambassadors will receive a modest scholarship for their role and letters of recommendation from a director and a graduate assistant.

Community Involvement: Guest Artists

Throughout the academic year, CCC leaders will also strive to invite guest artists to open studio sessions to provide additional critique and guidance or to deliver a workshop open to all CCC members. Particularly, leaders will strive to identify artists within the greater community dedicated to the creation of art that is socially conscious or educative on topical issues. Inviting such participants allows for a diversity of perspectives as students cultivate their work and it draws connections from the collective to the greater community.

Professor Partnerships & Curriculum Embedment

At least four months before each semester, co-directors will put out an open call to professors, asking if they would like to integrate an arts-based project into their course curriculum that could be supported and showcased via the Creative Campus Collective. CCC leaders will specifically target courses within the humanities and social sciences. Further, leaders will most heavily target courses within the aforementioned disciplines that are largely comprised of first year students in order to generate potential enrollment from students in future years. As professors develop their syllabus, the directors of the CCC will work with faculty in order to develop a realistic project and schedule and identify resources and spaces required to complete the project. For example, if a professor identifies that they would like their students to make a mural, the visual art co-director will collaborate with the professor before the semester begins on securing materials, finding times that work for both the class and the graduate assistants or co-directors, and requiring the class attend at least one, weekend open studio session in lieu of a

weekday class. These professor partnerships drive greater participation in the collective and allow for the arts to be easily and meaningfully embedded within curriculum. If the work is completed within the fall semester, collective leaders will store and maintain the finished piece until the final showing, which all class participants and professors are invited and strongly encouraged to attend, though, it cannot be a course requirement as fall courses have already ended. Additionally, all students that participate via class are also welcome to attend any workshops and cultural trips facilitated by the CCC throughout the entire academic year. A sample outreach to professors is detailed in Appendix D.

Relevant Intervention Component: Program Events

Open Studios and Rehearsals

Open studios are hosted three times a week during the academic year (excepting campus breaks and holidays). Open studios are a time when students have access to space, all necessary materials, collaborative partners, and graduate assistants within their discipline in order to devote time to their pieces. Open studios take place once during a weekday afternoon, ideally overlapping with a campus, common hour break for those commuter students, one weekday evening after 6 pm, and one weekend, early afternoon. Students are required to attend at least one of the weekly open studios until their project is complete or fully rehearsed: at the time of the submission of their proposal, all students within the proposing group must identify when all of their members can attend open studio sessions. As the CCC is grounded in collaboration, students cannot work on their group projects independently.

Community and Cultural Immersion

Throughout the academic year, co-directors identify opportunities for the collective to experience cultural events outside of campus. For example, leaders might organize a trip to see a play or to visit a museum. Further, in lieu of a weekend open studio, leaders might organize a trip to a site or space that is relevant to the collective's centered theme. As a general example, if all work produced within the collective in the 2025-2026 academic year is centered on climate injustice, students might be invited to visit non-profits centering their work on issues of climate justice or take a trip to a particularly, environmentally devastated area to draw inspiration for their work and better understand the scope or severity of the centered issue.

The Final Showing

The final showing is the culminating event of the academic year for the Creative Campus Collective. This weekend is an opportunity for the student's work to be displayed, and the opening evening is a chance for students to interface with the community and witness the impact their work has on attendees. The final showing will take place during alumni weekend: most institutions host alumni weekend during the end of the spring semester, particularly in late April. This way, there will already be a greater flow of traffic on campus and a heavy presence of alumni, who often feel more compelled to donate to campus organizations than outside parties.

The final showing is a weekend long-event, but the official opening event is on Friday evening. All students participating in the collective are required to attend the opening event. If there is a piece of art being showcased that requires live performance, those students are required to perform once per day at pre-determined times throughout the weekend that the exhibition is open and stationary work is being displayed. Please see Appendix E advertising a potential Creative Campus Collective final showing.

Perceived Challenges

As I have noted throughout this thesis, funding in both the arts and in higher education and student affair is always a challenge. My anticipated cost for this program, which will be detailed in chapter 5, is substantial, especially as I endeavor to provide equitable wages and benefits for all workers within the collective, including graduate assistants, in a neoliberal society. Additionally, proving the value and validity of this programming—programming that is intended to foster community, social responsiveness, and meaning in students' lives—is undoubtedly a challenge as the neoliberal university heavily relies on quantifiable metrics to prove worth and validity of programming.

A logistical challenge faced within this intervention is that of scheduling. Certainly, college students are overstretched in terms of commitments and most institutions host students who commute or are only enrolled part-time. As the collective evolves, considerations might need to be made surrounding individual participation and the availability of open studios. Ideally, there would be open studios every day, but in order to maintain a realistic schedule at the onset, I have detailed three opportunities to hold these crucial studio moments.

A final challenge is the intimate and sometimes harmful and taxing nature of creating art in response to social issues. In order for the work produced within the collective to be safe and responsible, professional staff and graduate assistants must have training surrounding working with students of diverse populations and identities, particularly those that are marginalized. Art making can be both provocative and therapeutic, but boundaries need to be established between students, their work, and their peers, especially if the centered issue deals with racial trauma or harm to any marginalized identity or population. Professional staff should be sensitive in the selection and facilitation of such topics.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I introduced my intervention, discussed how theory and literature has impacted its development, and finally detailed all components of my intervention. In the next chapter, I will detail the timeline, budget, and assessment measures surrounding my program. I will conclude this thesis by considering limitations and future directions.

Chapter 5: Implementation and Evaluation

Introduction

Within the final chapter of this thesis, I will detail the logistics of my proposed intervention for those who might endeavor to implement the Creative Campus Collective. Additionally, I will close with remarks on the value of the arts, particularly noting ways in which the arts interface with current events.

Implementation: Timeline

Before the first year of execution of the Creative Campus Collective, I anticipate leaders of the organization would need at least a year to build a strategic plan, coordinate with campus stakeholders, plan which spaces and resources will be necessary to utilize in the impending year, and to devote time to fundraising and developing partnerships. Additionally, this preparation year will be spent identifying and recruiting graduate students to fill the graduate assistantship roles. After this year of preparation is complete, those implementing the CCC might follow the suggested timeline detailed below in Table 1.1

Table 1.1

Time of Year	Program Developments
April prior to Fall Pilot	Outreach to Professors garnering class participations/collaboration
June prior to Fall Pilot	Solidify class involvements Book campus spaces Begin to collect anticipated, necessary resources
July prior to Fall Pilot	Finalize Graduate Assistant staffing

	Pro Staff and Grad Assistants work to select relevant theme/topical issue students will respond to via art making. (In future years, Student Ambassadors will be involved in this decision)
August/Beginning of Fall Pilot Semester	Recruitment begins via visits to Orientation Events, tabling, campus signage (targeted in buildings hosting arts departments), and Q & A sessions for interested students
September of Pilot Semester	Proposal workshops for interested students Staff continue to collect necessary resources based on rolling proposal submission studios Open studios begin for involved classes/ accepted proposals
October of Pilot Year	Proposals due the day before fall break begins (approximately mid-October). Co-Directors finalize participants and provide feedback and guidance on all proposals for graduate assistants and students to implement in open studios Based on accepted proposals, Co-Directors will begin to curate final showing event, securing appropriate spaces/resources, working to create advertising materials etc. Open studios will occur 3 times per week: Graduate Assistants will focus heavily on working to help students with honing their proposals or working together to make necessary changes. Additionally, grad assistants will begin to draw connections among projects, potentially identifying student partnerships across proposed pieces
November of Pilot Year	First guest artist comes to campus for critiques/lecture based on skillset and discipline Co-Directors will begin to recruit class participation for the spring semester Scheduled Cultural Immersion trip week post-thanksgiving for students to be re-inspired toward end of semester/leading up to finals
December of Pilot Year	Class participants and professors finalize their work, CCC administers reflective prompt and instructions in order to gain feedback from class participants Final open studio of the fall semester occurs week before finals. After final open studio is complete, Co-Directors and Grad Assistants work to store student work and work in progress safely until the start of spring open studio sessions
January of Pilot Year	Class participation for spring semester is finalized End of January: students return and open studios resume

February-March of Pilot Year	Students/grad assistants continue working in open studios, work begins to finalize toward the end of March If students finish their pieces early, graduate assistants work to identify in progress pieces that could use additional support and talents Week after spring break: guest artist is invited for critiques/lecture as students move toward end of academic year in the CCC Showing is finalized, program goes to print, advertising placed heavily on campus
April of Pilot Year	Final cultural immersion trip of academic year Critiques/final dress rehearsals begin leading up to final showing Co-Directors are interviewing/recruiting next year's graduate assistants Co-Directors begin to recruit classes for next cycle Final showing opens alumni weekend (typically last week of April) Surveys administered and collected from guests attending the final showing
May of Pilot Year	Students, graduate assistants and professional staff work to rehome or clean up physical pieces of art, donating or selling to interested parties or allowing students to take home work Students are invited to a closing gathering, where they will be asked to submit a piece of reflective poetry/creative writing that Co-Directors will use for assessment purposes Students are approached to return to the collective, offering of roles as student ambassadors Exit interviews with leaving graduate assistants, used for data analysis
June post-pilot year	Professional staff finalize graduate assistants for next cycle and classes embedding CCC into coursework Co-Directors work together to assess feedback from student participants, class participants, graduate assistants, and guests attending the final showing and strategize necessary changes to programming

July post-pilot year	Co-Directors, Graduate Assistants, and Student Ambassadors work together to select next year's centered issue Group discussions occur surrounding successes/shortcomings of the pilot year and ways to improve for Year 2 of the CCC

Implementation: Leadership

As I have previously discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, I am drawn to a leadership style that is democratic, in that decision-making is made alongside students, and leadership that is transformational. In developing this intervention, I sought to devise a program that had the ability to change the lives of those who interact with it: whether they are student participants, graduate assistants, or audience members. If I were to step into the role of a Co-Director within the CCC, I would attempt to be as involved with the development of student artwork as I could and, instead of leading from afar, attend open studios and ensure that I have one-on-one meetings with all of my graduate staff each week in order to develop their leadership abilities. The "consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, community/societal values, citizenship, change" (HERI, 1996, p. 21).

Implementation: Budget & Fundraising

The detailed, anticipated budget for the Creative Campus Collective can be found within Appendix F. This budget includes: compensation for graduate assistants, cost of guest lecturers and cultural immersion trips, materials and resources for student work, costs associated with the final showing including printing of posters, flyers, and programs, and refreshments, and small scholarships for each student who finishes the academic year with the CCC and completes a reflective writing piece for the collection and analysis for assessment purposes. The current budget assumes that the university would be able to provide the salaries for the Co-Directors

staffing this program. This budget totals out to approximately $117,000 per academic year, which, could indeed be considered cost prohibitive or expensive. However, in order to maintain my previously asserted value system surrounding equitable pay and the necessity of devoting resources to quality, long-term engagement with the arts for college students, I believe that a larger budget reflects a higher quality of programming. There are several strategies I propose for funding including ticket sales, the eventual development of a grant writing role, collaboration with academic departments for shared resources, potential community partnerships and solicitation of donations from alumni, beginning at the final showing which is scheduled for alumni weekend.

Perhaps the most obvious source of funding comes from ticket sales from the final showing weekend. Though these sales certainly would not cover overhead costs for the collective at large, ticket sales could directly be applied to the cost of student scholarships and resources needed for next year's student participants. I anticipate a price of $5 for student admission to the final showing weekend, $10 for alumni, faculty, and staff admission, and $12 for community members outside of the university. If, over the course of the weekend, the final showing draws attendance from 200 students, 200 alumni, 50 faculty and staff, and 100 community members, this could generate almost $5000 in profits. In future years, as the collective grows, my hope is that a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales could also be donated to an organization directly supporting the cause the collective has centered artistic response on for the academic year.

In addition to the proceeds collected from ticket sales at the final showing, the placement of the showing within alumni weekend was intentional in an effort to generate funding and donations from alumni. At the final showing, all guests will be provided with a survey asking for feedback on thoughts surrounding the event measuring the effectiveness of the showing in

relation to program goals and outcomes. In addition, these surveys will ask respondents to identify their relationship to the college, including alumni and to provide contact information. Please see Appendix G for this survey. Once the weekend is over and surveys have been collected, staff will add the names and contact information of alumni to a database that will be updated after each showing. Through this database, staff will be able to solicit donations from alumni for future showings and Creative Campus Collective cycles. Please see Appendix H for this outreach to alumni.

In order to reduce funding spent on physical resources and materials used to create pieces, Co-Directors are charged with the task of collaborating with academic departments that host majors that reflect the projects students might be completing. For example, perhaps an alliance could be forged with a visual arts department in which the collective is welcome to use department-housed kilns, 3D printers, or other machinery during open studio sessions so long as they do not interfere with class schedules and graduate assistants are present to oversee operation of machinery. This partnership is beneficial for both parties as the CCC will be targeting arts majors and minors and the collective will serve as an additional space for students to hone their craft and develop their abilities, directly complementing the work they might be completing for academic purposes. Additionally, the Creative Campus Collective will be hiring graduate students working within these departments, which will cover tuition and thus, potentially, drive enrollment for these academic departments that are often facing extinction within the neoliberal university. A strong partnership between the Creative Campus Collective and academic departments housing artistic disciplines could serve in reducing costs for both parties and a bolstered promotion of the value of the arts on a university campus.

An additional strategy that might be employed by leaders of the Creative Campus Collective is the forging of partnerships between the collective and the community at large. For example, perhaps there is an opportunity for students to visit local retirement homes and provide artistic experiences and interactions with residents. In turn, the organization might provide some funding or provide a donation to the organization. Additionally, as the CCC will center work on a specific cause each year, it might behoove leaders to find organizations that support the year's centered issue for a partnership. Leaders at the partner organization might be able to provide insight and leads on those parties interested in donating to the centered cause and could provide educational or cultural immersion experiences for students working within the CCC. This could be cost-saving for at least one of the cultural immersion experiences.

Finally, it would be ideal to for the Creative Campus Collective to eventually hire a part-time grant manager or development officer. This role would further add to the cost within the pilot year of the CCC, however, I believe the development of this organization and partnerships built by the collective in early years could lead to growth that allows for this eventual role to be added to the budget.

Implementation: Leadership

As I have previously discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, I am drawn to an educational leadership style that is democratic, in that decision-making is made alongside students, and leadership that is transformational. In developing this intervention, I sought to devise a program that had the ability to change the lives of those who interact with it, whether they are student participants, graduate assistants, or audience members. If I were to step into the role of a Co-Director within the CCC, I would attempt to be as involved with the development of student artwork as I could and, instead of leading from distance, attend open studios and ensure that I have one-on-one

meetings with all of my graduate staff each week in order to develop their leadership abilities. However, I believe it is key to distinguish between a present leader versus a leader who micro-manages. The role of all educators within the CCC is to support and guide students, rather than to manage or maintain. In researching leadership styles for the development of my intervention and its proposed, professional staff, I was drawn to integrating concepts from transformative leadership theorists and scholars.

Transformative or transformational leadership has two, key tenets: "(1) Change is the central purpose of leadership, and (2) leadership transcends one's position in an organizational hierarchy" (Harrison, 2011, p. 45). Transformative leadership is not concerned with management its entire purpose is to evolve and move beyond what already exists, and demands de-centering of hierarchical power in order to do so. Within transformative leadership, "leadership is viewed as a process rather than a position" (HERI, 1996, p. 18). I find transformative leadership particularly compelling for my own thematic concern and intervention as I seek to devise programming that de-centers authority and spreads agency among participants. Further, The Social Change Model of Leadership Development, a model that arguably centers transformation in its approach, illustrates seven critical values that support effective social change leadership development. These values, categorized as individual, group process, or community values, are: "consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, community/societal values, citizenship, change" (HERI, 1996, p. 21).

Though the Creative Campus Collective was structured in such a way that all seven 'C's' were addressed or intentionally thought of in its development, I believe there are two key 'C's' that shape my proposed intervention. It is imperative for me to have aspects of my program that center on developing 'Citizenship' among students with the greater society and community

through educational outreach and cultural, immersion experience embedded within the CCC. Often, the North American university experience is insular; student affairs educators often do an exemplary job of fostering school pride among the campus community. However, I think that we are remiss as educators if we do not extend our learning outside campus walls. Citizenship "recognizes that the common purpose of the group must incorporate a sense of concern for the rights and welfare of all those who might be affected by the group's efforts" (HERI, 1996, p. 23). Centering 'Citizenship' and the other '7 Cs' serves as foundational framework for creating transformational programming that grounds the arts in issues beyond the immediate community.

The other 'C' that has been deeply embedded within my programming and leadership aims is 'collaboration.' A key feature of the CCC is that no student can submit work individually, they must be working on a piece with at least two other collaborators. The role of the leaders in the CCC requires them to be able to draw connections among students and encouraging further collaboration beyond initial proposals. Therefore, as mentioned above, I believe it is imperative to lead alongside students. Perhaps the Co-Directors and graduate students are working on a piece in open studios aligned with the student themes or they find themselves as small contributors to student pieces. The aim of the showcase and the organization is not to center one, particular artistic voice but to share a collective voice. I believe this can best be achieved through leadership that is democratic and collaborative.

Assessment and Evaluation of Program

As I have previously asserted within this thesis, I believe that assessment within the arts is challenging and sometimes antithetical to the purpose of art making. However, assessment and evaluation of my proposed program is crucial in its evolution and betterment specifically in its aims to first, serve and center the humanity of university students, and to empower the

community at large. As this thesis and intervention has been developed through the lens of critical action research principles, it is imperative to work alongside the communities the intervention most directly impacts in order to make improvements.

As students are at the center of this intervention, their shared thoughts and feelings are vital to the program's success. Throughout the academic year, graduate assistants and co-directors should be attuned to anecdotal feedback and consider student perspectives beyond formal assessment measures. In addition to this anecdotal feedback, at the end of each semester, students will be asked to provide creative writing samples (poetry, song, journal entries, stream of consciousness writing) reflecting on their experiences within the Creative Campus Collective. Leaders will provide students with prompts such as: "How do you feel you've grown personally, spiritually, artistically, and/or academically within your time spent in the collective?" "Has this experience changed your perception of yourself as an artist?" "Has this experience changed the way you see the world around you?" "Have your experiences within the collective deepened your sense of or need for community?" Students are not required to answer any or all of the prompts within their responses, however, as educators seek to measure multidimensional growth among students, they will attempt to identify key themes within student responses. As improvements in programming take time, educators might be best served by focusing on one or two themes they are hoping to find emergent among student writing in a given academic year. For example, if educators are attempting to measure the effectiveness of the CCC's ability to generate feelings of belonging and a deepened sense of community in 2023-2024, they will identify how many students discuss concepts, memories, people, feelings, and experiences within the collective relevant to this theme. If very few students mention ideas related to this theme,

educators must strive to identify ways in which they can enhance the intended, communal nature of this programming.

In addition to serving students involved in the CCC, leaders should also be dedicated to enhancing community experiences and attitudes toward the program. At the end of each final showing, attendees will be asked to fill out a survey measuring their experiences. The survey will seek to identify if community participants are interested in returning to a future showing, if and what they learned by attending the showing, how the showing has affected their perceptions or attitudes toward art, and, if the respondent self-identifies as a student, the survey will question if the student felt moved to get involved in the CCC after attending the showing. Ideally, the final showing serves as an educational and inspirational for the larger community; please see Appendix G for a potential survey distributed to those attending the final showing.

Limitations and Looking Ahead

Perhaps one of the biggest limitations within this thesis, which I have alluded to in previous chapters, is the notion that our conception of 'art' as a Western society is largely influenced by white, Eurocentric values. Though strides and efforts have been and continue to be made for diversity in spaces dedicated to art making, whiteness is still pillared in fine art, media, and entertainment. Beyond representation of various identities in spaces dedicated to art making, I am also concerned with the integration of art making that is beyond the scope of what North American society defines as art. How could the Creative Campus Collective work to infuse, center or educate on art making in various cultures and regions? How can the work within the CCC seek to decolonize both art and academia? This concern is a larger conversation within society and not something that can be tackled within this intervention alone, but I believe it is a crucial discussion that should be had within artistic and academic communities alike.

Additionally, as access to the arts in North American K-12 education is largely determined by economic factors such as which school district a student is enrolled in and if parents or guardians can afford private lessons or extracurricular enrichment for students: I fear this will limit the diversity of students interested in the CCC. I believe that those students that do not have access to the arts within early education are not likely to gravitate toward this sort of program once they reach the university level. If I were to develop this intervention and thesis further, I would be interested in exploring how socioeconomic status affects one's pursuit of the arts and how leaders of this intervention could attract those students with limited, artistic experience. As I articulated in chapter one, it is my belief that all humans are artists and, therefore, all deserve educational opportunities to access and enhance those abilities.

Conclusion

On March 2nd, 2022, Inside Higher Education published an article titled, "What Do Actors Know About Leadership?," which centered on the remarkable and perhaps, unexpected, leadership demonstrated by Ukranian President, Volodymir Zelensky, as he and his country stand against the ongoing, Russian military invasion. Before Zelensky was President of the Ukraine, however, he was an actor and comedian. Within the aforementioned article, Kathy Bowles writes, "in times of crisis, leaders need to be brave and committed to their cause; they need to manage chaos, solve complex problems and hold true to their principles. The acting profession requires the same (as do the arts in general)" (2022, para. 3). Bates also highlights that the arts continue to be diminished and defunded in higher education despite their innumerable benefits, as evidenced at an extreme level by the leadership skills, humanity, and unflagging resilience of President Zelensky. Throughout this thesis, I have endeavored to bring awareness to the current state of the arts within higher education and the historical moments and ideologies

that have influenced this alarming lack or rapid deterioration of access to art making at the university level. As those in the United States continue to live with and emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, and witness atrocities being committed domestically and across the globe, such as the events in the Ukraine, I believe many are seeking community, human connection, comfort, and hope: the intervention proposed within this thesis strives to meet the needs of its participants in these very ways. However, this intervention is one of a million, potential arts-based interventions that have the power to positively impact the lives of the humans who interface with them. As I close this thesis, my hope is that its readers will consider ways in which they can pursue and integrate the arts within their own lives and how they can inspire others to do the same. The arts alone will not bring about world peace or fix the large, systemic issues we face within our country. However, it is my belief that the arts have the power to transform those who might be the next leaders who move us toward the co-construction of more equitable and compassionate communities.

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Appendix A

Co-Director Job Description (Performing Arts)

Job Summary

The Director of Performing Arts within the Creative Campus Collective is responsible for the oversight, development, and support of those students working within the performing arts engaged in the CCC's programming. Additionally, the Director of Performing Arts will oversee graduate assistants, cultivate campus partnerships and resources, and develop programming which enhances student experience within the CCC.

Duties

- Recruit, hire, train, and oversee graduate assistants pursuing study within the performing arts

- Collaborate with graduate assistants and student ambassadors on the selection of the CCC's centered, annual theme and the integration of this theme into student work and all programming

- Develop campus partnerships and relationships with faculty in order to grow CCC participation and resources

- Connect with community stakeholders for cultural immersion experiences and funding opportunities

- Oversee the production of student work, providing feedback and critique in open studio sessions

- Curate the final showing in collaboration with the Director of Visual Arts in order to produce a cohesive and meaningful culmination of student work

- Assess feedback and data surrounding the success of the programming in order to improve and evolve each year

- Oversee and manage budget, prioritizing necessary student resources and materials

- Plan academic year through the booking of spaces, scheduling of events and guest speakers, and the development of marketing for the final showing

- Engage in professional development opportunities that enhance cultural competency in order to best support students of diverse populations and backgrounds

Qualifications

- Education: Master's in Theatre, Dance, Music, or Master's in Higher Education, Arts Administration, Art/Music Therapy, or Social Work with prior experience and education in the performing arts.

- The successful candidate will have a background in the performing arts with additional experience in academic programming, educational coordination, arts administration and leadership, or student affairs work.

- Candidate should possess exemplary interpersonal skills and the ability to build successful relationships with a wide variety of stakeholders including, but not limited to, students, faculty, staff, and organizations in within the greater community

- Candidate should have a passion for and experience with socially conscious art making or art as a form of activism

Appendix B

Graduate Assistants Job Description

Job Description

Graduate Assistants within the Creative Campus Collective are meant to serve as educators and co-collaborators with students participating in the CCC. The Graduate Assistant will be pursuing graduate studies in a related, artistic discipline (including, but not limited to, music, theatre, dance, fine art, visual art, studio art, film, lighting design, sound design, animation, creative writing, or poetry). Graduate Assistants are responsible for overseeing all open studios, providing thoughtful critique and feedback to students, and serving as artistic, transformative leaders within the CCC community.

Duties

- Lead and oversee all open studio sessions in which students have several 15 hours per week to work on collaborative pieces

- Provide appropriate, constructive, and thoughtful feedback to students on their work in order to facilitate artistic growth and development

- Serve as main liaison between students and directors, reporting on progress and student needs when directors are unable to attend open studios

Qualifications

- Must be pursuing a graduate degree in the arts or English/Creative Writing (please see above for potentially relevant courses of study)

- Ideal candidate will have experience working as a teaching artist

Appendix C

Student Proposal Form

Creative Campus Collective: Project Proposal

Artists,

Thank you for your interest in the Creative Campus Collective: we are eager to receive and review your proposal! The CCC is a highly collaborative and supportive campus organization whose mission is dedicated to providing high quality, impactful, artistic engagement and experiences for all students. As you know, this year's theme centers on [incarceration and the privatized prison industry in the United States](). The Collective places no restrictions work you are interested in creating excepting that it must have some connection or be in response to this topical issue and that you must be creating a piece with at least two other peers. All students are accepted into the CCC so long as they meet the above requirements, but please look out for communication from our organization regarding potential adjustments to your piece and next steps regarding scheduling.

Warmly,

Performing Arts Director Catherine & Visual Arts Director Maura

Student Names & Pronouns: _____

Major & Class Year of Each Participant (list in order above): _____

Contact Information (Emails & Phone Numbers for each member): _____
_____

Working Title of Your Piece:_____

In the space below, please indicate how piece respond to or address the CCC's annual theme:

In the space below, please describe your piece and each participants' role within its creation:

In the space below, please indicate which materials you will need to successfully complete your piece:

By submitting this proposal, you acknowledge that everyone in your group can attend at least one of three open studios per week:

We have read and understood the above requirement ☐

By submitting this proposal, you acknowledge that you will be able to attend the spring showcase on April 22nd (if you are submitting a piece that involves live performance, you acknowledge that you are available to perform your piece each day of the showing weekend of April 22nd-24th)

We have read and understood the above requirement ☐

Please list any additional skills or talents within the arts that group members may possess and be willing to share with other, participating groups**:**_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix D
Professor Outreach

Dear Professor Jones,

We hope this email finds you well as we head toward the end of the semester. My name is Catherine Purcell and I serve as the Director of Performing Arts within the Creative Campus Collective. My colleague Maura (cc'ed on this email) and I reaching out regarding your Philosophy 250: Ethics in US course scheduled for next semester. If you have not finished planning your syllabus and course curriculum for PHL250, we invite you to consider partnership with the Creative Campus Collective in the development of a special project for the semester.

The Creative Campus Collective is a student affairs organization dedicated to providing high quality, impactful, artistic engagement to all students. Though the organization receives proposals from students independently, we are also interested in inviting classes to participate by creating a collaborative piece that might count as a graded assignment for students. The CCC centers all work on a particular theme each academic year and this year's theme explores Incarceration and the Privatized Prison Industrial Complex in the United States. Due to the nature of your course, we believe that this year's centered cause might be particularly relevant to your students and providing them with this artistic engagement could enhance learning and understanding surrounding ethics in American systems.

Your classes' potential participation would be based on your schedule and resources would be provided through our organization depending on the type of piece or medium we all decide might be most accessible for your students. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out and we can schedule a time for a Zoom meeting. We look forward to hearing from you and hope to partner with your class next semester.

Thank you for your consideration,

Catherine & Maura

Appendix E

Campus Advertisement: Student Recruitment

Appendix F
Annual Budget

Budget Item	Cost	Explanation/Details
Graduate Assistant Compensation	**$67,500**	$15 x 15 hours per week 10 graduate assistants 30 weeks of work
Supplies (ie. paints, fabrics, cameras, etc)	**$30,000**	Overhead cost would likely shrink each year as organization retains resources and continues to develop partnerships across campus
End of year scholarship for student participants	**$10,000**	Pilot year: 20 students complete program/final creative writing evaluation. Each receive $500 scholarship.
Visiting Artist Lectures/Critique Sessions	**$5,000**	2 visiting artists per AY. $2500 each for 2 sessions per artist.
Cultural Immersion Trips	**$2,500**	2 trips per AY, 20 students, 1 bus needed, largest cost is connected to reduced rate group tickets if attending a museum or performance
Refreshments for Events such as Final Showing, Closing Party	**$1,500**	Largest cost associated with food/beverage provided at final showing
Printed Materials	**$500**	Campus posters/flyers

Total: $117,000 for Pilot Year

Appendix G
Post-Showcase Survey

Creative Campus Collective Showcase, Spring 2024 Feedback

Thank you for attending the inaugural 2024 CCC showcase! We'd greatly appreciate your feedback as we endeavor to improve our programming in collaboration with the community.

🚫 catherinemaurapurcell@gmail.com (not shared) Switch account

☁

Your Name

Your answer

Your Email

Your answer

Your Relationship to the School

○ Student

○ Alumni

○ Faculty/Staff

○ Family member of student artist

○ Member of Greater Community (local/neighboring resident)

○ Other:

How did you hear about the CCC's showcase?

Your answer

Prior to the showcase, how much did you know about the Privatized Prison System within the US? What did you learn from the showcase?

Your answer

How has the showcase influenced your perception of incarcerated populations within the US?

Your answer

Please rate the frequency with which you attend artistic and cultural events

○ With great frequency (at least once or twice a month)

○ Frequently (at least every other month)

○ Sometimes (occasionally throughout the year)

○ Rarely (maybe once or twice throughout the year)

○ Hardly ever (I only go to artistic/cultural events if they present themselves or someone I know is performing/being exhibited)

Did attending the showcase inspire you to attend future arts and culture-related events?

◯ Yes

◯ Somewhat

◯ No

Did attending the showcase increase your own desire to make or collaborate on the creation of art?

◯ Yes

◯ Yes but I don't self-identify or practice as an artist

◯ Maybe

◯ No

Any final thoughts or feedback?

Your answer

Submit   Clear form