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The Journal of Campus Activities Practice and Scholarship (JCAPS) is a social science peer-reviewed journal. It focuses on publishing rigorous, relevant, and respected scholarship related to postsecondary education co-curricular campus activities, and translating such scholarship to practice. It especially encourages submissions from practitioners throughout higher education.

Typical submissions to the journal cover topics such as:

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A CRITICAL PILLAR IN THE SCHOLARSHIP
OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN
CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

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The scholarship and professional practice of campus activities are likely entering an inflection point in its history. Numerous scholars, pundits, and bloggers have recently described what has become known as the "twin pandemics" – the global spread of Covid-19 and its resulting upheaval, public health crises, and community anxiety, combined with a global-scale reckoning of societal injustice and inequity based on social identity and economic privilege. Indeed, both have served to reinforce and lend focus on the other. Public health crises, for example, lay bare who has resources to address them and who does not. The potential connection to campus activities practice and scholarship was seeded prior to these profoundly disruptive events. Still, both have directly contributed to the speed and strength of discussion in our field for how, why, and for whom we do our work.

The Editorial Board of the Journal of Campus Activities Practice and Scholarship believe that inclusion has always been the central purpose of our work in campus activities and will make a case that this must be our focus as we contemplate how to move forward in a way that has been informed by the "twin pandemics." Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), which we will often refer to collectively here, are not simply a current popular fad that will pass as the Covid-19 crisis lessens and attention in higher education passes to other topics. Indeed, the National Association of Campus Activities had begun integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion topics throughout its Association-wide Research Agenda long before most people knew what a "coronavirus" was. But it is also safe to say that our field has evolved in its understanding of how to approach this work. In the previous issue of this Journal, the Editorial Board described the updated Research Agenda, outlining its essential parts and highlighting what had been added from the previous version. Here, we focus on a specific, actionable area within the new Research Agenda – a concept that has served as a longstanding pillar in campus activities work, and also one that could be expanded in our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion – student sense of belonging.

In that spirit, we are pleased to announce that this Journal will soon produce our first-ever "Special Issue" in 2022. Each article will be designed to contribute to our understanding of the work of campus activities in the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion topics in higher education. We are also proud to be collaborating with a special Guest Editor to provide partnership for leading within this issue, Dr. Mamta Accapadi, the Vice Provost for Student Life at the University of Pennsylvania.

As we set the stage for this important publication, the Editorial Board would like to open a conversation about approaching this critical conversation – not just in our research but also in our practice. This article will make a case that "infusing" EDI into our work isn't enough; it must become our work.

DEFINING INVOLVEMENT, ENGAGEMENT, AND LEADERSHIP

To understand how fundamental supporting DEI progress is to the work of campus activities professionals, we must first focus on defining terms that are often used incorrectly in student affairs publications: involvement, engagement, and leadership. Three primary theories are central to their canon. Astin's Involvement Theory (1984) is perhaps the most familiar to campus activities professionals because it offers validation of the educational benefits of typical campus activities involvement. However, this theory is often misunderstood. While there may be a tendency to view Astin's theory supporting attendance at a co-curricular experience, Astin defined it more concretely as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 518). Such energy could be expended inside or outside of the formal academic classroom. To us, the noteworthy distinction rests with the level of analysis. Administrators might think in terms of "Over 100 students were involved in the program" when Astin might more insightfully ask, "How much physical or psychic energy did individual students expand as part of their involvement in the program?" The former can summarize involvement across a group, while the latter can only be analyzed individually. The contrast between how the theory is often described and how it was initially written illustrates a fallacy observed in many other contexts– the idea that students can be passive beneficiaries of initiatives organized for them. The focus on the individual student experience is a fundamental key in understanding the concept of student involvement, especially in increasing the degree of diversity, equity, and inclusion that exists in campus activities contexts.

Engagement is another common term relating to campus activities work that similarly is partly misunderstood. Kuh and his colleagues (2007), in their seminal writing on the concept, defined engagement as "participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes" (B12). Whitt, et al. (2005) point out the challenges of seeing the benefits of involvement simply in terms of exposure to opportunities, writing:

> "Many colleges claim to provide high-quality learning environments for their students. As evidence, schools point to educationally enriching opportunities they make available, such as honors programs, co-curricular leadership development programs, and collaboration with faculty members on a research topic. Too often, however, such experiences are products of serendipity or efforts on the part of students themselves. Moreover, for every student who has such an experience, there are others who do not connect in meaningful ways with their teachers, their peers, or take advantage of learning opportunities. As a result, many students leave school prematurely, or put so little effort into their learning that they fall short of benefiting from college to the extent they should" (p. 9 and 10)."

Another definition of engagement put forth by Hu and Kuh (2001) defines engagement as "the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes" (p. 555). Again, it is not the experiences themselves that produce desired outcomes, but rather the combination of the quality of that experience and the investment students make in it. It is unclear if campus activities professionals have made that shift in perception within their scholarship. Consider, for example, the educationally purposeful experiences to which Kuh (2008) and his colleagues refer to as "High-Impact Practices" (p. 1). When asked what practices are considered high impact, many postsecondary institutions list the prevalence of experiences such as "first-year seminars, learning communities, service-learning or internships" (Kuh, 2008, p. 9-11) on their campuses. However, Peck and Callahan (2019) observed,

> "When many think of high impact experiences, they tend to think of a variety of programs which have been demonstrated to produce the "impact" that can come from high-impact programs. What is often undervalued are the conditions that must be present for these programs to be effective. Without the(se) conditions…these experiences are no more high impact than any number of other experiences" (p. 18).

Put another way, we still haven't shifted from focusing on what programs offer to students and what they deliver for the representative body of students in terms of the impact that results. We call on campus activities professionals to begin to make this shift from thinking about involvement and engagement as something that can be assessed

in counting the number of students that attend programs that occur to measuring how the programs contributed to desired outcomes in the students that attend. Given this shift, it becomes easier to think about the concept of student belonging in a DEI context.

Lastly, leadership is often seen as a valuable and desirable outcome related to helping students become involved and engaged in campus activities initiatives. Many campuses provide leadership development programs and a myriad of opportunities to help students build the capacity to lead their peers, both while on campus and in the professional world upon their graduation. And yet, there continues to be a disconnect between what students might learn in academic leadership programs and how students are prepared for leadership roles on campus and afterward. As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2007) explain, "…many students have trouble relating to the leadership literature, much of which is written for corporate chief executive officers (CEOs). Some students find the leaders-focused approaches to be self-centered, and some say, "I'm not a leader. I just want to make a difference." We might respond that the desire to make a difference is not just fundamental for building leadership capacity – it is also a critical part of feeling a sense of belonging.

Another pitfall that co-curricular leadership development faces is that it may sometimes confirm the very stereotypes that it ought to dispel. One such misconception is that leadership can be reduced to a set of individual skills, attributes, or even traits. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon's (2007) well-known definition of leadership as "…a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change" (p. ix) implicitly challenges the notion of leadership as a set of traits or attributes, or even related to occupying an organizational position. Pfeffer (2015) also challenges the notion that not only does leadership training often focus too much on leadership traits, but focuses on the wrong traits as well, writing, "…the qualities we actually select for and reward in most workplaces are precisely the ones that are unlikely to produce leaders who are good for employees or, for that matter, for long-term organizational performance" (p. 7). Instead, we should view our work as professionals as helping our diverse body of students see themselves as worthy of and possessing the capacity to help "make a difference" – and then supporting them in building the skills to do so. We suggest this might be more difficult than it might seem. Helping a young woman develop the skills to lead her 100-year-old social sorority after her slightly older peers recruited her to the role requires different work than helping a first-generation, underrepresented student organize a rally to focus attention on financial aid reform. We believe both are aspects of campus activities "leadership development work." An intentional focus on cultivating belonging through student leadership could do much to close this gap. When groups feel included and valued, they tend to develop the kind of cohesion that allows them to thrive. How student leadership programs might look different if they were focused on belonging deserves considerable attention within the campus activities profession.

STUDENT BELONGING - EVOLVING IN PURPOSE

The scholarship and context for campus activities work have significantly evolved since the early work of Astin and other researchers focused on student engagement and belonging, particularly regarding the role of diversity. Consider our profession's Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS; 2019), which first produced a Self-Assessment Guide for Student Activities units in 1988. Early versions of the CAS standards articulate the mission of campus activities to, "…complement the institution's academic programs. The purposes must enhance the overall educational experience of students through development of, exposure to, and participation in social, cultural, multicultural, intellectual, recreational, community service, and campus governance programs" (CAS, 2003, p. 52). In this frame, "diversity" is implied through "multicultural" programs, and is positioned as something that a student might be exposed to through involvement in an experience. A campus activities professional with a commitment to diversity was encouraged to ensure that programs appealed to a broad audience. Later versions of CAS (2003) Standards included statements like, "Programs should be comprehensive and should reflect and promote the diversity of student interests and needs" (p. 52). Still missing is guidance regarding the intended outcomes for programs and the campus activities professional's obligation in ensuring them.

The most recent 10th edition of the CAS (2019) standards reveals how significantly the purpose of campus activities programs has evolved. This version reads, "The mission of Campus Activities Programs must be to enhance

the overall student educational experience through providing activities and events to facilitate students' sense of belonging and connection to the institution and the overall academic mission" (p.72). This mission calls our field to build belonging and connection for and among ALL students (first-generation, international, those with physical or mental disabilities, online, working adult, etc.), not just those that have traditionally been well-served.

"DEI" has in some ways already become a cognitive and verbal shorthand for a variety of values, issues, initiatives, and goals in higher education. Dangerously, as some have observed, the terms and its respective three letters are often employed as if they represent one amorphous concept rather than meaningfully differentiating the terms (Johnson and Pierre, 2021). Each term, however, has a distinct and significant meaning to campus activities professionals. "Diversity" refers to recognizing that our campuses reflect many different backgrounds, experiences, identities, and expressions. "Equity" refers to our responsibility to ensure that all students share equal access to institutional resources ensuring their needs are equally met. "Inclusion" obligation that all students, regardless of background and individual attributes, feel valued by their respective institutions and effectively connected to and within them.

When we consider how diversity, equity, and inclusion ought to be reflected in the work of campus activities professionals, at the most superficial level, we can see that *diversity* compels us to provide activities, events, and leadership experiences that reflect the wide variety of student wants, needs, and perspectives. *Equity* focuses campus activities professionals on ensuring that their events are accessible and educationally developmental for all. *Inclusion* is the concept that likely resonates the most in the history of campus activities work, given that helping others connect and engage has long been a central role in our mission as campus activities professionals. Inclusion is likewise central to the role of DEI work as well. As Johnson and Pierre (2021) point out, "Inclusion is the cornerstone of DEI work because one can neither celebrate diversity or experience equity without it" (p. 61).

While involvement, engagement, and leadership remain essential goals, when viewed through an inclusion lens, campus activities professionals may run the risk of treating a student's involvement (or lack of it), their engagement (or lack of it), and leadership development (or lack of it) as ultimately the result of decisions that the student themselves makes – rather than a reaction to the conditions on campus that either send signals of inclusion or exclusion. Johnson and Pierre (2021) explain, "For many years, student affairs literature has touted the importance of "involvement" and "engagement" in promoting student learning and success. An essential but historically underappreciated precursor is "inclusion." How can one be involved or engaged unless they are first included?" (p. 61).

Perhaps even more fundamentally, the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion are founded upon the concept of student sense of belonging. If we were to imagine a Venn diagram or mental map of the terms involvement, engagement, leadership, equity, diversity, and inclusion, a case could be made that belonging is where all of these concepts intercept. How can it matter if a student attends an event if they don't first leave feeling more connected to and valued by the institution? How can it matter if students join an organization if they don't establish a sense of common purpose and community that meaningfully contributes to their learning and development at the institution? How can it matter if a student attends a leadership development initiative if they do not feel as if the initiative supports their goals or style of interacting in groups?

The impact of belonging is succinctly expressed in another seminal theory in student affairs, Tinto's Theory of Departure (Tinto, 1993): "Other things being equal, the greater the contact among students, the more likely individuals are to establish social and intellectual membership in the social communities of the college and therefore the more likely they are to remain in college" (p. 118). In this way, belonging doesn't just improve students' experiences in college – it also leads to the completion of a degree.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY – FUNDAMENTAL TO INCREASING STUDENT BELONGING

Broadly speaking, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has received increased national attention in the media over the last few years primarily due to a lack of understanding of what it means to use an epistemological or methodological lens to critically examine racial issues in our society. During this same timeframe, we have seen a growth in the

use of CRT as an epistemological lens for how scholars are examining strategies higher education can employ to create environments that serve the entire campus community (e.g., all students, faculty, and staff). The use of CRT to improve our higher education environment, specifically our students' experiences, is not new. In her 2016 article, Patton called for "more prominent scholarship on higher education grounded in CRT" (p. 316). Patton further noted that while "racism/White supremacy will not end," the academy "serves as a space for transformative knowledge production that challenges dominant discourses and ways of operating in and beyond the academy" (p. 335). While CRT has become embedded in higher education scholarship, CRT and how it can be applied to practice are less understood. CRT originated in critical legal studies (George, 2021) and, within its transition to the discipline of education (and specifically student affairs), does not possess a concrete definition. Rather, scholars understand that CRT provides a lens to "challenge conventional accounts of educational institutions… and the social processes that occur within them" (Powers, 2007, p. 151). CRT "cannot be confined to a static and narrow definition but is considered to be evolving and malleable" (George, 2021, para. 2).

It is important to note that CRT scholarship in higher education "help[s] to expose how race and racism are infused into the higher education culture" (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015, p. 215). In that context, CRT does not provide the answer for improving our campus climates for belonging. Instead, it provides a lens to expose present inequities. It is important to note that CRT is a powerful tool for revealing the types of inequities that have been rendered invisible without a rigorous lens to examine them. Once exposed, campus activities professionals can alleviate them by working to create anti-racist environments.

Identifying strategies to address racial disparities in the work of campus activities offices requires an acknowledgment of the presence of racism within the environment. As critical values within the profession, DEI often represents topics frequently included in student leadership training programs. Campus activities professionals often work with students to consider these values as they plan broader campus events, suggesting policies whereby, for example, one campus lecture program must feature a focus on race, or a monthly bulletin board must feature stories of an underrepresented student population. Initiatives like these are essential in building a sense of belonging from students who have systemically been marginalized on most university campuses. However, alone, these are not enough.

The anti-racism movement has prompted numerous campuses to become more transparent in what they are *specifically* doing to address racism. As campus activities professionals continue to engage in the anti-racism movement, they need to examine how they are changing their organizational structures [e.g., budgets, policies, marketing strategies] and staff behaviors [e.g., mentoring, advising, leadership training approaches] to improve access to educational opportunities. For example, campus activities professionals might reflect on how frequently racial perspectives are shared in student organization training materials and specifically what students benefit from existing programs.

Reimagining the purpose of campus activities to "enhance the overall student educational experience through providing activities and events to facilitate students' sense of belonging and connection to the institution and the overall academic mission" (CAS, 2019, p.72) with a CRT and anti-racism lens will require a significant amount of time and attention. In examining what involvement and engagement practices are beneficial for historically underrepresented students, Kuh & O'Donnell (2013) note that high-impact practices (HIPs) can be transformative and beneficial when done with attention to the qualities that make HIPs meaningful. As we consider the importance of student belonging within our work, we also need to recognize and listen to the experiences of racially minoritized students. Using CRT as a lens, Kinzie, Silberstein, McCormick, Gonyea, & Dugan (2021) offer two points of consideration when structuring HIPs that center these practices "more squarely in racially minoritized students' lived experiences" (p. 13). Those HIP qualities are:

- *Making a difference for others:* Racially minoritized students value HIPs that emphasize opportunities to help others, make a difference, and encourage collaboration among students and between students and the larger community. HIPs could be better structured to allow students to maintain connections beyond the experience and to help students reflect on how they have made a difference.

- *Agency and accomplishment:* HIPs must be structured to empower minoritized students and provide opportunities for agency and achievement beyond simply enduring potentially unwelcome spaces. Similarly, biases and impediments to students' agency must be exposed and addressed. (p. 13).

Campus activities professionals will need to think critically about what they learn about how racism is infused into our existing structures and take an active role in implementing anti-racist structures and behaviors to improve conditions for meaningful learning, involvement, and engagement. The new HIPs qualities provide a lens for how campus activities can create programming and spaces that encourage student belonging that acknowledge the voices of our diverse student populations.

CONCLUSION

Some may consider "DEI" a buzzword in higher education and within campus activities scholarship, but it cannot afford to be a fad. In this article, we have made a case that DEI initiatives are central to building student belonging and therefore central to the mission and purpose of the discipline of campus activities. When we plan events for the campus community, the purpose is to connect students with diverse others in meaningful ways. If our programs do not do that, they may simply replicate what would have happened naturally without our intervention. Indeed, college students, and humans in general, will gather with others like them and find a way to entertain themselves. Building a sense of student belonging among students who have been marginalized and connecting diverse students to each other and our institution is where campus activities professionals earn their salaries. Campus activities work provides students a valuable learning experience. If that learning experience does not include the chance to think about how to navigate cultural differences, confront inequitable and unjust systems, and foster a sense of inclusion within our teams and the people that they serve, then we are not preparing students for the diverse world in which they will live and work.

We hope that we have inspired campus activities professionals to challenge how we view our work. Moreover, we hope we have started a conversation that can continue in the forthcoming special issue of JCAPS that is specifically focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of campus activities scholarship and practice. We look forward to seeing how our readers and profession approach this critical conversation and make students feel valued by their institutions.

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FACILITATING ENGAGEMENT AND BELONGING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: USING EXPRESSIVE ARTS

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Four volunteer participants who used the services of the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) on our campus attended three sessions where they were interviewed about inclusivity and (a) taught an art technique; (b) taught to do the technique with a partner; and (c) used the technique with a guest whom they identified as having impacted their inclusivity on campus. The qualitative method of phenomenology was used to analyze transcripts from the interviews and the art sessions. The information the participants provided revealed the essential themes of (a) The desire for support beyond academic accommodations; (b) The benefits of an expressive arts program; and (c) The meaning of inclusivity and the desire for engagement and belonging. We detail the thematic findings of the study and make recommendations for how OASs can expand the services they provide. We advocate for creating expressive arts programing to facilitate engagement and belonging for students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) requires colleges and universities to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities so that they may participate in all aspects of postsecondary education on an even playing field with students who do not have disabilities. Offices of Accessibility Services (OAS) are established within postsecondary educational institutions to oversee the process of connecting students with disabilities to the resources and accommodations they need for equity. This is arguably the primary function of OASs. However, much more can be done beyond ensuring accommodations.

The OAS at our institution wants to provide expanded services to students with disabilities. Taking our cues from the literature suggesting that engagement and a sense of belonging are critical factors in student success and the findings that engaging in expressive arts has multiple benefits, we piloted an arts program for students with disabilities through our University OAS. We collected qualitative data during the three sessions of the project. Results were analyzed using the qualitative method of phenomenology. They revealed three essential themes: namely that students with disabilities may benefit from more than just accommodations, that they want inclusivity, engagement, and belonging, and that an expressive arts program is one way to provide engagement and belonging effectively.

The review that follows establishes that a significant number of students with disabilities seek higher education and that these students often need additional support to bolster their persistence and to finish their degrees. Student engagement has been correlated with retention and academic success, and after introducing some of that literature, we review work that establishes the importance of engagement for students with disabilities. Lastly, we examine the literature suggesting that students with disabilities may benefit from affinity groups. OAS offices are uniquely positioned to establish such groups. We present a review of why an expressive arts program may facilitate engagement and a sense of belonging for students with disabilities.

AN OVERVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Data from the U.S. Department of Education (2021) indicate that almost 20% of college/university students have a disability. These students are often given academic accommodations, but students with disabilities obtain approximately 18% fewer degrees than their peers without disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Thus, it appears that academic accommodations alone may not be enough support.

Teasing out what would be helpful to students with disabilities beyond academic accommodation is difficult, in part because they are often grouped for research purposes, so the literature on recommended support is murky (Kimball et al., 2017). The disabilities represented among college/university students are almost as diverse as those in the general population. College students most frequently report hidden disabilities such as ADHD and other neurodevelopmental disorders, but an array of other disabilities is likely to be found in any student population. Are the extracurricular needs of students with low vision or mobility challenges the same as those with a learning disability or a mental health diagnosis?

Answers to questions about intersectionality among students with disabilities and their specific needs are tangled and complicated. This is partly why Kimball et al. (2017) recommend that colleges and universities engage students with disabilities. As they note, engagement has been found to benefit students both academically and non-academically. Students involved in learning communities attain more knowledge and show greater persistence. Engagement, in general, has been correlated with positive interactions with both peers and faculty. Moreover, it is well established that student engagement is correlated with retention (Kuh, 2001; Kuh et al., 2005; Lam et al., 2012).

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

What does it mean for a student to be engaged on campus? A review of this multifaceted concept is beyond the scope of the current literature review, but most definitions include a behavioral, social, and emotional component. Behaviorally, engaged students participate in their institution's academic and social opportunities. Social engagement refers to how well students interact with their peers, faculty, and other members of the college/university community. Emotional engagement involves affective connection such that students identify with their school and feel that they belong (Zhoc, 2019).

In her article about student engagement, Komives (2019) noted that students have sought formal and informal ways to gather around shared interests and experiences since the beginning of postsecondary education. She also pointed out that researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that student engagement outside the classroom is associated with greater persistence and better academic performance. There is evidence that student engagement is correlated with retention and even health outcomes (Tinto, 2012; Walton & Cohen, 2011). Kuh et al. (2005) asserted that "what students do during college counts more for what they learn and whether they will persist in college than who they are or even where they go to college" (p. 8). Newman et al. (2020) found that when students with disabilities engage with standard or disability-related supports on campus, they are more likely to be academically persistent and complete their degrees.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Strayhorn (2012) looked at students with various intersectionality and argued that special attention should be paid to members of any marginalized group. Evidence suggests that these students may feel less of a sense of engagement and belonging on campus than those with privileged identities. College and university campuses were developed for affluent white men. Even today, the people other than this historical norm may need extra support to feel they belong. Indeed, Johnson et al. (2007) collected data from a large sample of first-year college students and found that students of color reported feeling less of a sense of belonging than their white counterparts.

Race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation have received the most scholarly attention in studying students and belonging. Vaccaro et al. (2015) contended that disability is an identification that needs consideration as well. Their study is one of the first to explore belonging for students with disabilities aside from research examining the effect that campus infrastructure has on students with physical disabilities. Most of the students in the study had hidden

disabilities such as mental health diagnoses. They conducted in-depth interviews with these students and found that sense of belonging was synergistically connected with self-advocacy, social relationships, and mastery of the student role. They also found that participants wanted to connect with other students with disabilities.

THE ROLE OF OASS IN FACILITATING ENGAGEMENT AND BELONGING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Stereotypically speaking, students with disabilities have fewer connections to on-campus resources than students who do not have disabilities (Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). The results of a study on the effect of social support on college students with disabilities yielded complex results about the type of social support that was most helpful but led the researchers to conclude that OASs and other units on campus should help students with disabilities to develop and maintain social relationships (Lombardi et al., 2014). While it is not necessary that students with disabilities connect with each other to achieve engagement and feel a sense of belonging, doing so could be uniquely beneficial (Strayhorn, 2012; Vaccaro et al., 2016).

Having relationships with other students who have disabilities may be a way to foster a positive disability identity. This term refers to claiming one's disability and having a favorable sense of self as a person with that disability. Research (Raver, et al., 2018) suggests that many students with disabilities do not incorporate their disability into their self-identity. However, embracing one's disability status can be very empowering. The same study found that having a positive disability identity was associated with a greater sense of belonging. Thus, it may be that the capacity of a college or university to engage students with disabilities will have a substantial impact on their sense of self.

Similarly, Cooper (2009) advocated helping students form and join affinity groups representing their distinct characteristics. Hall and Belch (2000) asserted that students with disabilities need a place where they can, "communicate honestly, authentic and intimate relationships are established, and a commitment is developed to sharing joys and sorrows together" (p. 10). The stigma associated with having a disability, and the challenges of identifying other students with disabilities (given that most disabilities are hidden), may make establishing affinity groups difficult for students to do on their own. OAS units may be the only unit on campus that can facilitate affinity groups for the students they serve.

There are numerous ways to build an affinity group for students with disabilities. We propose that a group centered around expressive arts is ideal for facilitating engagement and belonging for students with disabilities.

USING EXPRESSIVE ARTS TO FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT AND BELONGING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Engaging in creative endeavors is a well-documented means of supporting physical and mental health (Abbott, et al., 2013). The visual arts, dance, music, creative writing, and other art modalities have been widely employed to treat the body and psyche. The known benefits provide the foundation for art and music therapy fields. The expressive arts can be a tool through which anyone may enhance their well-being (Jensen & Bonde, 2018; Knill, et al., 2003; McNiff, 2004).

Less is known about how creating art alongside others, or collaboratively, may be beneficial. The concept of "third spaces" is relevant here. Third spaces/places are neither work nor home (Oldenburg, 1989). They are neutral grounds where people can enjoy and learn about each other, talk, and create relationships. Oldenburg noted that social media platforms are third spaces frequently used by young people, but the most promising third spaces are real places where people can gather.

Timm-Bottos and Reilly (2014) researched the benefits of a university-sponsored third space where people came together to create visual art. Their research led them to conclude that the simple act of joining with others to make art has a positive impact on the participants' social and emotional well-being. They asserted that the desire to make art is innate to human beings, can be aesthetically pleasing, and is a means for learning. They add that making art with other people allows us to see other viewpoints and "ways of knowing" (p. 105). Being with other people while

making art can enhance our self-compassion and compassion for others. Their qualitative research of the experiences of people who used a community art center led them to conclude that:

> The use of empowering third spaces and multiple ways of knowing can rebalance notions of authority, knowledge creation, and power and provide the medium that simultaneously promotes relevant, well-rounded, deep, and meaningful personal and professional educational experiences with the potential to go on to use the arts to promote healthy communities (p. 113).

Although she did not label her musical arts-based projects with children as third spaces, Nunn (2020) described how creating music with peers helped refugees express their intersecting identities as young people and connect to their refugee communities. Nunn noted that making art with others provided an "exceptional sphere of belonging" (p. 5). She explained that shared art spaces (i.e., third spaces) are unlike the locations we inhabit in everyday life. Nunn described creating art with others as, "… spaces of co-inquiry that are grounded in critical reflection and creative knowledge production" (p.5). Said differently, relationships are likely to develop as people express themselves through art and engage in free-flowing conversations that lead to interpersonal and meaningful insights. Nunn also concluded that shared art spaces were especially welcoming to marginalized populations.

METHODS

Participants

Participants were recruited through an email sent to students who use the services of the OAS at a mid-sized, private university. The email invited students to be part of a research project, spanning 3 group meetings, to discuss inclusivity on campus for students with disabilities and to participate in a shared art experience to facilitate discussion. Four students volunteered to be participants. One identified as male and the other three as female. Three of the participants had hidden disabilities (learning disability or a psychological disorder), and one had a physical disability requiring a wheelchair.

Procedure

We interviewed students about their campus experiences of inclusivity and offered a third space for creating art as a means for further data collection. Four volunteer participants who used the services of the OAS on our campus attended three sessions where they were interviewed and (a) taught an art technique; (b) taught to do the technique with a partner; and (c) used the technique with a guest whom they identified as having impacted their inclusivity on campus.

The first session began with a brief overview of the project. The PIs introduced the topic of inclusivity and the process of using an arts space. Everyone then participated in a 5-minute guided mindfulness exercise and brief, semi-structured interview about perceptions of inclusivity at the University. Afterward, the second PI demonstrated how to create a pour painting – an abstract painting created by layering acrylic paint and silicone products into a cup and then pouring the paint onto a canvas. Following the demonstration, the students and PIs made pour paintings (Figure 1). The meeting was audio-recorded.

Figure 1
Example of Pour Painting and Paintings Created During Session 1

Meeting 2 began with a 2-minute mindfulness breathing exercise. Afterward, the participants shared their thoughts about the first meeting in a semi-structured interview. This was followed by a demonstration of co-creating a pour painting with a partner. The participants then formed pairs and practiced co-creating a pour painting. As before, the meeting was audio-recorded.

The final meeting started with a 2-minute guided imagery, and the participants were again interviewed in a semi-structured manner. Afterward, each participant and their guest went to a private room where they co-created two pour paintings (Figure 2). Before ending the meeting, the group gathered to talk about the experience. The portions of the meeting where everyone was together were audio-recorded.

Figure 2
Examples of Co-Created Pour Paintings Made with a Guest

Design

The experience of creating art with peers who identify as having a disability could be studied in several ways. With a large sample size, researchers could administer surveys about the experience and analyze the data statistically. The risk of such a quantitative analysis is that the a priori assumptions of the researchers creating the surveys may not fully represent the participants' experience, so valuable information is lost. Qualitative methods are arguably the only way for researchers to gain a rich understanding of a situation or event or other human experience.

There are various qualitative methods, all with their own merits. For this study, the phenomenological method of Giorgi (1985) was used to evaluate the data because phenomenology is aimed at illustrating human experience and describing it in psychological terms. The typical data of phenomenology are transcribed in-depth, semi-structured interviews of people who have had a particular experience. The researchers engaged the participants in semi-structured interviews at the beginning of the three sessions for the present study. The interview data were supplemented by transcripts of spontaneous verbal statements and exchanges made while the participants co-created art.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved several essential steps. The first PI adopted a presuppositionless attitude and studied the transcriptions to understand the main elements of "inclusivity" and each student's experience of creating art with fellow students with disabilities. Main elements – called units of meaning -- are those that the researcher deems to have psychological significance. The units of meaning were coded and restated from everyday language into psychological language. The units of meaning were then synthesized across participants to reveal themes, thus indicating the key features of the experience. The second PI reviewed the transcripts, coded units of meaning, and proposed themes for intersubjective agreement. Lastly, quotes that represent the themes were selected by both researchers. The essential themes that emerged were (a The desire for support beyond academic accommodations; (b) The benefits of an expressive arts program; (c) The meaning of inclusivity and desire for engagement and belonging. A phenomenological description of each theme follows in the Results section.

FINDINGS

The Desire for Support Beyond Academic Accommodations

Participants spoke of needing institutional support in terms of academic accommodations. They noted that accommodations are essential for effective learning and allow them to demonstrate what they know. The participants expressed appreciation for their university's OAS. One participant commented on the recent change in the title of the Office from The Office of Disability Services to The Office of Accessibility Services and cited the change as an example of institutional support and validation.

However, across the sessions, the participants emphasized that they want support beyond the minimal requirement of academic accommodations. For example, talking about inclusivity prompted stories of the opposite – how needing accommodations sometimes led to exclusion. While the participants were clear to say that most faculty, staff, and students treat them respectfully, they want members of the campus community to receive education about disabilities in the hope that greater awareness and understanding will eliminate incidents of exclusion. One participant asked, "Will you include [in the research findings] what we told you about how [some students and faculty] here are unaware? I mean, I definitely think that it should be included because there are some people here that literally have no clue." Another participant said, "I think it's really important." The rest commented, "I totally agree with you on this" and "I do too."

To illustrate, one participant shared her experiences of repeatedly being singled out by a faculty member for receiving accommodations. The most egregious story she told was, "She [the professor] handed me my test, and she said, in front of the entire class, 'you need to go take this where you belong.' And I know that this was not how it is supposed to go down." All the participants spoke of how using accommodations sometimes draws attention, curiosity, and even hostility from their peers. For example, a participant reported that a student in one of her classes told her that getting extra time on tests, "wasn't fair," and that the student was going to complain to the professor.

A subtheme that emerged was that participants do not feel equipped to address stigma and discrimination when it happens. On two occasions, the participants queried each other about handling adverse situations. When a participant relayed a recent negative experience, she added, "And everyone was staring at me, and I was so upset I wanted to go home." Another participant said, "I have so much respect for you. I have a smart mouth…so props for you for being able to keep your cool." In a later session, after hearing of an incident, one participant asked, "Have you said anything back? Not to be an instigator, but I would not be able to take that." The participant who reported the negative experience answered, "No, I didn't want to ignore it, but I did bite my tongue… I just didn't want to start anything." When one of the PIs asked if the participants would like to learn how to respond to aversive situations diplomatically and assertively, they said they would like to be taught that skill.

The Benefits of an Expressive Arts Program

Three subthemes related to the benefits of an expressive arts program emerged. The first was that the participants enjoyed being in a "third space" together making art and found it psychologically beneficial. The second was that they found aesthetic pleasure in creating and having art, and the third was that making art facilitated easy sharing and connection. Each subtheme will be touched on briefly.

When the participants were directly interviewed about their first experience creating art together, they spoke enthusiastically about how much they enjoyed the session. One participant said, "I couldn't wait until the next one [second session] because it was so fun, and it was such a great experience." Another participant said, "Last time was something I really needed … it was awesome." The first participant added, "It makes you feel like all of your burdens are gone, it takes reality away for a little while, and that is a good thing for me." Another said, "Usually I'm anxious, and I get really panicky, and this helps me not feel that way." In later sessions, they spontaneously offered comments about how making art together helped them combat the stress of school because it is, "calming" and "relaxing." In the final session, one participant said to another, "What I learned here is that there are no screw-ups. There is nothing that you can't fix." The other responded, "I feel like that is the first thing you have to accept when

you go into art, that artists never make a mistake, they just make their paintings better." A third participant added, "I think it is also a lesson for me; I need to have that outlook for everything, not just doing art."

The participants frequently commented positively on the work they created and the work of each other. The transcripts are filled with, "I love that idea; color; the way that looks." Speaking of her own painting, one participant said, "That is gorgeous; it looks like expensive art, seriously." Another participant exclaimed, "I didn't expect it to come out the way it did, so it was awesome." Yet another told the group that she showed her paintings from the first session to her mother, and her mother was so impressed she told her daughter to bring the paintings home over the next break because she wanted one.

Having a concrete task allowed for easy engagement and the free flow of conversation. Throughout the sessions, the participants chatted and laughed together. They shared personal information about where they are from and their families, how they are doing in school, and advice on getting through some core courses. A participant sang out, "This girl is on fire," and the rest of the group joined in during one session. They also built bridges for further engagement. For example, during one session, a new participant was pleased to be told about activities that the OAS sponsors during Disability Awareness Month. Another member said, "We have it every year, so come and join us."

The Meaning of Inclusivity and the Desire for Engagement and Belonging

Participants initially spoke of inclusivity as "acceptance" and feeling comfortable in a diverse community regardless of personal characteristics. During the last session, they referred to inclusivity more concretely, as "coming together" and "belonging "in a community. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of making sure others feel included. One participant said, "not only feeling like you belong, but making sure that other people feel like they belong with you."

Across the sessions, connections between the participants deepened, and they expressed their appreciation for meeting each other and talking about shared experiences. In an early session, one participant asserted that many students have hidden disabilities, and so theoretically, she knew she was not alone, but that she was motivated to participate in the study because she wanted to know about the experiences of other students with disabilities. She said, "I want to share what has happened to me so that I can bond with the other students."

The participants spoke of feeling connected to the group during the later sessions. There was talk about "collaboration," and one participant said to another, "I appreciate you so much." They commented that painting helped them express themselves and see the other group members more deeply. When a participant spoke negatively about her artwork, another yelled out, "Hey, this is a judgment-free zone!" Several participants spoke of being perfectionistic and controlling about their artwork, which led to the group members sharing their vulnerabilities such as anxiety and being shy.

Over the three weeks of conducting the study, we all seemed to lose sight of the original purpose of the research. We were investigating the experience of inclusivity on campus for students with disabilities – our intention was not to facilitate engagement and belonging. Yet engagement and belonging were the ultimate outcomes. For example, when participants shared personal stories about disability discrimination, comments such as "This is a safe space" were offered as the group progressed. During the final session, when a participant apologized for "ranting," another told her, "This is totally not ranting." Then a third participant said, "That's what we're here for."

Point of Interest

One participant in the study said she wished the research would continue so the group would be maintained. The other participants agreed strongly and implored the PIs to facilitate an ongoing experience. With the support of our University OAS Director, the second PI agreed to provide a bi-monthly expressive arts program. The program introduced students to new expressive arts modalities and continued within the OAS for two semesters. The program then expanded to include a broader base of participants from across the University (7-20 students per session). A recent issue of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA) newsletter (for members only) highlights the work of the second PI. It describes how, due to the pandemic, she eventually continued her program virtually. For two hours every Sunday evening, she hosts a Zoom "open studio" where students can co-create art virtually.

Summary

Our original intent was to learn how students with disabilities define and experience inclusivity within our campus community. The experiences we provided over three sessions of the study were designed to elicit that information. We obtained what we wanted but, in the process, we learned much more. We discovered that students with disabilities might benefit from services beyond accommodations. OAS units are uniquely poised to provide such additional support. For example, staff and students might hold workshops or classes to teach student advocacy and assertiveness skills. OAS units can facilitate campus community awareness and education. They may also create third spaces and activities for students with disabilities to come together and affiliate. We found engaging in expressive arts to be especially fruitful for fostering engagement and belonging.

DISCUSSION

We recommend that college and university OASs facilitate engagement and belonging for the students they serve by offering group experiences that allow students to identify each other and interact while engaging in an activity. Activities can be anything that students might enjoy. Still, we suggest that the activity promotes self-expression, so students have a greater opportunity to have a personally meaningful connection – more so than playing a game or engaging in a service project.

We found as Nunn (2020) attested, that creating art together provides an "exceptional sphere of belonging" (p. 5). Creating art is a pleasurable activity that students can do while also socializing with reduced social pressure. The work created becomes a means through which students can share themselves to the extent they are comfortable. They can engage with each other on the level of looking at each other's work or deepen their connection by revealing the meaning their work has or how it relates to their personal experiences. The student chooses the level of intimacy desired.

On a practical note, we recommend emphasizing the satisfaction of expression rather than the actual product. While there are benefits in offering instruction in a fail-proof art technique like pour-painting that practically guarantees a satisfying outcome, the most meaningful aspect of an expressive arts program is creating together. Interested readers are directed to the abundance of resources on the internet and through organizations like the IEATA (https://www.ieata.org/).

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JCAPS

FORMER STUDENT GOVERNMENT OFFICERS NAVIGATING MULTIPLE/MINORITIZED IDENTITIES IN COLLEGIATE AND POST-COLLEGE PUBLIC OFFICE

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Many notable leaders in the United States previously served in their college's student government, including Stacey Abrams, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Elijah Cummings. Findings in this article derive from a larger study on the experiences of former college student government officers who ran for or served in post-college public office between 2018-2021. Themes in this article reflect the experiences of participants who identify as Persons of Color, women, or gay/bisexual, and the nuances of gender, gender and race, race, and sexuality in the context of collegiate and post-college public office. Among others, recommendations for practice include a calling to student government advisors and university administrators to create and offer tools for participants with minoritized identities to successfully access and matriculate through collegiate public office.

In 2021, Lamar Richards was elected as the first openly gay, Black student body president at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Toms, 2021). Karmen Jones was elected the first Black woman student body president at the University of Tennessee (Young, 2021). That same year, Abel Liu became the first Chinese-American student council president at the University of Virginia and is the first known openly transgender student government president in the United States who was out when elected (Wyant, 2021). A common thread between these individuals and their elections is that each represents a kind of intersection between their minoritized identity/ies and their experience in elected student government.

Over time, several scholars have sought to capture the experiences of People of Color, women, and queer individuals in student government (e.g., Goodman, 2021a, Goodman, et al., 2021; Miller & Kraus, 2004; Smith, 2020; Workman et al., 2020). This article illuminates the experiences of 17 individuals and their experience(s) in elected student government and post-college public office (running or serving). In this context, "public office" should be understood as elected, representative leadership (e.g., constituent-based, governmental, public service). Specifically, the themes brought forward in this study illuminate the experiences of People of Color, women, and gay/bisexual men who were formerly involved in student government and who ran for post-college public office between 2018-2021. A lot can be learned from the experiences of those serving in collegiate public office and those whose student government experience(s) informs post-college public office. When considering students and identity/ies, important implications and recommendations from this study relate directly to advising and administration.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

College student governments are a function of student involvement, student voice, and representation (Dungan & Klopf, 1949; Klopf, 1960; May, 2010; Miles, 2011; Miles et al., 2008; Templeton et al., 2018). Further, while it is nonpartisan in theory, student government is political. There are politics associated with how student governments legislate, vote on, and engage with equity and justice issues in higher education (Goodman et al., 2021). For this article, relevant literature on women, People of Color, and LGBTQ+ issues and identities is illuminated

to further contextualize and ground this study.

In an early piece on women in student government leadership positions, Miller and Kraus (2004) found that women were elected as representatives (held nearly half of positions in student government), yet were under-represented in president and vice-president positions. This research disrupted the notion that women were not interested in politics or government. Yet, it revealed that they were interested in campus politics, but were not elected to the top leadership roles (Miller & Kraus, 2004). At the time of the research, just over 70% of student government presidents and vice-presidents were men (Miller & Kraus, 2004). Years later, Workman et al. (2020) studied the experiences of seven women student government presidents, and found that there were challenges in traditions and culture within the student association and that student government was a "boys' club" that led to a "chilly climate" for women (p. 44). The authors found an inherent bias against women, as well as challenges for women in student government within both elections and transitions (Workman et al., 2020). One participant, a Black woman, wanted to evolve the student government culture but felt the white men in the organization did not value women or minoritized voices (Workman et al., 2020). Participants were impacted by the male-dominated nature of student government, which affected how they could lead or change the culture to be more inclusive (Workman et al., 2020). Similarly, in a study on former student body presidents working in higher education, one participant recalled a significant sexist incident in her student government. This prompted a senior university official to invite all the elected women to her home to talk more about issues facing women in campus leadership (Goodman, 2021b).

Next, through photo-elicitation interviews, Smith (2020) studied the experiences of eight Black student government presidents at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). One finding from Smith's (2020) study included participants establishing life-long connections with their peers, and valuing relationships through their shared identities and student government experience(s). For some, this included relationships with leaders from other HBCU student governments (Smith, 2020). One participant shared that there were significant benefits of networking with other HBCUs, and that issues student governments are dealing with are similar across institutions (Smith, 2020). However, while participants in Smith's (2020) study felt support from their peers, they lacked it in relationships with administrators.

Additional scholarship has illuminated the experience of Students of Color more broadly, and in the context of student involvement in higher education. Manzano et al. (2017) posited that Asian American student leaders engage in "conventional student-leader roles," such as student government, as a way to enact incremental change on their campus (p. 70). For example, despite unchanging structures of power and privilege, if a student is the first Asian American student government president, they may view that achievement as representative of valuable change (Manzano et al., 2017). Next, one participant in Jones and Reddick's (2017) study discussed the benefit of Black student representation in exclusionary spaces, and named student government in particular. The participant (Terrance) shared, "Without the Black student voice at the table, no one's going to get into that organization...once you get plugged in to student government, you pave the way" (Jones & Reddick, 2017, p. 210).

Similarly, participants in Harper and Quaye's (2007) study saw value in minority student representation on committees that set campus policies. One participant (Christopher) used the role of student government vice president to advocate for Black student organizations and funding made available through student government (Harper & Quaye, 2007). It is not uncommon in the literature to find examples of students with racially minoritized identities facing individual and systemic challenges in student government. This frequently appears in student affairs literature, and in particular, scholarship on student leadership, involvement, and activism. In a study about racial salience in predominantly white student organization spaces, Jones (2020) wrote about Ron, the only Black student government representative among around sixty students. Ron experienced discrimination in student government, and was hesitant to engage further due to patterns of dismissiveness (Jones, 2020).

Finally, while sexuality has been somewhat underpublished for LGBTQ+ students and college student government specifically, there is a shortage of literature regarding LGBTQ+ students and leadership more broadly (e.g., Dilley, 2002; Jourian & Simmons, 2017; Kulick et al., 2016; Lange et al., 2019; Renn, 2007; Rhoads, 1995; Tilla-

paugh, 2013; and more). One student government president in Smith's (2020) study shared navigating campus politics with legislation that would have had a negative impact on the transgender community (Smith, 2020). Next, Goodman (2021a) studied the experiences of openly gay undergraduate men in elected student government and found an 'it is what it is' sentiment as the men reflected on their experiences with being out in this leadership capacity. The visibility of being gay and the work of/in student government captured their experiences and was coupled with a "just so happen to be gay" attitude (Goodman, 2021a, p. 5). Many of the participants in Goodman's (2021a) study saw openly gay student government officials before them who modeled that they, too, could achieve such roles. Still, there was a layer of internalized homophobia experienced by participants, in that they were conscious of how they appeared in public spaces (e.g., one participant thought his voice and gestures were, in one example, "unprofessional") (Goodman, 2021a, p. 6). The intersection of sexuality and race was particularly noteworthy for Participants of Color in Goodman's (2021a) study. Each shared that they felt they had to work harder because of their race, leadership, and sexuality. There were multiple ways that 'being gay' was racialized for these men, who saw and experienced student government as a predominately white space (Goodman, 2021a).

STUDY CONTEXT

This study was approved through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process at the University of Maryland, College Park. This article derives from a more extensive, more broad study on the experiences of former student government officers who ran for or served in public office between 2018-2021. By and large, participants who identified as People of Color, women, and/or gay or bisexual shared multiple examples and perspectives related to experiences with their identity/ies and in- and post-college public office. Enlisting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to this research (Gadamer, 1975; van Manen, 1997), I am guided by philosophical underpinnings (van Manen, 2014) that seek to understand the essence of a phenomenon (Hultgren, 1995), and participants' lived experience(s) specifically.

METHODS

Recruitment involved a national call for participants and was advertised through student government and student affairs listservs, as well as various social media platforms. Participants must have been 18 years of age or older and served in elected student government while in college. Additionally, participants must have run for or served in post-college public office between 2018-2021. Nineteen individuals met the criteria and participated in the broader study. Data from 17 participants were pulled forward for this article. I enlisted two semi-structured interviews (Bevan, 2014) to be in-conversation with participants, which were conducted as hermeneutic conversations (Hultgren, 1993). After transcription, I engaged in a selective highlighting approach (van Manen, 1997) as a method of thematizing. In particular, I pulled forward a theme of participants' experiences with marginalization and minoritized identities. To gain perspective, I participated in peer-debriefing with two colleagues to clarify my interpretation(s) of the data and probe potential biases (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Positionality

As a scholar, I am most informed by my own history with college student government and representative leadership. While I have never run for post-college public office, I understand the nuances of identity, and in particular, my gay identity as it relates to college student government. As a former student body president, I always felt my role was "public." This publicness stopped me from feeling like I could truly be myself and be open and "out" as gay in many ways. I stayed in "the closet" because I felt I owed my constituents something (something I would later realize was my own conjuring, but a combination of being from Oklahoma and seeing very few out people at my institution). As an older adult, I stay attuned to local, state, and (inter/)national politics, and the very ways identity emerges in public leadership. We are still heavily experiencing "the firsts" in college student government (e.g., Liu at the University of Virginia, Jones at the University of Tennessee), and in post-college public office (e.g., Pete Buttigieg and his candidacy for U.S. President, Mauree Turner from Oklahoma as the first nonbinary state legislator). As such, I believe there is value in a study such as this, and the lessons learned can be life-changing for students who are and will run for college student government - and someday, even post-college public office.

FINDINGS

While these themes are illuminated as gender, race, and sexuality, they can also be framed in the context of sexism, racism, and homophobia in both student government and post-college public office.

Gender; Gender and Race

For the women in this study, (their) gender was salient to their experiences and existence(s) in both student government and post-college public office. Participants shared stories and anecdotes as part of our conversations, including many that were left out of these findings as a result of the publicness of their role and identity. But gender does not exist in a vacuum, especially for the Women of Color in this study, who shared about the intersection of their gender and race. This includes both independent incidents of sexism and racism, and often, sexism and racism happening simultaneously.

Yvonne, a white woman, served as student government vice-president, but lost the presidency to a male classmate who she felt had not done the same level of work or commitment as she had during her four years of college. She shares, "I had been doing the work, you know, for the three years and that, you know, it should have been mine if it was based on work ethic." While Karina, a multiracial woman, won her election of student body president, at that point the first Woman of Color in 20-30 years to win, she feared her work would be all for naught. She recalls thinking, "I'm going to really, like, [bust] my ass for these three years, I'm going to put myself on the line, and somebody is going to pick the frat boy over me, aren't they?" Coming from a "very old" university, Amy, a white woman, recalls being only the fifth woman elected as president, and ten years after the woman before her election. Comparison to male counterparts/peers was not uncommon, and Cyndi, an Asian woman, experienced this at multiple points before, during, and after collegiate roles. Cyndi recalls that the high school student body president was a tall, white man when she was a sophomore. The student body president when she was a first-year student in college was "a white guy from [a small town]...a rural community...he's savvy, he's smart, he's attractive, just like things that everybody assumes a politician will look like." She shares how this impacted her and continues to today:

> I still struggle with those things, and those fears, and those limitations bubble up as I use my voice...I'm like, I want to be that guy, except not a white guy. You know? And yeah, I just, I've always been interested in it…but always have had a fear of putting myself out there because I didn't look like the people who came before me, and there are a lot of things that now at [my age that] I think back on in college that I'm like, Wow, I didn't realize maybe because I was a female student or because I'm Asian, or because I didn't have the same journey here, that I may not be enough to do this. (Cyndi)

While campaigning for post-college public office, Amy felt people dismissed her because of her gender. In particular, she experienced older men dismissing her, many who had their wives call, email, and Facebook message her when they had questions. While her constituents who are men have come around, she also experienced similar microaggressions once she was elected. In one experience, Amy recalls an older white male colleague she served alongside using the term "Mama" when responding to her. She notes:

> I said, "You know what, I'm gonna stop you right there." I said, "How about you be [you], and I'll be [Amy]." And I said, "Don't ever do that again." And it has never happened again…You can't let those moments, you really can't let them pass as a woman. You have to be willing to say, "That is unacceptable, and I am not going to allow that behavior." (Amy)

Shirley, a white woman, experienced similar interactions with men. She recalls speaking at an event and a man telling her she "shouldn't talk about all that women stuff." She felt strongly about telling the man he was wrong and that for her, it was about speaking to women who had not previously been seen or heard. Even after winning her election with a historic (wide) margin, people said, "You only won because you're a woman."

It was one thing to be a woman in a male-dominated space like student government and post-college public office, and it was another to have the pressure of both gender and race at play. Karina felt this pressure deeply

and as far back as high school student council. Karina recalls feeling like "the perfect Black girl student" as student government president. She felt "propped up" by administrators, and that there was increased pressure on her due to the nature of her institution as a "majority white space." When she got to college, Karina watched another Black woman run for student government president and lose. This impacted her perception of her own election and made her wonder if she could achieve such a goal at a predominantly white institution like the one she attended. In her post-college role, Cyndi experienced a similar fear as a calling to work harder and be more creative. She reflects on the language and inferences made around her:

> You have to show up more. You can talk about all the things you've done, all the results. And even today [someone said to me], "Are you tough enough? Are you strong enough? Can you punch a bully in the mouth?" These are things I hear. And I'm like, in what world? Every leadership book I've read and classes I've taken, I have a [degree] in leadership, not one time do we talk about toughness. (Cyndi)

Such a "toughness" emerged in responding to microaggressions and macroaggressions, which occurred when Cyndi was speaker of her collegiate representative body that she recalled during our conversations. She shares:

> I had to go downstairs to get something, and I came back up. And my gavel…it was wrapped in a condom. And I remember thinking, like, what in the, who would do something like that? And in that moment, I really wasn't thinking about gender. I wasn't thinking about the disrespect as a woman being in that kind of position. I was just embarrassed. And I was appalled. And I was upset that someone would use something of mine and do that. And then the next week, I addressed the issue. But, you know, I bet I could ask some of my, my former, you know, peers in college, like, did that ever happen to you? And I'm positive the answer would be no. And that sticks with me because…we're using our voices to make a difference for each other, for our community, which is the university community. And that kind of disrespect, you felt this person felt like he could, he could do that to me. And I think it's because I'm a woman. And that sticks with me. (Cyndi)

Since college, and because of incidents such as these, Cyndi has committed to confronting remarks and aggressive behavior as it relates to her gender (and race).

Race

Race reverberated for all Participants of Color. And like Cyndi shared related to dynamics of race and gender in her pre-college student government experiences, Michael, an Asian man, recalls several examples when his race and ethnicity became a focal point in elections, and as early as his high school election(s), as well as in his election(s) after college. In high school, Michael found himself "leaning into the Brownness" of his identity in slogans, only to be met by an opponent who used xenophobic and racist language as a response. After college, Michael felt his initial elections were "about making white people comfortable" and constantly felt "worried about not being foreign or an other" to his constituents. These moments led Michael to extensive self-reflection, especially as he believes he was the first Asian student body president at his university. He now lives and leads in a community with a significantly small Asian population. He shares:

> I don't know if Asian ethnicity is just not prioritized or seen as diverse in the same way that other immutable traits are. Every position I've ever been in, from a political perspective, I've been the first. And yet it's never been part of my narrative. I don't feel bitter about that or anything; it's just an interesting observation. The first is important for a lot of communities, but it never seems that important for Asian communities. (Michael)

This idea of "the first" resonated with Participants of Color, particularly the nuances of race and institution type (e.g., all but one went to an, at the time, predominately white institution). Theo, a multiracial man, experienced inquiry from student groups, particularly other student leaders who noted the importance of being the first Person of Color in many years to hold the student government presidency (and potentially even the first Black student to be in the role). He recalls that this led to an actual argument at a student government event about if he was Black or not, where he shares he "watched them debate my identity."

Cici was the first African American woman to be president of her university's student government. Identifying as half-Black, Cici battled people's questions of whether or not she was "Black enough" to represent Students of Color on campus. Theo experienced this same disconnect, in that at times, he did not feel "Black enough for the Black community" as a mixed-race person. In the end, both felt a calling to be more representative from Students of Color. For example, Cici recalls, "It was kind of like, 'Come on, you're the Person of Color, you need to be into this, you need to understand, you need to represent for us.'" And yet, she found some Students of Color resisting her leadership and identity. She recalls thinking:

> Do you think that the white guy that's in the fraternity - in the ag fraternity on top of it, who doesn't speak any Spanish - is any better, but you're gonna just knock me off because [I don't speak Spanish]?" (Cici)

Identifying as Latina, Karina spoke Spanish in the last part of a speech and afterward had a peer accuse her of "pandering to get votes from Latinos." She reflects on that experience:

> And I was like, "But I am Latino. What do you mean? How am I pandering to get votes for people that I represent?" So I, I'm telling you all of this, to give you some context for like, just the, what I had to deal with, as I was trying to figure out, like, what student government meant, and whether I was, you know, could be respected in that kind of space, because it has, like all this...prestige. (Karina)

Mark, a Black man, saw similar learning in college as beneficial to his later experiences in public office, particularly his proximity to and relationship with the Black community. In college, he felt his Black peers remark, "What have you done for us," and, "I don't think you've done enough for us." However, in one of his elections, Mark experienced a white peer believe he (Mark) was racist because Black students were voting for "the Black guy." He felt this reflected the privilege white students felt at his institution, a predominately white institution, and "what people will do when they feel like something they deserve is taken from them." Despite this feeling and experience, his thinking has evolved in that, he recalls:

> I could be the student body president for all people, but also I have to be a leader of Black people in my community as well. And I've been faced with the same, you know, I guess you can say, situation dilemma, as a leader, you know, now as well, and that, that prepared me for today. (Mark)

Similarly, in her post-college election, Cici felt a dismissing of her identity as multiracial, in that years into a role, an opponent garnered attention that prompted people to comment, "Well, it'd be nice to have an African American [elected]." Remarks like this left her feeling frustrated.

In addition to feeling called to representation, participants noticed a lack of or notability of representation reverberated. When Theo got to college, he noticed the elected student government representatives were "privileged white kids." He did not see other students who looked like him in student government. Even in early leadership roles after his first year, he served alongside a majority of white students, including many who "had a different way of thinking, both in political ideology, but also in general on social cues and norms." Some participants felt called by other notable Leaders of Color impacting the larger United States political arena. Both Karina and Michael recall the salience of seeing President Barack Obama ascend to the highest office in the United States. Karina recalls Obama's election as her "political awakening," in that she saw herself "reflected" in him. For Christian, a Latino man and the youngest participant, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez inspired him to lead and make a difference. He identifies with "that AOC kind of movement," which influences how he leads and sees the world (through shared identities). Noticing Black and Brown people be ignored in his geographic region, Christian watched his district flip, and a new political dialogue emerged. This spurred him to run for student government, and immediately after his term as student body president, run for post-college public office.

Sexuality

Finally, sexuality was of note for gay and bisexual participants in particular. Charles and Henry, both gay men, were the first openly LGBT people elected to their institution's student governments. Henry felt his experience as openly gay and elected to student government allowed his student government to address queer issues and bring

LGBTQ+ topics into the campus discussion on diversity and inclusion. Another gay participant who had many gay and lesbian people involved in his student government felt he poured more of himself into work than into his personal life or his identity as a gay person in the top leadership role in student government. The participant reflects, "My experience was, you know, I don't have to address it. I'm just the student government president, I'm too busy to do, to do *that* (participant emphasized *that*), my personal self," talking about his gay identity. Rufus, a gay man, illuminates similar sentiments around not addressing sexuality, which was a seminal part of his coming out, and in some ways, why he did not come out until after college. He shares:

> I always thought is that I've got to be, you know, nose to the grindstone kind of upstanding, straight guy to get ahead, and eventually find myself a wife, and yada, yada, yada. … and eventually decided to run for office, you know, I, I was very determined, you know, sort of, this is who I am. And if the…if the public doesn't like it, you know…I'll go do something else. That's okay. (Rufus)

Henry feels he "blazed that trail" for gay students, and the year after he served in his role, his institution had an openly gay student government president. Henry feels his identity and presence made it easier for people after him to run. This translated to post-college public office and running as an openly gay man in his geographic region. Over time, Henry has received affirmation about the importance of his running as openly gay. One anonymous letter thanked him for being out, "and he wasn't ready to come out himself, but just thank[ed] me for being out and visible and saying that made life easier for him. That's still very important."

While Rufus was not out as gay while in college, in post-college public office, he thinks a lot about sexuality and its relationship to leadership (for both college student government and post-college public office). His community is a "bedroom community," he shares, and, "If you don't want the single, young gay man, [there are] plenty of people who aren't like me you can vote for." Over time, he's experienced "undertones" of homophobia and some explicit notions about his sexuality. In some ways, this is akin to Cyndi, who rejects the "white picket fence" narrative when running for office after college. Candidates do not have to be—and are not—solely white, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, *and married*. Rufus feels many gay candidates deal with this in college and beyond. Aside from his sexuality, though coded in homophobia, Rufus has heard people say he would not make a "good" candidate for higher public office because he is not married. He shares:

> I know what that means…You're talking about a specific kind of marriage, not that I'm not married. If I were married to a man, which I hope to be one day, that's not what you're talking about. What you mean is I don't have a wife and children. That's what you're saying. And that's homophobic. (Rufus)

Rufus has even faced backlash on social media and received hateful and violent messages due to some of his posts. He even once had a colleague make pejorative comments about him being gay and telling people in a way that held a negative connotation.

While this thematic section on sexuality is not as "full" as those that illuminate elements of race and gender, it is still important to uplift sexuality as a notable minoritized identity that came through as a sub-theme in this study. For relevant participants, their gay or bisexual identity showed up in different ways and yet was a part of each person as a salient—at times hidden—identity. It is essential that a study such as this names sexuality as a significant and relevant minoritized identity in public office spaces, and especially as one that appeared in conversations with participants, even if as an "imbalanced" theme overall in comparison to themes relating to gender and race.

INSIGHTS AND DISCUSSION

There is, perhaps, something significant about understanding these experiences in student government and post-college public office. For these participants with multiple/minoritized identities, the work demanded more from them in different ways - new and different hurdles to clear, politics to understand, and (hidden) curricula to locate and interpret. But what is this "hidden curriculum" that requires students to believe they must be this or that, or XYZ, to be in student government and be received as a worthy public leader? Predominately white student organizations such as student government, specifically, maintain "hidden and exclusionary support networks"

used by the dominant group to secure leadership positions (Jones & Reddick, 2017, p. 215). Cyndi mentions this hiddenness related to opportunities on campus that she later learned others were receiving, including opportunities she never heard of until she ascended to post-college public office. For example, she shares that years after college, when she was invited to speak as a public official at a major student leadership program in her state, she wondered who went from her time as a student. Cyndi shares, "There were hidden things going on that I didn't even realize; I wouldn't even know to ask." Despite being a known and successful student leader in college, she felt that some major opportunities beyond the institution were reserved for young men. This idea of getting passed up for opportunities relates to Cyndi's gender and race. It should be further interrogated how opportunities are seen, reserved, and taken up in college and beyond. Who gets which spaces? Who even knows about the spaces?

The/se dismissals, the patronizing and hidden curricula, and the extra hurdles to clear should be a sounding alarm for student government advisors and university administrators. Like Amy and Shirley feeling dismissed by older men, the makeup of university administrators as older (and white) men may pose a similar risk for women leaders specifically. For example, in 2017, the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources reported 88% of provosts or senior academic officers were white. The challenges that many participants faced, whether it be peers who questioned their elections or sexuality, race, or gender, are also of particular note, in that the very individuals doing the challenging may go on to later hold office, and maintain heteronormative, racist, and sexist tropes that are a barrier to minoritized people serving in public office. Just as a participant in Workman et al. (2020) posited, "Me being in this space is already causing a conversation" (p. 45), advisors and administrators should engage in those types of conversations as fierce advocates and allies to students. There is a need for advisors and administrators to address issues of inequality and inequity in interpersonal interactions as well as through spaces like public social media and campus press.

Many of the student body presidents in this study recalled being "the first" related to various social identities, or at least were conscious of when "the last" occurred of a particular identity. As participants talked about the noteworthiness of political leaders like Tammy Baldwin, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Alexandria Ocacio-Cortez as notable figures who caught their attention in student government and post-college public office, advisors and administrators can program and advise with these important milestones in mind. Influences like those had on these participants are of particular note, and may mean advisors and administrators should pay close(r) attention to elected leaders making ground in different ways. Involvement in student government leadership positions is not a race-neutral endeavor, and there are power discrepancies that create barriers for Black students in particular (Jones, 2020). In Goodman (2021a), one participant saw a previous gay student government president, which helped him also to believe he could serve in that role. Letting the leaders be themselves is not entirely a radical act - it has only become one due to the nature of and politicization of identity in U.S. politics. Still, it is important and should be valued. I come back to Rufus' perspective on his election, and he shares, "It was no secret that I was gay, but I was running for a job...I wanted to make it work well for people...to reform it, and that's why I was running. It wasn't to do anything else."

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations and implications for student affairs practice can be drawn from this study. First, student government advisors and university administrators should pay close attention to the very students running for elected office on campus. What identities are and are not represented? Do students feel comfortable and safe running in that particular institutional context? Further, what tools are provided to student government leaders (across all leadership roles - from executive cabinet to committee work)? Cici talked about the value of giving students *tools* so that Students of Color feel more comfortable to run for office in college and after. In their study, Jones and Reddick (2017) wrote about a participant (Annette) who designed a guide for students of color running for student government positions. Support in this way starts with access. However, it should not be the sole/responsibility of students to do this labor for the institution and its constituents. Advisors and administrators should innovate ways to bring Students of Color, women, and queer students into student government and work to make that space supportive and safe for those students to lead. This involves recruiting women to take on higher leadership roles and getting them involved early (Workman et al., 2020). Advisors and

administrators must directly address the whiteness (and racism), maleness (and sexism), and heteronormativity (and homophobia and transphobia) that often permeates student government(s). Advisors and administrators must "be real" with themselves, as well, and in particular, how they may be fostering an environment where such -ism remains unchecked. Further, when/as institutional crises occur, advisors and administrators can be mindful of the labor placed on students whose identities are related to the very issues involved. For example, in contexts like voting on Chik-fil-A as a dining option (i.e., the impact on queer students) or passing a resolution to affirm the campus' support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program (i.e., the impact on undocumented student leaders) (Goodman et al., 2021), advisors should be attentive to students who share identities with the very issues being discussed or legislated.

Administrators and advisors should be prepared to work with students that allows them to examine their identities and make sense of how they show up in society and in leadership (e.g., identity exploration and development). Cyndi shares that her realizations today are a result of processing over time. She probably would not have been able to articulate this learning at that time, in college, when she was still grappling with her identity as an Asian American woman. Cyndi experienced periods of her life where she googled how to Westernize her eyes, and paid attention to specific attire, makeup, and patterns that helped her seem less Asian and fit in. Like Michael, who made jokes about his Asian identity while running, a post-college reflection led participants to realize the harm that had been done. Advisors and administrators can consider the ways students are experiencing identity development at the same time as their leadership.

Further, advisors and administrators can work with local elected leaders to display the varying identities involved in public office. Henry talked about the importance of seeing one of his state representatives on campus as he and other student government leaders worked to create space(s) for LGBT students. Like the salience of Obama or Ocacio-Cortez, student leaders need to see people who look like and are like them to further realize their potential and possibility for post-college public office (or service, in general). In Michael's reflection of Obama's impact, he shares:

> He's a Brown dude. I just identified with him so much, and I loved him so much. He made me believe that even I could run and get elected. And he made me believe that I could lift up communities around me.

To believe one can accomplish something is an ideal path to making student government more accessible. Perhaps, bringing in individuals to model this for student leaders may increase the way students come to student government or run for office in and after their time in college. Michael shares, "So yeah, I mean, so I am his legacy." Legacies such as Michael's, and many others, should be captured and held dear by institutions and practitioners. As such, institutions can do a better job of documenting histories such as these student government elections, and in particular, house them within archives, displays, or through the very student governments themselves. For example, in 2020, Danielle Geathers was elected the first Black woman student body president in the 159-year history of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Johnson Hess, 2020). Housing and spotlighting this information are ways to anchor opportunities for generations of leaders to come. Institutions can maintain this history and better understand how individuals with minoritized identities show up in politics, on and off campus.

CONCLUSION

It feels, perhaps, most relevant to close with a quote from Cyndi, whose student government and post-college public office experiences both significantly impact(ed) her political worldview. Cyndi shares:

> And I think about women in politics, Hillary Clinton in particular. She was too tough. Too many plans. So she wasn't enough. I look at Stacey Abrams, I mean, just a true shero of mine, and a true example of, you know, for her, it's like, "Am I an angry Black woman if I speak too loud? But then am I speaking loud enough, so my colleagues know I'm fighting for them?" You know? And I think that, you know, that's, that's the barrier, and those are the challenges we have to overcome as women and Women of Color that people really don't understand. And you can literally work your tail off, and it's not enough...And you know, but it's like, I'm showing them my results…I think they're looking at me as, like, little Asian lady…

> And they're like, "But, are you tough enough?" But hopefully, it will be enough. Let's put that, put that in the universe.

Perhaps, it will be enough. Perhaps, it always was - to bring one's identity into the student government and post-college public office role(s). And, still, there is much work to be done to ensure students are (1) granted access into those spaces and (2) able to thrive with all minoritized identities in tow.

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JCAPS

Book Review

THE INFINITE GAME:
SERVING STUDENTS FROM
AN INFINITE MINDSET

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"The Infinite Game," by Simon Sinek, is a business book that is applicable to student activities. This book review intends to review the content of the book while directly connecting how the information applies to our work as student activities practitioners. As we rebuild our campus communities out of the global pandemic caused by COVID-19, an opportunity exists to lead with an Infinite Mindset, and best serve students both today and into the future.

The Infinite Game by Simon Sinek is a business book that is applicable to student activities. You may be thinking that treating higher education as a business is a mistake. I could not agree more. This book is applicable because it challenges prominent business practices that focus only on the short-term bottom-line impact. It also asks us to put people above profits, which will ultimately pay dividends over the long haul. The vast majority of campus activities professionals have spent the better part of the past 18 months providing virtual services to students. In the face of the challenges presented by this COVID-19 global pandemic, campus activities professionals are positioned to deliberately rebuild community and campus culture at our respective institutions. While the importance of community and the sense of belonging derived from campus activities should not be understated, the budget outlook is not overly favorable for many campuses. As such, campus activities departments must find ways to show their value to holistic student development. This review analyzes key elements of *The Infinite Game* and presents ways that the content applies to our praxis.

FINITE VS. INFINITE GAME

To understand the concept of an infinite mindset, one must first explore the difference between a finite game and an infinite game. Sinek credits James P. Carse's 1986 *Finite and Infinite Games: A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility* as how he learned about finite and infinite games. Key elements of a finite game are that the players are known, rules for playing are clear, and there is an objective that, when reached, definitively ends the game. Conversely, infinite games have both known and unknown players, there are no necessarily agreed-upon rules, and there is no time horizon that ever definitively ends the game.

In conversations with colleagues, silos can be identified not only between Faculty, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs but often within student affairs. One such example of a silo within student affairs may be how enrollment management and campus activities compete for resources even though the two functional areas are intertwined. The reasons may vary (i.e., organizational structure, budget in-fighting, etc.), but a silo existing is a sign of a finite game being played. The inaugural issue of this journal contained an article, *How Campus Activities Can Lead the Modern University: Five Imperatives,* that I would consider a call to action. One such imperative is to reconsider assessment with the student at the center. Tracking attendance and satisfaction surveys are valuable tools for measuring the success of our programs and justifying that campus activities provide value connected to the budget associated with programming. Tempting as it may be to compete with other departments and center

our assessment around what many of our campus decision-makers want to see, a finite mindset may be in place if that is the extent of an assessment plan. We need to strive to measure student growth holistically through established learning outcomes and reimagining how we assess student learning. Focusing our campus activities work on student learning means genuinely taking the approach of an infinite mindset and will ultimately lead to improved satisfaction and attendance.

FIVE ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

It is important to note that this book review is not a comprehensive chapter-by-chapter analysis. Rather it is intended to identify, discuss, and connect key elements to display how leading and working from an infinite mindset can have an extraordinary, positive impact on our programs within student activities. The book discusses five essential practices necessary to adopt an infinite mindset. While each of these practices alone has value, all of them must be done in conjunction with one another to have maximum impact. The following sections provide foundational insight into each of the five practices.

Advance a Just Cause

"A Just Cause is a specific vision of a future state that does not yet exist." A Just Cause must be affirmative and optimistic, inclusive, for the primary benefit of others, resilient, and idealistic," (Sinek, 2019, p. 37). The difference between being for or against something can sometimes be indistinguishable. Using the example of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work, there are many times where students rally against an unjust worldly event or policy decision (recent examples may include police brutality and the attempted removal of protections provided through DACA). However, this opposition by itself does not represent a Just Cause. Instead, a Just Cause requires one to be affirmative and optimistic. A NACA specific example of a Just Cause could be pulled out of the Competencies for Diversity and Inclusion resource, "[One of the] core values is Inclusivity, by which NACA is committed to creating, with intention, an environment where all people can thrive and be successful," (NACA Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, 2018). Everything we do through our work should have the primary purpose of benefitting the students we serve. If our Just Cause is well-crafted and we strive to work towards that Cause, we are much more likely to create an inclusive environment that inspires others to want to, and be able to, join in.

Utilizing the book as a means to create conversation on your campuses is highly encouraged. If connecting with colleagues that are internal to your department and supportive of you, the book can aid in creating a Just Cause specific to your institution and stimulate conversation about how to advance the Just Cause intentionally. If there are colleagues on your campus that are skeptical about the power of campus activities, engaging in conversation about the book can prove valuable from the sense of helping them to see the way your work connects to advancing a Just Cause.

Build Trusting Teams

"When we are not on a Trusting Team, when we do not feel like we can express any kind of vulnerability at work… we hide mistakes … and we would never admit we need help for fear of humiliation," (Sinek, 2019, p. 106). A trusting team is truly the backbone of leading with an infinite mindset. Are we treating student leaders on activities boards in a transactional way that works because of the mutual desire to get things done? Are we positively supporting our campus activities colleagues? Are we building a culture of trust that leads to synergy? Do our colleagues and student leaders feel comfortable being vulnerable with us? Vulnerability will lead to innovation because fear of making a mistake is eradicated.

The level that the COVID-19 Global Pandemic impacted each of our campus communities may vary. However, all of us have felt the impact in some meaningful way. Whether or not we choose to approach our work with an infinite mindset, we are faced with rebuilding the culture for student leaders on our campus. Culture building is a lot of work and "starts by creating a space in which people feel safe and comfortable to be themselves," (Sinek, 2019, p. 121). We are all returning to campus at different times and ramping back to 100% activity at different rates. Because many of our campuses have been primarily remote for an extended period, much institutional knowledge will have disappeared without passing it on to the next generation. The work to rebuild culture is not

a choice, and what better time to learn to approach doing so with an infinite mindset? If we approach our work through the lens of student development and create space for students to be vulnerable and make mistakes, a Trusting Team will follow.

Study Worthy Rivals

We select our own worthy rivals, and in selecting a rival, "the main point is that they do something as well or better than us," (Sinek, 2019, p. 161). It is essential to note that a rival is not a competitor. We should not be seeking to *beat* our worthy rivals – we should seek to *learn* from their successes. A rival can be from within our industry or from outside of it. NACA provides an excellent outlet for campus activities professionals to identify worthy rivals inside and outside higher education. The NACA Connect tool allows us to learn from each other by posting questions and sharing best practices that are not competitive in any way whatsoever. The NACA 24/7 database of associates allows us to connect with those who specialize in their specific area to connect that expertise directly to our students. One example of how this applies to the Worthy Rival concept is a campus's decision to pay for a professional virtual escape room for all students to engage, but take the time to learn how to build a virtual escape room to increase the engagement at a virtual student leader retreat. Even though we have proven the ability to create our own virtual escape room (we learned from our worthy rival), we would still seek to contract an associate in the future as we trust their capacity for serving a higher volume of students while maintaining the fun and vibrant atmosphere that students are often seeking when participating in a virtual event experience (we recognize where our rival is superior and avoid trying to beat them).

Existential Flexibility & Courage to Lead

While Existential Flexibility and Courage to Lead are separate essential practices/chapters in Sinek's book, they are intertwined regarding the approach that student activities professionals need to take moving forward. "Existential flexibility is the capacity to initiate an extreme disruption to a business model or strategic course to more effectively advance a just cause," (Sinek, 2019, p. 185). Without argument, COVID-19 has caused an extreme disruption to campus activities. We were all positioned differently to adjust our campus activities programs to a virtual format and continue helping our students feel connected to the campus community. In the early months of 2019, a campus leader approached me regarding the need to build out more digital programming for our (at the time) fully commuter campus. Admittedly, I balked at the request and doubled down on trying to find ways to engage our population at in-person events. An existential flex "happens when the company is fully formed and functioning… and is existential because the leader is risking the apparent certainty of the current, profitable path with the uncertainty of a new path," (Sinek, 2019, p. 186-187). Due to my inability to commit to an existential flex in 2019, my department was less equipped to serve students during the global pandemic than we needed to be. In short, it is important for us as campus activities professionals not to be satisfied with the status quo and constantly seek opportunities for an existential flex that keeps our programming fresh and adaptable to any circumstance.

"Courage, as it relates to leading with an infinite mindset, is the willingness to completely change our perception of how the world works," (Sinek, 2019, p. 200). No one is perfect, and even the most courageous leaders will stray from an infinite mindset. A courageous leader will recognize that an organization is straying from its Cause and take action to get back into an infinite mindset. The easiest path to an organization playing an infinite game is for upper administration to lead the charge. However, as we approach our work, we must identify how Student Affairs, particularly campus activities, might find the courage to lead the way into higher education, cementing a culture of an infinite mindset. This book was written in 2019 and shared two key ways to find the courage to lead: 1) wait for a life-altering experience that shakes us to our core or 2) find a Just Cause that inspires us (Sinek, p. 200-201). It's safe to say that campus activities have faced a life-altering experience that shook us to our core, making the ability to lead from an infinite mindset all the more necessary. We can take the easy route and go back to doing the same things we were doing prior to COVID. Or, we can create a better normal through committing to an infinite mindset and consistently seeking to put all five essential practices reviewed here to work. In particular, if we are courageous, we can avoid replicating campus activities programming that we knew wasn't effective but done out of tradition and re-allocate those resources in a way that promotes student learning and holistic development.

While *The Infinite Game* is a business book by nature, it truly teaches us the importance of not treating higher education as a business. I encourage everyone reading this article to read *The Infinite Game*. Sinek does a wonderful job providing vivid examples in each section that help the reader better comprehend how the concepts discussed above have played out in real situations and emphasizes the positive impact it can have on how one approaches leadership. I also want to explicitly state that, while I use the term used in the book, nothing about our work is a game. Students entrust us with their time and resources, often limited time and resources, and we need to deliver on the promise.

To be resilient is to be "able to endure political, technological, and cultural change," (Sinek, 2019, p. 44). A global pandemic recently required (and continues to require) us to show our resilience. Campus activities across most campuses could not be executed as planned. At a moment's notice, professional staff had to find a way to endure the change and keep connected with students. Whether or not our Just Cause was connected to DEI, it became clear that the transition to remote learning was not equitable. Many of our campus communities attempted to serve students through setting up mobile wifi hotspots in parking lots, securing long-term rentals of laptops to students without access to technology at home, and things of the sort. Most of us did this due to playing the finite game of trying to keep students enrolled. A noble gesture, yes. However, as Kevin Kruger, President of NASPA, put it in a webinar in April 2020, the work we were able to do to secure resources for students who did not have them displayed our lack of promoting equity prior to the pandemic more so than it displayed a gesture that deserves positive recognition (Presence.io, 2020). Playing the infinite game, we need to continue to provide students with activities that help them develop a sense of belonging to our campus community while also being intentional about providing holistic support to students.

Even prior to the global pandemic that altered the landscape of higher education without notice, enrollment trends were not positive at a large percentage of institutions. Trends do not appear to be shifting positively as we are looking at a potential enrollment cliff with a projected 15% decline in enrollment in the year 2025 due to decreasing birth rates in the United States (Kline, 2019). We can learn a great deal from this book by ensuring we do not just focus on the bottom line out of panic but commit to playing the infinite game in a way that will allow us to come out of this crisis better than we went into it. If we in higher education genuinely want to promote equity and be change agents, we must put students first. If we genuinely do this, the metrics will follow because higher education will provide the value that it claims to provide. As higher education institutions are forced to compete for students, campus activities can profoundly impact the future of higher education.

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