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GEORGIA JOURNAL OF COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

As the official journal of the Georgia College Personnel Association (GCPA), the *Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs (GJCSA)* aims to promote scholarly work and perspectives from graduate students, practitioners, and scholars, reflecting the importance of professional and academic research and writing in higher education. The scope of the journal is focused on state, regional, and national higher education research, concepts, and practices that have implications for both practitioners and scholars within the field of college student affairs.

In addition to peer-reviewed manuscripts using a variety of methodological forms and perspectives, GJCSA will consider publication of other scholarly contributions such as case studies, media reviews (blogs, websites, books, videos, reports), articles highlighting best practices or current trends, and practitioner reflections. When possible, special attention will be made to include scholarly contributions from graduate students, new professionals, and junior faculty. In addition, the GJCSA may periodically call for proposals for theme-focused editions and volunteers to serve as guest editors for these special editions.

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Using Critical Race Theory as a Framework to Explore the Experiences of College Students from Rural Areas: A Strategy for Educators

Elise J. Cain (Georgia Southern University)

Natesha L. Smith (Binghamton University)

There are several indicators (e.g. lower enrollment rates and lower persistence rates) that rural people are achieving less postsecondary success compared to their urban peers. This is particularly true for people with low socioeconomic statuses and people of color. This article, therefore, utilizes critical race theory in education as a framework to explore the experiences of college students from rural areas. The article begins with an overview of critical race theory and a review of relevant literature about rural people organized within a critical race theory framework. This information is then utilized to construct a strategy to guide educators in their critical explorations of rural students and their experiences through assessing pertinent questions. A vignette is also provided as an example to assist educators in their utilization of the strategy, providing a promising practice to support educators at higher education institutions in their efforts to be more inclusive of students from rural areas.

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In recent years, higher education professionals have increased their awareness of people from rural areas. For example, according to the 2017 Survey of College and University Admissions Directors released by *Inside Higher Ed* and Gallup, 52% of public and 28% of private colleges increased their recruitment of rural students (Jaschik, 2017). Some colleges and universities are also starting financial and academic support initiatives for rural students similar to ones previously only offered for urban students (Nadworny, 2018). Because rural students as a distinct student population are often ignored in higher education research (Byun, Meece, & Agger, 2017) and because there is the potential for greater numbers of people from rural areas attending college, gaining knowledge about these students becomes key.

The United States Census Bureau defines a rural area as a place outside of an urban area, having a population less than 2,500 people (United States Census, 2016b). These areas are home to about 60 million people or 19.3% of the country's total population. The average graduation rate for high school students from rural areas is 81% (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). The percentage of rural people aged 18-24 enrolled in colleges or universities, however, is only 29% (NCES,

2015). This percentage is much less than all other locales with cities having the highest percentage at almost 48%. Additionally, college students from rural areas have lower first to second year persistence rates than suburban and urban students (High School Benchmarks, 2016). Furthermore, only 19% of rural adults have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 33% of urban adults and the rural/urban education gap in achieving bachelor's degrees increased between 2000 and 2015 (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA], 2017). Beyond this data by locale, high school and college completion rates are highly influenced by socioeconomic status and race in rural areas, with poorer people and people of color experiencing even less educational success (Lavalley, 2018; Showalter, Klein, Johnson & Hartman, 2017; USDA, 2017). For example, rural adults of color are half as likely to have bachelor's degrees than White rural adults (USDA, 2017). Thus, even though people from rural areas are graduating high school at a substantial level, few people from rural areas are completing college degrees, especially rural people with low socioeconomic statuses and rural people of color.

Rural people from the state of Georgia may face even more barriers to their educational success compared to what these

national statistics suggest. Showalter et al. (2017) reported that in the state of Georgia the rural student poverty rate and the rural student minority rate are among the highest in the country. In addition, the overall rural high school graduation rate in Georgia is 77% (Showalter et al., 2017), less than the national rural high school graduation rate of 81% reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) and less than the national high school graduation rate of 87% reported by Showalter et al. (2017). The high school graduation rates for Georgia rural students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and who are students of color, are even lower, both at about 71% (Showalter et al., 2017). Rural people in Georgia, therefore, have less chances of graduating high school, not to mention attending postsecondary education. Yet there are almost 380,000 rural school-aged students in the state of Georgia, meaning an understanding of the educational pathways of these individuals is particularly critical for educators.

Due to the lag in educational attainment of people from rural areas, particularly people with low socioeconomic status and people of color, the purpose of this article is to utilize critical race theory as a framework to explore the experiences of college students from rural areas. Through a review of relevant literature, a strategy for

critically exploring students' experiences from rural areas will be created. This article aims to contribute to scholarship by providing a promising practice that may be utilized to expand higher education's understanding of college students from rural areas. The article will begin, therefore, with an overview of critical race theory along with educational data about people from rural areas. Next, a strategy for critically exploring the experiences of college students from rural areas will be presented in the form of a table with key questions for educators to assess when working with students. A vignette of a student named Jean is then utilized to review the use of the strategy. Lastly, this article will conclude with final thoughts, practice implications, and recommendations for further research.

Critical Race Theory Applied to College Student from Rural Areas

Torres, Jones, and Renn (2009) noted the potential of critical race theory to add to the comprehension of student identity development as well as the need to further investigate "the ways that individuals and their environments interact in the social construction of both identity categories and individual identities" (p. 593). Critical race theory is defined as a movement involving activists and scholars who aim to study and transform the relationship among race, racism, and power

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical race theory began in the 1970s when a group of activists, legal scholars, and lawyers came to realize new strategies and theories were necessary because the advances made by the 1960s civil rights era were stalling, and in some cases reversing (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This original group included people such as Derrick A. Bell, Charles Lawrence, Richard Delgado, Lani Guinier, and Kimberle Crenshaw (Taylor, 2009). The central tenets of critical race theory include: (1) racism is normal and the system prioritizing white over color serves many purposes for the dominant group, (2) since racism advances White people both materially and psychically, a large part of the population has little incentive to eliminate racism, (3) race and racism are social constructions, meaning they result from social relations and thoughts not biological or genetic reasons, (4) dominant groups racialize different groups of people at different times, shifting popular images and stereotypes over time as well, (5) no person has just a single, easily described identity, but has multiple and possibly overlapping or conflicting identities, and (6) people of color have a unique voice and assumed competence to speak about race and racism due to their histories and experiences of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Utilizing critical race theory as a theoretical lens to explore the experiences of

college students from rural areas, therefore, alters the “focus away from a deficiency model to explain educational disparities, to an approach that uncovers how inequities of access, power, and resources in the educational system perpetuate the achievement gap” (Hernández, 2016, p. 170). The central tenets of critical race theory applied to the field of education, create five themes directing perspectives, research methodology, and pedagogy (Hernández, 2016, Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). The five themes are: (1) understanding of individual experiences, (2) challenging dominant ideology, (3) commitment to social justice, (4) experiential knowledge and voice, and (5) interdisciplinary perspectives. These five themes can be applied to exploring the experiences of college students from rural areas. In the following sections each theme is defined, and examples from literature are provided. Note, however, some examples can be applied to more than one theme but are positioned generally in just one for purposes of this article.

Understanding of Individual Experiences

The first theme centers the importance of race and racism in the understanding of individual experiences. This theme also includes the intersection of other forms of subordination and oppression, such as classism

and gender inequality (Hernández, 2016, Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). For people from rural areas, there are several individual characteristics that impact their educational aspirations and attainment of college degrees. Rural high school students' aspirations for some college and four-year degrees do not differ by race/ethnicity, but students who identify as multiracial are significantly more likely to aspire for graduate or professional degrees (Meece, Hutchins, Byun, Farmer, Irvin, & Weiss, 2013). Race and ethnicity do, however, impact educational attainment of rural people with the percentage of Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Hispanic or Latino people from rural areas being less likely to have at least some college education compared to White people (USDA, 2017). In fact, rural people of color are half as likely to earn bachelor's degrees or higher compared to White rural people (USDA, 2017). Rural women are more likely than rural men to aspire for college education (Meece, Askew, Agger, Hutchins, & Byun, 2014; Meece et al., 2013), enroll in college (NCES, 2015), and earn their associate's or bachelor's degrees (USDA, 2017). Socioeconomic status is also an important factor relating to the educational success of people. People with higher socioeconomic statuses are more likely to graduate from high school and are more likely to apply to college (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; High

School Benchmarks, 2016). The actions of rural students during college also influences their likelihood of completing their college degrees. For instance, college students from rural areas are more likely to complete their bachelor's degrees when they do not delay their entry into college, attend college full-time, and participate in Greek organizations and/or social clubs (Byun, Irvin, & Meece, 2012).

Beyond individual characteristics, educational aspirations and attainment for people from rural areas are impacted by several family, school, and community characteristics which impact individuals' experiences (Byun et al., 2017; Molefe, Burke, Collins, Sparks, & Hoyer, 2017). College students from rural areas tend to indicate they are closely tied to their families and/or their communities (Bryan & Simmons, 2009). In the college decision making process, parents of rural college students are powerful influencers of support and determent for attending college (Schultz, 2004). High school students whose parents have higher educational expectations are more likely to enroll in college (Meece, Askew, Agger, Hutchins, & Byun, 2014). Students from rural areas often mention being encouraged by their families to attend and complete college (Hlinka, 2017; Hlinka, Mobelini, & Giltner, 2015; Kanapel & Flory, 2017), however, family commitments and expectations may also distract

the rural college students from their studies (Hand & Payne, 2008; Hlinka, 2017; Hlinka et al., 2015). Family members may have a limited understanding about college and its requirements, yet they desire to support their students with love and excitement through their college experiences (Bryan & Simmons, 2009). People from rural areas with lower family incomes often have lower high school graduation rates (Provasnik, 2007; Roscigno & Crowley, 2001), lower college enrollment rates (Byun, Meece, Irvin, & Hutchins, 2012; Provasnik, 2007), and lower college completion rates (Byun, Irvin et al., 2012; Byun, Meece, & Irvin, 2012). In fact, the overall lower socioeconomic statuses of families from rural areas versus families from urban areas was found to be a major contributor to the rural/urban discrepancies in college attendance rates (Byun et al., 2015). Family structure also influences rural high school students' educational aspirations and attainment with students from two-parent homes having higher aspirations and attainment compared to single and other family structures (Byun, Irvin et al., 2012; Byun, Meece, & Irvin, 2012; Byun, Meece, Irvin, & Hutchins, 2012; Roscigno & Crowley, 2001; Roscigno, Tomaskovic-Devey, & Crowley, 2006). Additionally, higher parental education levels are also associated with higher enrollment and completion rates for rural students (Byun, Irvin et al., 2012; Byun et al., 2017; Schonert

et al., 1991). Due to the many intersecting individual, family, school, and community characteristics all individuals possess and how these characteristics impact educational attainment, it is important to remember rural people are not one homogeneous group.

Challenging of Dominant Ideology

The second critical race theory theme in education is challenging of dominant ideology in education. Critical race theory applied to education sees the assumptions of objectivity, neutralness, and equal opportunity as false (Hernández, 2016, Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Relating this theme to the first, this means people may not have the same opportunities for educational success based on their multiple identities even though more than half of high school students from rural areas aspire to obtain two- or four-year college degrees (Meece et al., 2013, 2014). For example, literature suggests the characteristics of peoples' high schools may be one way of promoting or demoting the educational success of college students from rural areas. Schools with smaller class sizes (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011), schools with lower poverty and lower minority rates (High School Benchmarks, 2016), and schools with higher rigor of the curriculum with incorporation of advanced coursework and college preparation programs (Byun, Irvin et al.,

2012, 2015) all relate to higher educational achievement of rural people. Furthermore, receiving college counseling also increases the likelihood of enrolling in college for rural high school students (Griffin, Hutchins, & Meece, 2011).

Findings regarding the academic status of college students from rural areas, however, seem to be mixed in the literature. Most studies conclude the students from rural areas, in their samples, are not at a disadvantage academically versus other students (Byun, Irvin et al., 2012; Hand & Payne, 2008; Schonert et al., 1991). In fact, Byun, Irvin, and Meece (2012) discovered rural and urban students had higher first-year cumulative GPAs versus suburban students. On the other hand, other scholars (e.g. Hilkna, 2017; Lavalley, 2018) reported rural students having lower academic success. For example, Hlikna's (2017) study found the rural students sampled from Kentucky's Appalachian region who attended a community college struggled academically due to their poor academic preparation and inability to adjust to critical analysis versus memorization of course information.

Beyond their high schools, college students from rural areas may also be struggling to earn college degrees due to the types of postsecondary institutions they are attending. College students from rural areas are more likely to attend public colleges and

are less likely to attend selective institutions compared to college students from suburban and urban areas (Byun, Irvin et al., 2012). Also, of the rural students who do attend college, 64.5% attend a two-year institution at some point during the college career (Byun et al., 2017). The type of institutions students attend is important, nevertheless, because more selective institutions and institutions with higher expenditures have higher retention and graduation rates compared to less selective institutions (Gansemer-Topf & Schuh, 2006). Thus, students from rural areas who attend selective institutions and institutions with higher expenditures are increasing their chances of completing their degrees simply by where they are attending school.

College students from rural areas may also enter the postsecondary level with little knowledge about higher education until they step onto campuses, impacting their educational success (Ardoin, 2018; Bryan & Simmons, 2009). These students may not have access to resources outside of their community (Walker & Raval, 2017). In addition, due to the limited number of people who earn college degrees in rural areas, younger people may not hear accurate accounts of what college is like (Ganss, 2016). Even when these people do receive some information, institutional information may be con-

fusing and students from rural areas, especially first-generation students, may not have the additional supports necessary to navigate the complexities of higher education (Ardoin, 2018; Hand & Payne, 2008).

Commitment to Social Justice

The third theme of critical race theory applied to education involves a commitment to social justice by working to eliminate multiple oppressions and empowering marginalized groups in educational contexts (Hernández, 2016, Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). One common theme about college students from rural areas involves their struggles with their connection to home, both positively and negatively. Several of the college students from rural areas perceive college as a means to not be “stuck” in their home communities (Ganss, 2016; Walker & Raval, 2016) or as an opportunity for “a better life” (Ardoin, 2018). Some students mention a lack of career and social opportunities in their home areas as reasons for not wanting to return home (Bryan & Simmons, 2009). On the other hand, many students feel a strong connection and loyalty to their families and their communities and wish to return home or stay close to their home after graduation or later in life (Hand & Payne, 2008; Hlinka et al., 2015). These feelings are complex and may impact the educational and career choices students make, impacting their

college experiences. For example, students may choose majors based on the career options they see available in their home areas. Much of these struggles, however, are rooted in the power dynamics much greater than individual experiences. They result from influences from urban normativity, defined as viewing urbanism as the standard and ruralism as inferior (Thomas, Fulkerson, Lowe, & Smith, 2001). For instance, students may not want to return to their home area because many young, talented rural youth are groomed for leaving their hometowns to find success (Carr & Kefalas, 2009). Higher education institutions, instead of requiring rural students to conform to dominant urban culture, could increase their involvement in rural communities to promote congruence of students’ experiences between their rural lives and their college lives to assist these students (McDonough, Gildersleeve, & Jarsky, 2010). Critically addressing not only individual but structural power dynamics, therefore, promotes the potential for social justice for this group of students.

Experiential Knowledge and Voice

The fourth critical race theme in education, the centrality of experiential knowledge, gives marginalized people voice to attest to the effects and consequences of racism by valuing their lived experiences (Hernández,

2016, Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). The voices of people of color and women are crucial in the understanding and teaching of racial subordination. This theme encourages listening to the experiences and goals of college students from rural areas to determine what they think is best for their development. College students from rural areas may be struggling academically, socially, and/or emotionally, inhibiting their college success. McDonough et al. (2010) “argue that ‘the rural life,’ being qualitatively different than urban and suburban cultures, is untended by higher education” (p. 191) because institutions do not align with rural students’ specific concerns and lifestyles. College students from rural areas may be excited as well as anxious about college due to the sizes of their campuses, the sizes of their classes, the close proximity of people in the residence halls, and the surrounding college communities (Schultz, 2004). College students from rural areas may also struggle with making new friends. Some students lack experience having to make new friends due to attending small elementary and secondary schools with the same cohort of students (Ganss, 2016) or simply having friends as a result of convenience and few peers where they grew up (Buote et al., 2007). In addition, students from rural areas may find it to get involved in campus activities. The rural students interviewed by Ganss (2016) said

overwhelming amounts of options and lack of direction on where to start, inhibited their involvement activities.

Some college students from rural areas also struggle at college because of social and emotional factors relating to their families and communities. Some students describe being connected to their hometowns because individuals are supportive of one another as well as know who the other people in their town are (Walker & Raval, 2017). In spite of this encouragement, when these rural students attend college, they may also become aware of a lack of diversity in their home communities (Walker & Raval, 2017) and become aware of their lack of experience with diverse members of the campus community (Schultz, 2004). The college experience can also highlight how the rural students are different (or become different) from their family and community members, and even if students anticipate a change in their relationships, the feelings of difference may be upsetting for them (Bryan & Simmons, 2009). Some students have even expressed feeling like one person at school and another person at home, separating their identities based on place (Bryan & Simmons, 2009). Thus, even though the connections these students have with their families and communities can be positive, challenges can arise due to these relationships as well. Hearing the voices of

these individual students, therefore, is the best way to understand what they are experiencing and how educators may best help them with their individual needs.

Interdisciplinary Perspectives

The fifth, and final theme, is utilization of interdisciplinary perspectives by analyzing race and racism in education in historical and current contexts through interdisciplinary methods (Hernández, 2016, Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Multidisciplinary methods involve gaining an understanding from two or more perspectives. Alternatively, interdisciplinary methods involve “the practice of holding different ways of knowing *in relationship*” (Dreyfuss, 2011, p. 75). It requires people to hold different, sometimes contradictory, ways of knowing simultaneously. Interdisciplinarity, therefore, recognizes that all knowledge and tools are partial, subjective, and evolving (Dreyfuss, 2011).

An interdisciplinary approach is especially appropriate for the study of experiences and identity because understandings of “identity” differ depending on the discipline, epistemological worldview, and historical context that the perspectives were developed (Jones & Abes, 2013). Many of the identity theories in higher education are rooted in psychology, sociology, social psy-

chology, or human and developmental ecology (Torres et al., 2009). Identity theories that draw from psychology emphasize the individual, focusing on personal identity and understandings of the self (Jones & Abes, 2013; Torres et al., 2009). On the other hand, sociological identity theories view identities as situated within social contexts, with “self” developing out of interactions within groups. Social psychology identity theories combine psychological and sociological perspectives, resulting in identity theories which include both individual and social processes. In addition, identity theories situated in human and developmental ecology look at how individuals are situated in their environments, impacting their development (Jones & Abes, 2013; Torres et al., 2009). Student identity theories, moreover, have also been influenced by postmodernism and poststructuralism (Torres et al., 2009). Key within these viewpoints are the beliefs that identities are socially constructed as well as bound by temporal and cultural contexts.

Combining several of these perspectives to explore identity can enhance understanding of college students by altering attention to different key aspects within each of the disciplinary roots. In the case of college students from rural areas, their identities can be understood as individual, as influenced by social groups, as the interaction between individuals as social groups, as impacted by

environmental factors, and as changing based upon contexts. Each of these understandings can potentially uncover new insights about the students which may be neglected with a narrower approach. It is advantageous, therefore, to question assumptions within different perspectives to best assist students in their educational journeys.

A Strategy for Exploring the Experiences of College Student from Rural Areas

By using the themes of critical race theory and data from literature outlined above, a strategy for exploring the experiences of college students from rural areas emerges as illustrated in Table 1. This table can be used to support the investigation of rural students beyond a constructivist perspective of reporting individual experiences, to a critical perspective which additionally incorporates the questioning of institutional and structural factors. Each of these five areas (understanding individual experiences, challenging of dominant ideology, commitment to social justice, experiential knowledge and voice, and interdisciplinary perspectives) provide additional knowledge about students and their contexts. Example questions are provided within each of the sections to encourage thinking within each of areas of the table.

To use the table, individuals should prepare answers for the provided questions (and any additional relevant questions for the

theme). After inquiry is completed for the first four themes, the final theme, "Interdisciplinary Perspectives," encourages users to think about the other themes again within a new disciplinary lens. Once these multiple perspectives are considered, the similarities and differences between the original and new views should be highlighted. This strategy can be utilized within different student affairs functional areas, such as residence life, new student services, student conduct, and student activities, as well in classroom settings. The questions provided in Table 1 are intentionally broad to be useful in multiple settings, but more specific questions may be added for specific uses of the strategy within a particular setting. For example, in residence life you may question how a student's multiple identities (e.g. their race, gender, class, and place of origin) influence their relationship with their roommate.

Because examples are often helpful when utilizing a new tool, I will demonstrate the strategy using a scenario involving a fictitious student. As you read the vignette, imagine you are a higher education administrator working with first-year undergraduate students:

Early in the fall semester you are approached by Jean who is having difficulty adjusting to college. Through conversation, you learn Jean is from a rural area about an hour from your campus. Jean

identifies as a Latina female. She appears to be a traditional aged college student, about 18 years old. She tells you she is the first in her family to attend college. She has a younger brother who is three years younger than her. She lives with both of her biological parents. Her mother is an administrative assistant and her father is a mechanic. Both of Jean's parents are supportive of her attending college. Additionally, many of Jean's teachers and commu-

nity members showed support of her educational choice as she was always one of the top students in her town. Jean feels pressure, however, to make her family and community proud by succeeding in college and is worried if her preparation is adequate compared to the other students. Jean also mentions she attended a K-12 school with a class of about 30 students. Thus, she is feeling a little nervous about making new friends and getting involved.

Table 1. Strategy for Critically Exploring the Experiences of College Students from Rural Areas

Understanding of Individual Experiences	Challenging of Dominant Ideology	Commitment to Social Justice	Experiential Knowledge and Voice	Interdisciplinary Perspectives
What are the individual characteristics of these students (e.g. race, gender, class)?	What are the possible barriers to educational success of these students (remembering that "success" should be defined by the student)?	In what ways do these students have privilege and in what ways are these students oppressed?	How do these students understand and make meaning of their identities and experiences?	What perspectives are currently being used?
What are the family, school, and/or community backgrounds of these students?	What are the benefits or drawbacks of the institution relating to the success of these students?	How are these students influenced or affected by urbanormativity?	How do these students express their identities (e.g. language, actions, dress)?	How may the identities, experiences, and stories of these students be understood using different perspectives?
What are the unique college needs of these students?	How are students' opportunities for success influenced by their multiple identities?	How can inequalities be eliminated in order to empower students?	What are the goals of these students?	What are the similarities and differences between these understandings?

Note. For each of the central tenets of critical race theory example questions are provided to guide critical exploration of the experiences of college students from rural areas.

Table 1 can be used to guide thinking to help Jean with her college transition. Beginning with the critical race theme of “Understanding of Individual Experiences,” there are several things already known about Jean. As far as individual characteristics, Jean is a Latina, traditionally-aged, female student from a rural area. For family characteristics, she has a younger sibling, two parents who support her education, and may be from a working-class background. In addition, relating to community characteristics, Jean is from a small community with a K-12 school that seems to be supportive. From the information provided, it seems Jean may be struggling to adjust to college socially (due to her nervousness of making new friends and getting involved) as well as academically (due to feeling pressured and possibly inadequately prepared).

Next, for the critical race theme of “Challenging of Dominant Ideology,” there are a few possible barriers to Jean’s educational success. To begin, however, it is helpful to clarify what success means to Jean. For instance, what outcome is Jean hoping for by attending college (e.g. a certificate, a two-year degree, a four-year degree)? Next the extent of Jean’s academic preparation and college knowledge, especially as a first-generation college student, should be explored. Also, since Jean mentioned being

nervous about making friends and getting involved as well as support yet pressure from family and community members, it would be useful clarify if Jean is struggling with her social support networks. Within this topic area, it is important to also evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of the institution for helping Jean. Maybe the institution has resources that can assist Jean like a program to assist first-generation college students or a strong residential first-year experience program or a student organization similar to one of Jean’s interests. However, it is also important to honestly evaluate some challenges for the institution such as large class sizes or a student population predominately from urban locations or low first- to second-year persistence rates. Jean’s other identities should also be explored to determine how they may be influencing her opportunities for success. Since this task overlaps with the next theme, more of Jean’s multiple identities will be included in the next paragraph.

Transitioning to “Commitment to Social Justice,” Jean’s situation can be evaluated in terms of privileges and oppressions relating to her identities. Jean, being a student of color, is a member of a marginalized group. She is also both privileged and oppressed as a woman because as discussed earlier rural women are more attend and complete college, however, Jean may still be impacted by patriarchy. Jean may also face

additional challenges due to her first-generation status. Depending on her family's income, she may also struggle economically to pay for her college education. Beyond individual factors, this critical race theme pushes thinking towards larger institutional and structural issues by examining urbannormativity. In Jean's situation, for example, she said she was one of the top students in her town, yet she is nervous about her academic preparation. Does Jean lack skills because of inadequate preparation from high school or does Jean just worry about this because she assumes her education was inferior to other schools because of urbannormativity? Further clarification in this area is warranted rather than assuming one reason or the other. This may, moreover, be an area to provide empowerment to Jean. For instance, if the case is that Jean is a top student, providing her with opportunities such as study groups or tutoring may increase her confidence and satisfaction with her classes as well as connect her with other students.

For the fourth critical race theme, "Experiential Knowledge and Voice," getting to know more about Jean becomes key. For this case study only basic information is available about Jean, but in a real-life situation it would be advantageous to have an extended conversation (if not several) with Jean to grasp more fully who Jean feels she is, what she feels she needs, and what short-

and long-term goals she has. Gaining additional information about Jean, therefore, would provide greater alignment of her needs and the assistance necessary to aid her in her college transition period.

Finally, for the fifth critical race theme of "Interdisciplinary Perspectives", the initial thoughts about Jean should be evaluated and pushed to in new directions. For example, from an ecological development perspective, what other environmental factors have influenced Jean's development? The introduction to Jean mentioned a younger brother. Maybe Jean is very close to her brother and misses him or feels she needs to be a role model for his educational attainment. Maybe being an hour away from home Jean is going home often on weekends, inhibiting her ability to make friends on campus. Questioning the similarities and differences between these different perspectives may lead to new views about how to best provide services for Jean.

This example of the fictitious student named Jean, was provided as an illustration of how to use the strategy provided in Table 1. The strategy uses the themes of critical race theory in education to guide exploration of rural college students in practice settings. It is important to note, however, this example was brief for purposes of this article. Much more questioning and investigation into Jean's situation would lead to even greater

understanding of her experiences and identity. Proper time and care in real-life situations with real students, therefore, should be taken to best align practices with the needs of students.

Conclusion

By creating a strategy for exploring rural college student identity based in critical race theory and current literature about college students from rural areas, this model aims to advance higher education's understanding of this student group as well as encourage dialogue and recognition of this group of students. Since traditionally aged college students from rural areas are attending colleges at the low rate of 29% (NCES, 2015), and college student from rural areas have lower first to second year persistence rates than suburban and urban students (High School Benchmarks, 2016), greater attention to this student population is warranted. Specifically, within the state of Georgia, since there are higher rates of students of color and higher rates of students in poverty in rural areas compared to national averages (Showalter et al., 2017), critical race theory provides a critical perspective for assisting the educational pathways of these marginalized students.

The information and strategy provided in this article has several promising im-

plications for practice. First, the strategy detailed in Table 1 can be used by educators in their conversations with students. An understanding of identity helps educators understand college students and their experiences (Jones & Abes, 2013). The table, therefore, provides a guide for educators to gain knowledge about rural students' identities and to better support the college experiences (e.g. academic, residential, career planning) of students at their institutions. Second, the table can also be used as a tool for faculty and staff to gain new insight into their own experiences and backgrounds. McClellan (2018) stated, "knowing who we are and being mindful of how our identities play out in our work and lives is essential to our success in serving and supporting our students and our institutions" (p. 6). Education professionals can, therefore, use the table as a personal and professional development tool. Third, the table can be used as an instructional tool with students in one-on-one meetings or within presentations. During these meetings or presentations, students can answer the questions within the table orally or written formats as individuals or in small groups. Additional questions can be added to the table (e.g. goal setting questions, career development questions) depending on the functional area the strategy is being implemented within.

Beyond practice, more research on the experiences and identities of rural students and their perceptions will further affect the development of this topic in the future. Qualitative research in the form of observations and in-depth interviews will allow for greater exploration about rural college students from various areas and who attend various higher education institutional types. More quantitative research on this group of students would also provide a greater understanding of this group of students. Many of the largest student surveys and data tools in higher education do not collect demographic data like high school name or zip code, which

could be used to investigate place as a variable. The strategy presented in Table 1 of this article should also be empirically tested in future studies. Once there is more data on college students from rural areas, colleges and universities can then begin to better align campus student services and curricula to meet these students' needs. Higher education owes it to these students to acknowledge its dominant ideological thoughts and practices, giving rural college students a voice and representation in literature and on campuses. This strategy for critically exploring the experiences of college students from rural areas seeks to be a starting point for these future conversations.

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The State of Fraternity and Sorority Life in Higher Education

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There are many benefits to being involved in Greek life. Becoming a part of a fraternity or sorority provides one with opportunities to get involved in community service and develop into global citizens. However, recent negative media attention has focused on hazing-related deaths, alcohol abuse, and sexual assaults in connection with Greek life. This narrative has perpetuated a false generalization of Greek life. The purpose of this paper is to review some of the current issues that are impacting the Greek community and to provide recommendations how student affairs professionals can assist in improving the image and improving the practices of Greek life.

Greek-letter organizations, also referred to as fraternities and sororities, have a 200-year history on college campuses in the United States (Johansen & Slantecheva-Durst, 2018). Greek-letter organizations are instrumental in engaging and involving students on campus and have become a familiar symbolism of institutions in the United States. However, fraternity and sorority life has faced numerous challenges and changes over the last decade. Various media outlets have reported multiple incidences connecting Greek life to hazing, sexual assault, drug abuse, and death. Many of these incidences have gained national attention causing institutions to observe the actions of fraternities and sororities more closely. Some institutions have banned and suspended fraternities and sororities. These corrective measures by institutions have caused members of Greek life as well as student affairs professionals to nationally reflect on the state of fraternity and sorority life in higher education. By reviewing the events of the current climate of Greek life, a better understanding can develop regarding the state of fraternities and sororities. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore some of the current issues that are impacting the Greek community and to provide recommendations how student affairs professionals can assist in improving the image and improving the

practices of Greek life. A brief history of fraternities and sororities, hazing incidents, anti-hazing policies, racial discrimination in Greek Life, and implications for student affairs professionals will be discussed.

History of Fraternities and Sororities

Prior to the Civil War, literary societies were one of the major extracurricular activities at institutions of higher education (Joyce, 2018). However, in the late 1700s, student fraternities began to emerge, and nearly a century after their emergence, fraternity and sorority councils began to form (Joyce, 2018). Fraternities and sororities tend to have chapters of larger national organizations (Hughey & Hunter, 2013). National organizations and their national associations are an important aspect of fraternity and sorority life. The four national associations that will be discussed are: National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), and National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC).

It was not until 1891 that there was a “call of the women’s sorority of Kappa Kappa Gamma for a conference amongst seven women’s sororities” (Johansen & Slantecheva-Durst, 2018, p. 5). Nine years after this initial meeting, the first interfraternal association, the Inter- Sorority Conference

(later to be known as the National Panhellenic Conference, NPC) was formed. Following the establishment of the National Panhellenic Conference, two additional interfraternal associations were formed (Johansen & Slantcheva-Durst, 2018). The North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) emerged in 1910 as the umbrella organization for fraternities (Johansen & Slantcheva-Durst, 2018). During this time, racial segregation was prevalent and therefore the NIC did not invite African Americans or any non-White and non-Christian organizations to join. At Howard University in May of 1930, the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) was established as the umbrella organization for the historically black fraternities and sororities also uniquely known as the "Divine Nine" (Johansen & Slantcheva-Durst, 2018). With the increase of diversity on college campuses, additional national umbrella organizations were formed in order to address the needs of multicultural fraternities and sororities. The National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO), the National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC), and the National Asian Pacific Islander American Panhellenic Association (NAPA) were established 1997 (Johansen & Slantcheva-Durst, 2018).

These interfraternal associations influence Greek life on college campuses across the nation. Councils were established

as a response for collaboration and resources (Johansen & Slantcheva-Durst, 2018). Institutions of higher education have implemented regulations in regard to national associations and an organizations affiliation. For many college campuses, it is mandated that an organization must be nationally affiliated in order to be recognized on campus (Johansen & Slantcheva-Durst, 2018). The primary reason behind the desire institutions have for national affiliations is due to the fact that "it comes with its own set of rules, resources from national headquarters supervision from national consultants, and professional staff members to guide chapters" (Johansen & Slantcheva-Durst, 2018, p. 6). Fraternity and sorority councils play a critical role in regulating institutions involving the issues facing Greek life.

Hazing Epidemic

According to Bruckner (2018), hazing has been around for centuries with origins in Ancient Greece and Rome. Schools supported and encouraged hazing behavior because it was viewed as a way to teach obedience. Hazing related deaths have been occurring since 1970 (Bruckner, 2018). Hazing practices include: binge drinking, ridicule, isolation, sleep deprivation, paddling, beating, physical exhaustion, and much more (Joyce, 2018). Timothy Piazza's death is an example of one of the several horrific incidents that

have occurred involving hazing in this country (Simon, 2018). After Timothy Piazza suffered an injury from a hazy related ritual, his fraternity brothers failed to contact emergency assistance until after more than 12 hours which resulted in his death (Simon 2018).

When stories involving hazing occur, institutions tend to become very scrutinous of the actions of Greek life. According to Bruckner (2018) hazing occurs because some students believe that it provides a sense of belonging. The hazing cycle becomes a tradition that repeats and has some significance to the group. The hazing cycle becomes normalized when a person believes "if they can do it, so can I," (Joyce, 2018). Hazing is an issue that is known globally and is not unique to fraternities or sororities. It is thought of as a process to "solicit individual commitment to an organization and exert dominance over those seeking to become members" (Chambers, Crumb, Hill, Hoover-Plonk, and Tingley, 2018, p.48). Not all students view hazing as a problem and have a viewpoint that hazing is a positive instead of a negative consequence. According to Chambers, Crumb, Hill, Hoover-Plonk, and Tingley (2018) a study was conducted to establish the prevalence of hazing and found that 9 out of 10 students who experience hazing did not consider the actions to be hazing. Students also

identified hazing as being a part of the campus culture.

Anti-Hazing Policies

Rosenberg and Mosca (2016) identified strategies for managing risk involving hazing and drinking for fraternity and sorority life professionals. For example, safe ride programs can be shared when having discussions around the risk of drinking at social events. Monitoring membership intake processes/initiation activities can assist in managing the risk of hazing.

Colleges and universities must continue to treat hazing as a serious crime. Several institutions have made efforts on being transparent regarding judicial actions by "[releasing] a monthly update with aggregate data on judicial actions taken on hazing cases and report all hazing incidents according to state and federal entities" (Boettcher et al., 2018, p. 43). Currently, some anti-hazing institutional policies and state laws are broad and have unclear definitions, which leave loopholes for what hazing is and what the penalties for participating should be.

Campus and university administrators, national associations, and national organizations need to remain aware of the potential for harm within student organizations. Stakeholders of fraternities and sororities can include fraternity/sorority advisors, un-

dergraduate members, student affairs professionals, and alumni. These stakeholders in addition to campus administration and national organizations need to remain active in the conversation about preserving the history of these organizations. Many alumni and donors of fraternities and sororities not only support their organizations in annual giving but to their institutions as well. When alumni and donors have historical connection with an institution, they feel more inclined to support the campus. Fraternity and sorority life has an educational value and social influence that can be impactful on the student experience at institutions across the nation.

Racial Discrimination in Greek Life

It is important to first acknowledge and recognize that the Greek system was not created to benefit students of color in any shape, form, or fashion. In fact, it distinctly left out students of color. Several displays of unwelcoming behaviors have been presented and demonstrated by many white fraternities and sororities. For instance, Halloween parties with black-face costumes, ritual songs and chants using the "n-word," and Confederate flag parties are a few examples of how racial discrimination is promoted in some white fraternities and sororities.

At the University of Georgia, Tau Kappa Epsilon was suspended after a video of some of its members using racial slurs and

mocking slavery went viral on social media (Abusaid, 2019). While this does not describe Greek life at all institutions, it shows how sororities and fraternities are capable of harming students of color in more profound ways than simply excluding them. Although only 2 percent of the United States' population is a part of Greek life, 76 percent of U.S. Senators, 80 percent of Fortune 500 executives, and all except 2 presidents are members of a fraternity (Chang, 2014). It is evident that Greek life has a strong influence on politics and vice-versa.

A major challenge that higher education faces in rebuilding its relationship with Greek life is fixing the perception that Greek excludes students of color from joining their organizations. Institutions across the nation should be proactive in encouraging fraternities and sororities to be not only diverse but inclusive. However, Greek life is becoming more racially diverse and inclusive. Nearly 200 women of color accepted bids at the University of Alabama's historically white sororities (Joyce, 2018). According to Joyce (2018), fraternities and sororities are increasing their engagement of National Panhellenic Councils and Multicultural Greek Councils on their campuses and participating in programming related to diversity and inclusion education.

Blechscht, Martin, Parker, and Pascarella (2015) suggest that membership

in a Greek-letter organization does have a significant impact on a student's intercultural competence development during their tenure on a college campus. Like a college education, it is important to emphasize educational experiences outside of the classroom such as fraternity and sorority life. These experiences can focus on "cross-racial interactions, multicultural training, and cross-cultural communication" (Bleichschmidt et al., 2015, p. 71). An institution and national organization need to remain aware and find tactics such as diversity training as a form of being proactive instead of being reactive.

Implications for Student Affairs

Professionals

There are several ways in which student affairs professionals can be proactive in improving the practices and perceptions of Greek life. The initiation process or new member intake process would be greatly improved by implementing diversity and inclusivity education. Each fraternity and sorority must confront and address racial discrimination directly from the start of members entering the organization.

It is imperative that student affairs professionals stay abreast of policies and anti-hazing state and federal laws. Updates and changes to laws can provide guidance and strategy on how to best educate and as-

sist fraternities and sororities on the consequences of hazing. In order to avoid misinterpretation, establishing clear definitions of what hazing is and what constitutes hazing can help the campus community understand hazing practices. Collaborating with staff members from the institution's legal affairs department can be beneficial in educating the campus community on policies and laws regarding hazing.

Building a strong relationship with the alumni chapters and national organizations of fraternities and sororities can also help support the mission of anti-hazing. It is sometimes necessary for the national organizations to make demands and/or apply pressure on their affiliated fraternity or sorority in which the institution cannot. By having a good relationship with the national organization, an open line of communication can be established in order to allow more candid conversations of what may be needed or expected of fraternity or sorority. National organizations are in better positions to make demands of their fraternities and sororities than institutions. As with all cultural changes, progress is not linear and when setbacks occur, members of these organizations should not be discouraged for their efforts.

Some institutions have developed research centers in order to improve the status of Greek Life. Pennsylvania State University has research center focused on addressing

hazing and dangerous behaviors in Greek life (Zalaznick, 2019). Florida State University has developed strategies such as scorecards to promote positive impact in Greek life on their campus (Zalaznick, 2019).

Developing responsible leaders is a key factor in improving the leadership of Greek life (Hevel, Martin, and Pascarella, 2014). Fostering a climate of social respon-

sibility within fraternity and sorority life is dependent on members and their aspirations for a sustainable future. Student affairs professionals need to engage in actively assisting students to shape these perceptions. It will take hard work and action and a collaborative effort to continue to change the perception of Greek life on college campuses and nationwide.

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Becoming Liberated in the Process of Researching and Writing about Liberation: A Scholarly Reflection of a Healing Process in a Doctoral Program

Falon Thacker (University of Central Florida)

This article chronicles the process of researching and writing a dissertation about liberation and how it connects to my own experiences of liberation. Qualitative research involves a more personal connection between the researcher and the study (Hays & Singh, 2012) which allows for a more in depth understanding of the experiences of the participants and the researcher. This article provides a reflection of my journey that began in early childhood and through the doctoral process, connecting those experiences to the research process utilizing Pillow's (2003) four reflexive strategies. Reflecting on the method, theory, and findings, I make connections with personal experiences of liberation, healing and the process of research on multiculturalism, social justice and liberation.

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When I began the application process for a doctoral program, a mentor told me that throughout the doctoral journey, it was more important to focus on whom I wanted to become because of the doctoral experience than it was to focus on what job I wanted on the other side of the doctorate. As I engaged throughout the doctoral journey, I repeatedly replayed his words in my head. Through the experiences in the doctoral program and experiences in my life, I am in awe and often overwhelmed when I reflect on how my life and I, myself have changed over the course of those four years. I knew that qualitative research was often personal and researchers often choose their topics based on personal experiences and narratives (Hays & Singh, 2012). However, I did not realize how deeply personal, emotional, passionate, and liberated I would feel because of my dissertation research.

Utilizing the key constructs of privilege, oppression, waking up, and liberation, with collective memory work as the methodology and undergirded in the theories of liberation and liberation psychology, the research question that guided my dissertation study was: How does the experience of waking up to injustice within a critical incident influence master's level counseling students to study multicultural and social justice competence in counseling? As outlined in the cycle

of liberation, waking up is defined as an intrapersonal change in the core of someone about what they believe about themselves and the world (Harro, 2013). A critical incident is an experience in which an individual begins to see themselves differently in the world than they have before (Harro, 2013). Collective memory work is a feminist social constructionist method that strives to remove power differentials between the subject and object of research (Onyx & Small, 2001). In nature, collective memory work is a liberatory research method by which provides an opportunity for the participants to maintain a role in both generating and analyzing data throughout the research process (Haug & Carter, 1987). There are three phases to collective memory work: (a) participants write a story about a particular memory; (b) a focus group where participants reflect on the memories and stories written; and (c) the data generated from the focus group is further analyzed and theorized by the researcher (Onyx & Small, 2001).

I am a student affairs professional with a strong counselor identity. My dissertation research was centered in the field of counseling; however, I believe my research and the healing process is synonymous in student affairs. While my dissertation study primarily focused on research regarding critical incidents of waking up within graduate students, my experience as the researcher

captured its own set of findings. This article chronicles the journey of how my life experiences simultaneously intersected the process of my dissertation. Many individuals lose themselves in the process of writing a dissertation; a phenomenon that I have witnessed first-hand. However, while there were times throughout the process where it felt insurmountable, I healed. My hope is that by sharing the reflection of my deeply personal and vulnerable journey, I may inspire others to find themselves and provide hope that healing is possible and it is liberating.

The Reflexive Process and My Researcher Positionality

The method to reflecting on my healing process was through engaging in researcher reflexivity. This section will detail the various stages of my reflexive process and how my experiences both within and outside of my dissertation study were connected to my research. Researcher reflexivity serves as a process by which the researcher maintains a continual inner dialogue, a critical self-evaluation, and an active acknowledgment that their position and connection to the research may affect the process of the research as well as its outcome (Berger, 2015). As a researcher who did not share the same life experiences of my participants, it was even more important I spent time engaged in deep self-reflection in order to more accurately

capture the experiences of the participants (Fawcett & Hearn, 2004). My process and reflection as the researcher was based on Pillow's (2003) four reflexive strategies: (a) reflexivity as recognition of self; (b) reflexivity as recognition of other; (c) reflexivity as truth; and (d) reflexivity as transcendence. These four strategies work together and provide the researcher with the tools to complete an effective personal evaluation and increased self-awareness (Pillow, 2003).

Pillow's Four Reflexive Strategies

Pillow (2003) describes the first reflexive strategy as recognition of self, which involves the researcher acknowledging their own capacity to be known and reflected upon. When I reflect on the four years in a doctoral program, I woke up in many ways both within the doctoral process and in my personal life. I recognized the consciousness-raising experiences and growth I experienced. This article provides insight into my growth of self and its impact on my research.

The second reflexive strategy Pillow (2003) described is the recognition of others. To conduct effective qualitative research, it is important to capture and understand the subject of research in a way that truly reflects their experiences (Pillow, 2003). This article also contains my personal reflection on the data collection and analysis process and the

ways in which I am connected to the participants' stories and their discussion in the focus group.

Pillow (2003) describes the third strategy as reflexivity of truth. This strategy reflects the idea that the researcher can communicate a form of truth throughout the research process. Participating in the process of reflexivity allows for increased validity (Hays & Singh, 2012). This article includes an examination of self, the stories of my participants, and the truth embedded in the findings of this study.

The fourth and final strategy is reflexivity as transcendence (Pillow, 2003). When the researcher allows for authentic self-examination as it connects to their research, a recognition of the truth and experiences of the participants, and the truth of the research findings, a wholeness forms (Pillow, 2003). Within the process of reflexivity, the researcher is able to move beyond their own subjectivity that allows for more representation of the research study (Pillow, 2003). This article provides a deep reflection on the process of the overall research in relation to the described strategies of reflexivity.

The Process of Becoming Self-Aware

As helpers, it is important we take action to learn about our own assumptions, biases, privileged identities, values, and beliefs (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, &

McCullough, 2016). Helpers must engage in ongoing self-evaluation because it is critical to discover strongly held values different from those of the community members we serve and determine how we navigate those differences (Goodman et al., 2004). Psychological oppression ensues from practices that result in various forms of injustice typically inflicted unintentionally by helpers who are genuinely interested in helping clients/students from diverse groups and backgrounds to realize new and untapped dimensions of their humanity (Duran, Firehammer & Gonzalez., 2008). Becoming self-aware of both my privileged and marginalized identities was a critical step to understanding my role as helper and begin my healing process.

The Intersectionality of my Gender and Career

My earliest memory of a career goal was to be a singer and a performer. For as long as I can remember, I have always loved and been inspired by music. However, I decided to ask my mother what my earliest career goal was that she could remember. When I prompted my mother with the question, "What is the first thing you can remember me saying I wanted to be when I grew up and how old was I?" Without hesitation my mother responded, "Oh. When you were four, you were determined to be a ninja turtle." I instantly burst into laughter because I

had no memory of this goal but remembered loving the ninja turtles and the recent live action film. I asked my mother, "Why in the world did I want to be a ninja turtle?" She again quickly replied and said, "Because you loved that they ate pizza and helped people." While this response also prompted laughter among us, I was also completely fascinated as to how this early childhood career goal, one that I could not even recollect, was parallel to my life in the present day. I had wanted to be a helper for longer than I could actually remember, am a helper today, and chose to pursue a terminal degree in a helping profession.

During a career development course, I started to become aware of how gender played a role in my career development and how internalized sexism has shaped how I view myself and molded my perfectionist complex. While it would take more time in my doctoral program and therapy to deeply understand and work through my internalized sexism, this class was the first time I woke up to the experiences with important men in my life and how their opinions and thoughts about my life choices influenced my career development choices.

Growing up in rural Appalachia, it is uncommon to be part of a family in which both of your parents went to college. I am privileged to be part of a family in which both of my parents graduated from college. In my

high school class, many of my peers had no intention of going to college. However, I knew I was going to college as my parents did not give me a different option.

As it came time to apply for college, my family began to tell me that it was time to "get serious" about choosing a career path and a major for college. They told me that being a singer was not a real career goal and I needed to pick something like law or pharmacy. My high school class president recorded a video and asked all of us where we hoped to be in ten years when we came together for our first reunion. My response was, "I hope that in ten years, I will have been on American Idol and will have a singing career." I still believed I would become a performer. Despite this, I declared a political science major and decided to pursue law school. My family was happy with this decision because being an attorney was a good career. I was happy as long as they, particularly my father and grandfather, were happy with me.

When a series of experiences led me to learn that law school was also not a passion area of mine, I told my family I had learned about student affairs and wanted to pursue that instead. I vividly remember a conversation with my father who told me, "Law school was probably not a good choice. You might have ended up being the breadwinner for you and your husband and he may

not be okay with that. Have you thought about being a kindergarten teacher?" I remember telling my father that I did not care about making more money than my husband and feeling very confused about the entire conversation.

Fast-forward to my master's graduation and my father wrote in my graduation card, "you are now more educated than I am." Similar to my memory in college, I was not quite sure what he meant by his statement and felt confused by his words. However, I felt resolved because I had finally found something that I loved doing. Up until pursuing my master's degree, I had only loved singing/performing and I had finally found something that put me at peace of giving up my lifelong dream of singing and performing.

My teenage years and most of my 20s were characterized by making choices for my career that made the men in my life happy; albeit my dad, husband or first professional supervisor at work. I found myself often wrestling with a deep internal conflict of wondering if they will be proud of my choices and praise me for my decisions yet wishing I did not care. The process of resolving this conflict became a deep emotional burden that overwhelmed me at every major decision I had to make. Discovering these deep roots of internalized sexism came in the early

semesters of coursework in the doctoral program. Learning about sexism and the messages women receive from men and connecting these messages to my own stories and my own memories of confusion were painful and overwhelming. I realized that in choosing how I pursued the doctorate was even a part of my mess. I worked to make starting a doctoral program and educational journey easy on my husband and minimally impact his doctoral experience and future career. I made sure that he understood the plan would be to establish roots with his career post-doctorate and I would follow; I was proud of myself for finding a way to make it all work. Nonetheless, I finally woke up to the injustices of the sexism I had faced and began the process of unlearning.

The Intersectionality of my Whiteness and Career

Waking up is not a singular moment; it is cyclical process that can occur at any point and within various contexts (Harro, 2013). My experience in my first professional position at Georgia State University (GSU) was an also an experience in which I woke up rather quickly to my privileged identities, particularly my racial identity as a White woman. When I began working at GSU, I experienced culture shock in a way like never before. My previous life and educational experiences were mostly White spaces. At GSU, on my very first day

of work, I became one of, and often, the only White person in the room. I felt my master's education prepared for me everything I needed during the first year of my new position except for one. Although my graduate program had a diversity course and I became aware of White privilege and other identities that were different from my own, it was not integrated throughout the curriculum nor was I challenged to think differently in my graduate assistantship.

Within my first two weeks of work, I realized I was unprepared to work with mostly Black students who were untrusting and unsure of a White, southern woman who suddenly became their boss. I remember feeling scared, overwhelmed, and incredibly out of place. There were days during the first few weeks of my new job that I would come home and cry. There were other times I would cry in the middle of a training session and I even once cried in the dining hall. I became so emotionally overwhelmed that I could not hold myself together and the slightest moment triggered my emotions. In the beginning weeks, I could not put my finger on why my students distrusted and despised me, until one day, a fellow colleague of color said, "Honey, to most of them, all they see is a White woman who represents every bad experience they have ever had with a White person and you just need to accept that." I

was forced to examine my White privilege immediately in my new position. Many years later, I have an understanding and awareness of my White privilege in a way that allows me to be successful with students who are different from me. Although graduate school could not have fully prepared me for this experience, it required more intentional preparation and training than what was in the curriculum.

During the first year, I experienced a lot of emotional turmoil. The usage of the word turmoil sounds dramatic; but it was a dramatic time in my life. There were a lot of tears, questions, self-degradation, reflection, and conversations with my colleagues who were White and of color that offered multiple perspectives. It was not just about my feelings, it was also about the oppression, inequities, and challenges I saw my students facing on daily basis. The pursuit of higher education should not require young adults to risk their basic livelihood on a daily basis and I had become a regular witness of such an experience. After attending two relatively privileged institutions, I was exposed to a campus in which students were dealing with injustices in ways I had never seen before in college.

These experiences motivated me to pursue my next degree with an emphasis in social justice as my master's degree did not

adequately prepare me to work with culturally diverse communities. I was linked to my dissertation research because I felt strongly about the lack of multicultural and social justice competence training in my master's program and felt compelled to explore multicultural and social justice competence in graduate preparation programs. I have seen and felt how oppression and the inequities of our society do not allow marginalized communities to thrive in schools. I believe this has to change; and as members of a helping profession, we must take on this responsibility.

It is imperative for graduate students to understand how privilege and oppression influence the work of a helper. I did not fully understand this until my first job. In the doctoral program, I acquired language to talk about multiculturalism and social justice in a way that was not taught to me in my master's program. I am mindful of my Whiteness and White privilege and how it influenced the study, similarly to the way I must consider my White privilege at work. Being White in my setting requires me to have a constant self-awareness, particularly as it relates to what I say, how I say it, and to whom I am speaking. Furthermore, this self-awareness was not exclusive from my research; I was mindful of my space, language, and approach to my research when interacting with my participants.

I have witnessed many well-intentioned White folks, myself included, perpetuate the

cycles of oppression. As helpers we are looked to and taught to be interventionists, leaders, and the persons our students and clients can turn to "pick people up when they are down." However, we are often the ones pushing individuals down because we lack multicultural and social justice competency training and unknowingly and ignorantly do more harm than help. At times, this has left me frustrated and angry at my White peers. Because I had a strong reaction to my own lack of multicultural and social justice competence training, I have found myself making assumptions about other White folks' multicultural and social justice competence. I was cognizant of this during the study as the majority of my participants were White women. I was conscious to consistently reflect on my reactions, bias, thoughts, and feelings so as to not make assumptions about my participants.

It was also important for me to reflect on my racial identity development throughout the process of my dissertation study. Helms (1995) identified *pseudo-independence*, when aspiring allies attempt to separate themselves from privileged groups by their ally efforts. I felt myself existing in this space before and I was careful to not operate within this context during the study, especially while engaging with my mostly White participants. In the study, I strived for *autonomy* in order to be a truly effective ally and continually

sought to understand my own oppressive socialization as a means of liberation and understand the complexity of the intersecting nature of all forms of oppression for both participants of color and White participants (Edwards, 2006).

Throughout the study, I reminded myself I was once a graduate student who had no knowledge of privilege and oppression. I remained reflective of how my own consciousness-raising experiences influenced my decision to study counseling through the lens of multiculturalism and social justice. My intrinsic motivation to add to the research landscape regarding the influence of the experiences of waking up to injustices of graduate students is rooted in my own experiences of love, liberation, and growth. My aspiration was that the findings of my dissertation research advanced the work of multicultural and social justice competency training in graduate preparation programs.

The Process of the Research Study

During the first semester of doctoral coursework, I was introduced to the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCCs). The MSJCCs are aspirational standards for the mental health profession and they provide a framework that acknowledge the different ways identity, marginalization, and privilege intersect

(Ratts, 2017). At the core of the competencies are multicultural and social justice praxis; the assumption that counselors should use strategies and techniques that align with client's cultural background and their work should promote social justice (Ratts, 2017). I found myself fascinated with the framework and took every opportunity in coursework to study and write about the competencies. In reflection, I was searching for a way to reconcile my frustration and guilt with my lack of multicultural and social justice training; I was searching for guidance on how to grow and learn as a helper.

By the third year of my doctoral studies, my knowledge and understanding of the competencies and my own subjectivity had grown into a love for multiculturalism, social justice, liberation and a commitment to study the influence of waking up in critical incidents with graduate students. My goal included conducting research that would help educators understand the importance of exploring and facilitating consciousness-raising experiences inside and outside of the classroom; just as the experiences I had inside and outside of the classroom influenced me. I felt compelled to explore how moments of waking up and critical incidents influence graduate students' decisions to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling.

Reflection of Methodological Choice

Once I determined what my overall topic would be, I began to consider the various methodologies I could use to study the experiences of waking up in critical incidents. I remembered reading an article about a constructivist methodology called collective memory work. The study focused on the stories and memories of women who remembered being treated differently for wearing a hijab, post September 11, 2001. It was sadening to read how 9/11 changed the lives of these women and the discrimination they faced. It was also powerful to read how the women found community and support in one another as they were finally in a space where they could understand each other's experiences, were not alone, and were *liberated*. I too wanted this experience for my participants. I wanted to understand their experiences of waking up in critical incidents but I also wanted my research to be an act of social justice, for them to find community in one another and to feel liberated through the research process.

Collective memory work gave me the outlet and opportunity to engage with my participants throughout the research process more than other traditional research methods (Onyx and Small, 2001). When we made it through the first story and they began to get into a flow of the research process, I watched them become confident in their reflection and

analysis. Without me or my co-researcher's prompting, they began to make connections across the stories and how their individual experiences were also reflective of larger contexts. Their ability to speak about their appreciation for the space to be together and reminder of their collective goal and purpose as counselor trainees reflected the essence of collective memory work as well as the importance of this research.

Reflection of Theoretical Choice

Choosing my theoretical frameworks of liberation psychology and liberation to inform collective memory work and my research was a simple choice. Liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation helps us understand how memories of waking up within critical incidents influence counselor trainees' decision to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling – primarily because the goal of liberation psychology is the development of a critical consciousness (Martín-Baró, 1994). Additionally, liberation psychology highlights the importance of recovering historical memory of oppressed communities and the connection of these memories to commitment to liberation and critical transformation (Martín-Baró, 1994).

My personal experience of waking up within a critical incident, the typical entry point of the cycle of liberation, gave me the language and a framework to understand my

own process of liberation and commitment to a critical transformation. Second, the premise of liberation psychology that systems of oppression have an impact on mental health aligned with my own philosophy of why counselors need to understand and embody multiculturalism, social justice and liberation in their practice; liberation psychology recognizes a counselor's responsibility to possess multicultural and social justice competence. Liberation psychology's call to action of counselors to be prepared to advocate on behalf of and with their clients is a call I answered and wanted to illustrate through my research.

Martín-Baró (1991) suggested that critical consciousness "is not simply becoming aware of a certain fact but rather it is a process of change" (p. 227). To become conscious of reality is to become aware of, and involved in, a process of continual discovery and action related to "truth." The experience of becoming aware and engaged in a process of change was a salient part of my multicultural and social justice competence development. It was through my classroom experiences and the consciousness-raising experiences my professors created in order for me to understand my own liberatory experiences of waking up that I became passionate about multicultural and social justice competence. Thus, the principles of liberation psychology were a natural fit for my study.

Additionally, the way liberation psychology connected well to my study involved study the phases of collective memory work. Through rediscovering historical memory, de-ideologizing understandings of cultural truths, discovering the virtues of the people, and applying this knowledge to specific contexts and lived experiences through problematization, the process of critical consciousness emerges and is maintained (Martín-Baró, 1994). Participants in the study engaged in these principles of liberation psychology through the experience of writing their stories and participating in the focus group. The methodology and theories used in this study collectively coupled with my experiences and the participants' created the cohesion I desired for my research.

Throughout the process, the frameworks of liberation psychology and the cycle of liberation served as a reminder that all my participants' memories included memories of liberation—even if they lacked the language to describe it that way in the moment. In the focus group, the participants essentially described moving through the cycle of liberation beginning with their memory of waking up to discussing their learned understanding and responsibilities as future school counselors. The participants discussed their understanding of systemic issues their students are facing and how they know as school

counselors it is their responsibility to look beyond behavioral issues or narratives they receive from teachers and other administrators. They reflected on their new beliefs that they are responsible for understanding someone's truth and lived experiences and then advocating with and on behalf of them.

When I began data analysis, I was not sure how I would integrate and synthesize the various data points of the stories, the focus group, my co-researcher's notes and observations, the memory facilitation notes, and my own researcher notes. I was anxious that my themes might not align with what I anticipated from reading literature and my own experience. I had to work to remove my own bias with this subjectivity and remind myself the participants were part of the research team and their stories and discussion held the themes. As the researcher, I needed to synthesize and articulate the data to reflect the participants' voices.

Reflection of Findings

When initially reviewing the various data points, re-reading, and listening to the stories and discussion of my participants, I noticed four broad themes that were repetitive through the data and particularly within the focus group discussion. After further reflection and analysis of the data, I came to recognize that some of the themes were not exclusive of each other and were inherently

connected. Therefore, I identified two major themes in the findings, recognizing injustices and experiences of privilege and oppression. For example, although experiences of privilege and oppression were two separate broad themes, it would not make sense nor be consistent with the literature to separate experiences of privilege and oppression (Crethar, Rivera & Nash, 2008). However, it was important to spend time highlighting through the focus group data how these constructs are related and how they influenced participants to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling, yet it was also important to show the ways in which the participants experienced these constructs differently.

It was also important to recognize how the participants were experiencing the participation in the study as its own critical incident while discussing their memories of waking up that were critical incidents that influenced them to study multiculturalism and social justice in counseling. While the participants did not have the language to articulate this experience as I just did—they became aware and articulated in the focus group that they were surprised about what they learned about each other during the group and the importance of understanding the experiences of each other as they move through their graduate program together.

My Privilege in the Research Study

Crethar, et al. (2008) defined privilege as the numerous systemic and unmerited benefits within the culture for members of dominant groups. Many areas of privilege existed throughout the process of this research. As a heterosexual, cisgender, White woman, my experiences of waking up and critical incidents are likely different from the experiences of people of color, specifically women of color who hold multiple intersecting marginalized identities. Most of my experiences and the experiences of my mostly White women participants were rooted in waking up to experiences of privilege while the peoples' of color memories and experiences were rooted in waking up to the experiences of oppression.

Experiencing Moments of Waking Up while Researching and Writing

The four years in a doctoral program were comprised of a series of moments of waking up and experiencing critical incidents. Almost instantly after beginning the program, I realized how my pursuit to be the perfect daughter, sister, wife, and employee was deeply rooted in the many messages I received about my womanhood, body, career, and what was expected of me from the important men in my life. Throughout those four years, I gradually gave myself permission to live au-

thentically as the woman I desired to be, outside of the confines of the opinions and desires of men. I grew in understanding who I am and learned to love myself for who I am and not who the men in my life want me to be. While I continue to struggle with the role of men in my life, the research empowered me to make decisions and choices that are for me and only me. One of those decisions included the decision to end my marriage, which I am not sure I would have ever done without the experience in the doctoral program. Additionally, I am not sure I would have ever been able to write publicly and authentically about this experience without the experiences of the program, the support I received from my faculty, classmates, and my own therapist.

During my third year of the program, I visited a therapist for the first time in my life almost every week for about eleven months. I estimate I engaged in about 40 sessions of therapy while beginning to write my dissertation and moving through the process of ending my marriage. Through the experience of therapy, I had countless moments of waking up related to all aspects of my life including this research process. My therapist often encouraged me to view writing my dissertation and preparing for prospectus as a coping mechanism and not a barrier. She challenged me to find how this process could be

liberating for me while also writing about liberation.

There were many weeks when I was so emotionally drained and incapable of viewing the doctoral process as anything but a barrier. Not being able to shift my mindset, my therapist then asked me to give myself permission to be okay with needing to take some time to regroup and step away from what felt like the insurmountable goal of beginning my dissertation. Once I gave myself that permission, I felt a sense of relief and growth that I would move through this and find my own liberation through writing.

Eventually, I began writing and I felt liberated that I had grown in my journey and that I was ready to write while still navigating the difficult circumstances of ending my marriage. I vividly remember sitting at my laptop and feeling proud of myself for the self-work I had done and investing in myself to begin the final steps of the doctoral process. I had accomplished so much already, both within the program and in my personal life; I knew in that moment that this was only the beginning of a research study that would validate, shape, and mold me into the scholar-practitioner-advocate I am today.

Love, Liberation and Growth

When I began the doctoral journey, I was a newlywed. When I officially started the program, we had been married for one year and

one month. My partner was also a doctoral student and had been a full time doctoral student for about three years. I thought starting a doctoral program while my husband had three years left of his six-year degree was a great idea because he would understand what I was experiencing although he was studying biomedical sciences and I was studying counseling.

I thought that while my love grew in my marriage that we would also grow together as scholars. We would be able to both challenge and support one another to keep pushing through the tough times of being doctoral students. He was experiencing all of the “firsts” and “steps” of a doctoral degree before I was, so he would be a great support to me when my turn came around. He would then finish his degree, about a year before me and he would begin job searching and would likely relocate our family of our dog and us. That would leave me in my final year of dissertating and likely create a scenario where he would finally have a full time job in which I could then quit my own full time job and focus solely on being a doctoral student when it mattered most: writing the dissertation. We could continue to seamlessly grow professionally together, without interrupting the growth of the love in our marriage outside of our educational and professional experiences and goals. I convinced myself that if

we stuck to this plan, everything would gracefully fall into place

Although the plan for my husband's and my love to grow alongside our educational journey's did not come to fruition, the plan I worked so hard to perfectly craft, I found myself in a place where I had grown to love myself, my educational journey was flourishing, and I was finally making choices for *myself*. For the first time in my life, I made a major life decision without consulting a man in my life. I chose to study my research topic without their opinions and without their approval. Love, liberation, and growth have characterized those four years of my life and participating and engaging in my dissertation research about liberation and growth were consistent reminders of my own progress.

The plans I developed to finish and move through the program clearly did not come to fruition. I am reminded of something I often tell students when I am coaching them through changing their major or choosing a different career path than what their parents chose:

I have learned throughout my life that every time I make a plan to attempt to control the outcome of my future, it usually never works. You never know what opportunities you might miss out on because you wouldn't allow yourself to open different doors.

My own advice and experience continues to be true and I am learning to trust myself as much as my students do. The doctoral process helped me learn to trust myself and be confident in my own voice and decisions.

Recommendations for Future and Current Graduate Students

The process of earning a doctoral degree is often isolating. It is an individual process, particularly during the dissertation writing and research stage. I own and am aware that because of this uniqueness and my identities, the recommendations in this section may not apply to everyone. My healing process will not be your healing process; you must find healing in your own way.

First, I encourage every student to approach the doctoral process with an authentic openness to learning. Be willing to leave your ego at the door. Listen and hear those around you, particularly those with marginalized identities and individuals who are different from you. Be willing to understand, explore and acknowledge your privilege, bias and oppressive behaviors. Be willing to change how you see yourself in relation to how you interact with those around you and in your communities.

Second, consider how your research process can be healing. Often the research topics we choose are deeply personal (Hays and Singh, 2012). Many of those ideas come

from experiences that have caused us harm and grief. Reflect on the research topics and interests that you are drawn to. Ask yourself, why is this important to me? How can studying this topic not only contribute to knowledge but how can I heal from understanding more as well?

Lastly, do not be afraid to ask for help. For those of us who choose a terminal degree, we are likely used to success. There will be many times throughout the doctoral process where you feel like you may never be able to achieve the success of earning the degree. I encourage you to find community within and outside of the process with those who are willing to support you at your best and your worst. Do not be afraid to lean others in your cohorts or classes, do not be afraid to seek out a therapist and mostly important do not be afraid so much, that you lose yourself in the process. Without the support of individuals in my various communities, I would not have healed in the process of completing the degree.

Conclusion

In four years, much can change. In my four years, a lot *did* change. Four years later, I am constantly reminded of the wise words of my mentor who told me to focus on who I wanted to be, rather than what I wanted to be. The truth is, I had no idea who I would become

during this process. I had no idea I would become a woman liberated from the injustices of a lifetime of sexism; a woman who would have the skills to evaluate her Whiteness and White privilege; a woman who discovered the language of love and liberation and how having this language allowed me to craft a research topic in which was both deeply personal and needed in scholarship and literature. Lastly, I had no idea that in year three of the program, I would find myself in the midst of an unraveling marriage and my plan to be a full-time student and follow my husband to his next destination would cease to exist.

As I am on the other side of the doctoral journey, I am excited and look forward to the opportunities to use my skills to create authentic consciousness-raising experiences for individuals in the fields of counseling and student affairs. I am thankful for my support systems who encouraged me to not give up on myself and the process of writing a dissertation and helping me find resiliency in the most difficult time in my life. I am thankful for the opportunity to graduate from a program that gave me the language and tools I needed to liberate myself in coursework, my research, and my life. Healing is ongoing and I still have much work to do. My doctoral program and my research held and grounded me in a time of great fear, change, and growth. I healed and you can too.

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Campus Carry in Georgia: Challenges & Recommendations

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The 2017 Georgia House Bill 280 states that, with limited exceptions, a properly licensed handgun owner can Concealed Carry on Georgia's public college and university campuses. Since its inception and because of the recent history of mass shootings, much controversy surrounds this law. The infancy of and controversy behind this law calls for further research into the subject. In this paper, we will offer a discussion of historical and environmental perspective, compliance with the law, risks and challenges, previous case analysis, and recommendations for Georgia Higher Education administrators. To lessen confusion and controversy surrounding the Campus Carry law in Georgia, administrators should consider implementing a committee to research the impact this law has on students, the institutions, and the state. Similarly, if the law is to remain in effect, mandatory safety trainings should be implemented on college and university campuses across the state.

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From April 2007 to April 2018, 320 people were shot on higher education institution campuses in the United States (Jones, 2018). Each time such tragedies occur, weapons on K-12, college, and university campuses become a more prominent topic in the national media and among all education stakeholders. Carrying firearms on school property is a highly controversial matter; because of this, much debate has occurred surrounding the nationwide discussion about Campus Carry legislation.

Firearm violence has significantly increased over time. According to Teeple, Thompson, and Price, “the number of premeditated incidents of violence involving victims affiliated with an institution of higher learning rose from 1 in the 1900s to 79 in the 1990s to 83 in the 2000s” (2012, p. 57). Tragic cases of firearm violence are too often seen, and many states have passed laws like Campus Carry in hopes of putting an end to these types of tragedies. For example, since the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in which 26 children and adults were killed, many legislators across the U.S. have been pushing to pass laws for Concealed Carry of weapons on campuses (LaBanc & Hemphill, 2014). As of August 2018, 10 states have legislation that permit Concealed Carry of guns on college and university campuses: Arkansas, Colorado,

Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin (Guns on Campus: Overview, 2018). An additional 23 states have legislations that leave the decision of Campus Carry up to the institutions: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia (Guns on Campus: Overview, 2018).

It is clear that many states are at odds on this issue. Even in the states that allow some form of Campus Carry—be it allowing guns on every public campus or allowing each institution to make their own decision in the matter—education stakeholders are divided. Some believe that allowing Concealed Carry on campuses will make them feel safer and may even help prevent situations like the Virginia Tech shooting. Students for Concealed Carry crafted a list of reasons that Campus Carry should be allowed, which include: legally-armed citizens have training, gun-free zones generally do not work, allowing Campus Carry will not increase risks to others, protection is deserved, and colleges cannot always protect students (Teeple, Thompson, & Price, 2012). Individuals in opposition to the law believe that having guns on campus would harm the academic environment and would not make

them feel safer on campus. Groups like Students for Gun Free Zones argue that shooters will not be deterred by those with concealed weapons. Concealed Carry permit holders are not always law-abiding, and people are not required to undergo law enforcement training before obtaining a permit (Teepie, Thompson, & Price, 2012). The perceptions surrounding this controversial topic are vastly different, making it difficult for lawmakers and campus administrators to determine the best course of action.

In order to further understand the purpose of Campus Carry, lawmakers and campus administrators need to fully analyze the topic at hand: The historical perspective, perceptions about guns on campus and how states handle those opinions, challenges of compliance and risks the legislation brings, and court cases surrounding the issue. Because of the infancy of this law in the state of Georgia, there is not yet much information or litigation surrounding it. However, we can examine other states outside of our jurisdiction to understand the benefits and drawbacks of Campus Carry. In this paper, we will offer an overview of the Campus Carry law including background, compliance, risks, and case analysis. Additionally, we will analyze how Campus Carry affects higher education in Georgia and offer recommendations to Georgia administrators.

About Campus Carry

A Historical Perspective

Guns and other weapons on American college and university campuses have not always been an issue. In fact, in the Colonial Era, young people were required to be armed for militia duty at all times, including students at college (Cramer, 2014). In particular, in 1784, Georgia required that any free man 16 years or older to be armed with a rifle musket, a shotgun, and cartridges for the weapons (Cramer, 2014). Therefore, in this era of American history, guns on campus were quite common and not at all opposed. However, as time progressed and students were no longer mandated by militia law to carry weapons, campus bans of firearms grew more popular. By the 1830s, several college campuses across the country prohibited deadly weapons of any sort. There seemed to be only one exception to this rule—in 1908, students at Connecticut Agricultural College could have a service rifle for ROTC purposes (Cramer, 2014). This rule likely extended to other campuses with ROTC programs. By the 1960s, an era in which there was much turmoil for students, 97% of higher education institutions had policies that prohibited guns and other weapons (Cramer, 2014). While many of these institutions likely had policies prohibiting deadly weapons before then, institutions that did not added similar policies to their arsenal.

From the 1960s to the early 2000s, most states and institutions agreed that deadly weapons should be banned on campus. The minds of many people changed in 1966 when a shooting happened at the University of Texas, where a gunman killed 16 people (Sanderson, Kupczynski, Mundy, & Gibson, 2018). People began to wonder if allowing Concealed Carry on campus would have helped stop this incident from occurring. This shift continued after the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, a mass shooting in which two high school students shot and killed 12 students, a teacher, and then subsequently committed suicide, and the Virginia Tech Massacre in 2007, an incident in which one student shot and killed 32 students, injured an additional 17 students, and then subsequently committed suicide (Columbine High School Shootings Fast Facts, 2019; Virginia Tech Shootings Fast Facts, 2019). Because of the Columbine massacre, in 2003, Colorado became the first state to allow Concealed Carry except in public official buildings and K-12 schools (Sanderson et. al., 2018). By 2013 and 2014, 33 states proposed legislation for Concealed Carry on campus (Sanderson et. al., 2018). While several of these laws did not pass, it did result in many states allowing Campus Carry. As previously stated, by 2018, 10 states now allow Concealed Carry of weapons on campus and

an additional 23 states allow individual institutions to decide about Campus Carry (Guns on Campus: Overview, 2018).

Perceptions and Reactions

There are differing opinions on Concealed Carry on college and university campuses; some argue that allowing Campus Carry would harm the academic environment and increase risks, while others argue that allowing Concealed Carry would offer greater protection for students, faculty, and staff. A study by Thompson, et. al. has shown that 94% of the public opposes Concealed Carry on college campuses (2013). However, people's opinions on the matter vastly differ depending on their gender, race, experiences, location, and much more.

Geographical location can have a significant impact on their feelings towards Campus Carry. For example, students in Washington (a state that lets each institution decide about Campus Carry) are three times more likely to report complete discomfort with concealed guns on campus than those in Texas (a state in which Concealed Carry is allowed at all institutions) (Cavanaugh, Bouffard, Wells, & Nobles, 2012). Similarly, those who opposed gun control are most likely male, white, from rural areas, and politically conservative (Thompson, et. al., 2013). This demonstrates that those from more politically conservative areas such as Texas

and other southern states are more likely to approve of Campus Carry than people from politically liberal locations such as Washington.

Because geography can have such a strong impact on opinions of Campus Carry, there are many ways in which states handle the issue of Campus Carry. Sixteen states completely prohibit firearms on campus. However, the other 33 states allow Concealed Carry of weapons on college and university campuses in some form. States such as Colorado and Utah, not only are pro-Campus Carry, they also have no restrictions and allow concealed weapons in every location on a college campus. Even states who are pro-Campus Carry may ban firearms in certain locations. For example, Kansas bans guns in buildings that have adequate security (Winn, 2017). Similarly, Wisconsin institutions can prohibit firearms in certain locations or at special events by posting signs (Teeple, Thompson, & Price, 2012). For some states, allowing guns on campus is not just a safety issue; for states in which hunting is common, firearms for the sport may be allowed on campus. For example, in 2014, the University of Alaska still allowed firearms on campus for students who hunt, though all weapons must be secured (Cramer, 2014).

In addition to location, other factors can contribute to someone's opinion toward Concealed Carry on campus. For example,

Shepperd, et. al. (2018) divide students, staff, and faculty into three groups: Protection Owners (those who own a gun for the purpose of self-defense), Non-Protection Owners (those who own a gun for non-protection reasons such as sport or collection), and Non-Owners (those who do not own a gun). They state that by dividing into these three groups, we can discuss the psychological need for safety; everyone has a deep desire and need for safety, but the way people view safety can vary, especially when in relation to guns. For example, 89.1% of Non-Owners and 81.4% of Non-Protection Owners stated that if guns were allowed on campus, they would feel unsafe having heated arguments, while only 35.8% of Protection Owners stated a similar feeling (Shepperd et. al., 2018). This may demonstrate that states in which Concealed Carry permits are more common or states that have more Protection Owners may choose to handle the Campus Carry issue differently than states with fewer Protection Owners.

Campus Carry in Georgia

Prior to Georgia's House Bill 280, license holders were allowed to keep weapons secured only in their motor vehicles. Now, the State of Georgia allows anyone who is properly licensed in the state to carry a handgun in a concealed manner on property

owned or leased by public colleges and universities, with limited exceptions (University System of Georgia, 2017). The law states restrictions for where handguns cannot be carried such as at sporting events, in classrooms with minors, and in administrative offices. Since the inception of the law, there have been both advocates for and against its necessity.

This change in law has presented many issues and topics of conversation for students, faculty and employees both with and without a license to carry. Although this law has many advantages for license holders and potential safety on campus, the disadvantages are just as important. We will explore the compliance, challenges, risks, and litigation surrounding Georgia's Campus Carry law in the coming sections

Compliance and Challenges

To accurately assess if there are compliance issues with the new Campus Carry law, there must be clarity about what the Campus Carry law entails, as well as clear expectations of what it means to be in compliance with the law. Clarity of the law would minimize confusion and avoidable incidents. Confusion about the Campus Carry law might stem from states having varying Campus Carry laws. Georgia's version of the law requires weapons be concealed, but some states do not require that weapons be concealed.

Confusion Surrounding the Law

Aspects of the law cause confusion for both individuals who want to exercise their right to Conceal Carry and individuals who want to ensure that license holders are complying with the law's restrictions. For example, at Southern Crescent Technical College in Griffin, Georgia, an instructor called the police when a student refused to conceal her weapon. The student disagreed with the responding officer about the restrictions of the Campus Carry law, and she was ultimately instructed to conceal her weapon in her car before returning to class (Stirgus & Prabhu, 2018). In this situation, the student was not in compliance with the Campus Carry law, and it was difficult to persuade her to conceal her weapon. This is an example of an avoidable incident that could have escalated because of misinterpretation and suggests that there should be education and training to ensure all stakeholders understand the rights and restrictions of the law.

When considering compliance with the law, we tend to focus on license holders complying with processes and procedures, but institutions also play a significant role. It is vital that institutions understand the boundaries established by law, and additionally implement rules, policies, and procedures that encourage adherence to the law. Administrators should be aware that Georgia state law grants license holders the ability to

carry handguns to public college and university classes (except those in which high school students are enrolled). Additionally, faculty members may not ask license holders to reveal that they are carrying concealed handguns or in any way discourage them from doing what they are legally allowed to do (University System of Georgia, 2017).

License holders also play a role in compliance. They must understand the meaning of concealing their weapons so they do not unintentionally alarm or harm others in the campus community surrounding them. Concealed Carry means to carry your weapon in a discreet manner that so it is not a distraction or perceived as a threat (Wrigley, 2017). Confusion around this could be mitigated if public institutions in Georgia provided comprehensive training prior to allowing license holders to carry their concealed weapons on campus. In some states, public colleges and universities reserve the right to implement additional rules and requirements for license holders to adhere to in an effort to keep their campuses safer. However, House Bill 280 states that public colleges and universities in Georgia must comply with the law without exception, so institutions cannot implement their own requirements.

Another source of confusion with the law is the prohibited locations of Concealed Carry. House Bill 280 states that “guns are

not allowed in buildings or property used for athletic sporting events or student housing, including, but not limited to, fraternity and sorority houses, faculty, staff, or administrative offices or rooms where disciplinary proceedings are conducted” (University System of Georgia, 2017, p.2). These restrictions create issues of compliance. For example, many buildings have both classrooms and administrative offices; it would be cumbersome for an individual to identify which buildings they can or cannot Conceal Carry in. Ultimately, license holders are responsible for knowing where they can and cannot carry concealed weapons. This leads to the following considerations: 1) Where can weapons be stored? 2) Will institutions provide storage?

Detection and Punishment of Violations

Administrators tasked with compliance must also consider how to detect Concealed Carry in prohibited locations. Faculty and staff should be knowledgeable of the locations where Concealed Carrying is permitted. Some institutions have implemented tools like panic buttons to alert the authorities of a problem if needed. Some faculty have voiced the Campus Carry law discriminates against them because they cannot protect themselves as weapons are prohibited in offices on campus (Bodenheimer, 2018). Students who live on campus may also feel that their

rights being revoked, because Concealed Carry is prohibited in residence halls.

Punishment, or lack thereof, for offenders of these restrictions is another challenge that the Campus Carry law presents. As addressed in House Bill 280, people who carry handguns in an open manner or in a building, property, room, or space in violation of the law are guilty of a misdemeanor (University System of Georgia, 2017). If it is the individual's first offense, they are punished with a \$25.00 fine with no confinement. The tensions surrounding the law suggests the need for harsher punishment. With the amount of surety license holders place on the advantages of Campus Carry, providing greater level of punishment may deter people from breaking the law.

Accidents and Other Considerations

Campus Carry supporters frequently minimize the risk of accidental shootings, pointing out their scarcity and argue that proper training can mitigate any dangers (Students for Concealed Carry, n.d.). But several accidents have occurred over the years at schools with Campus Carry. For example, in January 2012, a student at Weber State University in Utah accidentally discharged a handgun in his pocket, which wounded his leg (Defilippis & Hughes, 2015). A similar incident took place in Georgia following the passing of House Bill 280. In October 2019,

a student at the University of Georgia accidentally shot himself in the leg while carrying a concealed weapon (Sicurella, 2019).

Accidents are not the only concern when weapons are on campus. There have been several reported incidents where disagreements escalated to fatal encounters. For example, when a fight at Northern Arizona University escalated, a student opened fire on the participants of the fight. As a result, he killed one student and injured three others (Defilippis & Hughes, 2015). Studies have shown that college students who are likely to open-carry are predisposed to impulsive and aggressive behavior (Defilippis & Hughes, 2015). This is a security risk because students may be a dangerous population with which to give permission (Defilippis & Hughes, 2015).

Case Analysis

The Campus Carry law garnered much controversy as it was being considered in the Georgia government. After it was signed, a group of Georgia professors sued the former governor, secretary of state, and attorney general hoping to have it overturned. In the suit, they claim that the law infringes on the University System of Georgia's ability to set its own policies, which is an unconstitutional violation of the separation of powers. The professors are concerned that their academic freedom is at risk, and some have

even avoided controversial conversations in class because of their fear of students with concealed weapons reacting (Prabhu, 2019; Stirgus, 2017). This case is currently being considered by the Georgia Court of Appeals.

Because this law is in its infancy in the state of Georgia, there is not yet much litigation around it. Other states have passed similar laws in preceding years that have already been challenged and considered by the judicial system. In order to consider how the challenges to the Georgia law may progress, we can look at an example from the state of Texas. In the following sections, we will summarize the background and issue of the Texas case, discuss the ruling of the court, and analyze the case as it related to Georgia Campus Carry.

Issue

In 2015, Texas became the eighth state to allow Concealed Carry on college campuses (Beggan, 2017). This law was challenged by three University of Texas at Austin professors in July 2016, who claimed that the presence of guns in classrooms violates freedom of speech (Jaschik, 2018). They also claimed that the law violated both the second amendment in that the “firearm usage is not sufficiently ‘well-regulated’” (Glass v. Paxton, 2018, p. 4). Finally, they claimed it violated equal protection of the fourteenth amendment because the university “lacks a rational

basis for determining where students can and cannot concealed-carry handguns” (Glass v. Paxton, 2018, p. 4). The case was originally dismissed by the district court for not providing sufficient proof that the law violated freedom of speech.

The case was appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2018 to consider two issues. First, the plaintiff challenged the district court’s dismissal of the First Amendment claim. Additionally, the plaintiff requested that the court reverse the lower court’s ruling on the second and fourteenth amendment claims and remand the district court to consider them because they did not offer any rationale (Glass v. Paxton, 2018).

Rule and Analysis

In 2018, a panel of judges ruled to affirm the district court’s finding. The court dismissed the claim because the plaintiffs did not offer evidence to prove that freedom of speech was or could be violated. Constitutionally, plaintiffs must “establish standing to sue” (Glass v. Paxton, 2018, p. 5). The second and fourteenth amendment claims were dismissed for the same reason: the plaintiffs failed to prove that their rights were violated by the law (Glass v. Paxton, 2018).

In analyzing this case, it seems the court is not only well within its power to make such a ruling, but also thoroughly considered

the case. The panel of judges based their decision on precedents set by many former cases. For example, they cite *Moore v. Bryant*, *Clapper v. Amnesty International USA*, and *Susan B. Anthony List v. Driehaus* in determining that the plaintiff lacks standing in the first amendment claim (*Glass v. Paxton*, 2018). Additionally, the court offered a fair analysis of the plaintiff's claims. Instead of considering the issue of guns on campus as right or wrong, the court focused on determining if the claims had standing. One could argue that the court did not correctly decide that her first amendment claim had standing, because there are examples of injury from the law in Georgia. The Georgia Campus Carry law has only been in effect for a short time, but professors claim that they have avoided controversial topics in class for fear of a student with a concealed gun reacting (Stirgus, 2017). The court offers a fair counterpoint to this though: this is a self-imposed injury, which does not constitute as standing. Finally, the court offered a ruling on the remaining claims even when they could have returned it to the lower court. The judges acted in due diligence in ruling on this case.

Applications for Georgia Campus Carry Case

The *Glass v. Paxton* case can be used as a litmus test for the Georgia challenge to Campus Carry. The cases are similar in the both

are brought by professors who are concerned about safety and academic freedom. The cases also share the burden of establishing standing. This is what ultimately led to the affirmation of the lower court's decision in *Glass v. Paxton*. The Georgia case will also have to prove that injury is either actual or imminent for the case to not be dismissed. The notable difference is the claim. While Glass's claims are based on violations of individuals' rights, the plaintiffs of the Georgia case argue that the law violates the separation of powers. Perhaps the Georgia professors took note of the case in Texas and chose a different claim in hopes of being more successful.

We can look to the precedent set in *University of Utah v. Shurleff* to determine how the difference in claim will affect the Georgia challenge. In this case, the state attorney general stated that the policy of the University of Utah to prohibit guns on campus violated state law. The university argued that the state constitution granted autonomy to the university. This is similar to the plaintiff's claim in the Georgia case, in that they claim that the University System of Georgia has autonomy to decide on Campus Carry outside of state law under the separation of powers. In the Utah case, the court found that the autonomy granted to the university did not limit the power of the legislature to exercise "general control and supervision" (as

cited in Kaplin & Lee, 2014). This case offers precedent to the Georgia Court of Appeals, since it was determined that the state is the ultimate authority. There may be differences in the Georgia constitution, however, that require more consideration.

Conclusion: Recommendations for Georgia Administrators

As Georgia administrators in public colleges and universities continue to adjust to the Campus Carry law, it is vital to investigate, research, assess risks, and implement changes that adhere to the law, provide evidence of the necessity of the law, and keep campuses safe. "By simply reviewing the extant literature, it appears as if support for allowing the concealed carrying of weapons on campuses lacks sufficient legal standing and necessary empirical evidence" (Acheson & Arrigo, 2016, p.125). Statistically, the number of school shootings has not been significantly impacted since the passing of this bill (Angelis, Benz, & Gillham, 2017). Considering how new the bill is, the impact is yet to be seen.

In order to gain a better understanding of all the ramifications of the law, it could be beneficial to have a committee dedicated to researching and evaluating concerns surrounding Campus Carry issues. Administrators and lawmakers must implement ways to

address those concerns because administrators, university employees, and students are faced with the potential consequences of all the legal proceedings that may come. Faculty and staff can provide updated information of campus carry requirements on their website or in their syllabus. Administrators could also facilitate the installation of signage and reminders outlining the obligations of license holders. It is up to these individuals who study and work in the institutions daily to voice their opinions and be heard by state officials in hopes of filling in the gaps of this law.

Additionally, on behalf of the university, it would be beneficial to implement some type of mandatory safety course for the students who choose to carry. For example, Georgia Tech has implemented a safety course taught by law enforcement officers to discuss gun safety. Similarly, Georgia Southern University houses the Shooting Sports Education Center, which offers a gun safety course to teach proper use of a firearm (Whitehead, 2017). Another point to consider is that some trained officials have found it difficult to gauge when the use of a firearm is necessary, which would be an even more difficult decision for an untrained license holder. It would be incredibly beneficial for students to have assessments that present difficult scenarios and how to effectively de-escalate situations while being armed and unarmed.

A couple of suggestions for encounters with active shooters have been: “Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate” (ALICE); “Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events” (CRASE); and “Run. Hide. Fight.” in order to create a greater sense of safety and well-being for the students, faculty, and staff of the university (Policy development, 2017). These courses are not mandatory, but they are a good starting point. It is unlikely that this could be mandated by public colleges and universities in Georgia unless it is something that is required by law.

However, these types of training are important, because *Glass v. Paxton*—in addition to other recent court cases—shows that challenges will progress. *Glass v. Paxton* demonstrates that the Georgia case is unlikely to be successful in overturning Campus Carry. The burden rests on the plaintiff to show standing and subsequently prove the claims of the suit. This is no easy task, especially considering that precedent is on the side of the state. Not only that, but the

Georgia case is unique in that the individuals are sued and not the offices of the Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General. The plaintiffs will need to prove that Governor Nathan Deal, Governor Brian Kemp, and Attorney General Chris Carr were working as individuals and not in the role of the office in order for the court to even consider the claim that the law violates the separation of powers (Prabhu, 2019). It is unlikely that the Georgia professors will be successful in their quest to overturn the law, but higher education professionals nationwide await the decision. If the law is going to be difficult to overturn, it is imperative that students, faculty, and staff adapt to the status quo and prepare themselves with the proper knowledge, safety techniques, and level of responsibility that comes with the passing of this law. Ultimately, there are considerations no matter what your position is on Campus Carry; we should all be working together to ensure a safe environment that is conducive to learning and productivity.

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The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups (Book Review)

Coyle, D. (2018). *The culture code: The secrets of highly successful groups*. New York, NY: Bantam. 280 pp. ISBN: 978-008042-7698-9. \$25.20 suggested retail price.

Lucero Aradillas (Georgia Southern University)

In the book *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*, Coyle discusses how people work together as part of a group that achieves excellent results. As opposed to this being a book on how individuals lead, the author focuses on how people interact successfully and productively with each other; thereby, giving leaders three skills that can help hone successful teams. His research identified three skills that propel effective teamwork:

1. Build Safety
2. Share Vulnerability
3. Establish Purpose

Skill one, Build Safety, is what Coyle calls “the foundation on which strong culture is built” (2018, p. 6). This skill, in particular, shows how successful teams form strong emotional connections and function as a family unit where they feel comfortable with

each other. For a leader to create a safe environment like this, he or she must indicate he or she is fallible and open to input. Coupled with a variety of other tactics, such as communicating one’s listening, over-communicating gratitude, and ensuring everyone has a voice, a leader building safety also has to be visionary in terms of relationships and connections to the future.

Skill two, Share Vulnerability, is what he identifies as a trust builder. Where most people are afraid to show vulnerability, Coyle states that vulnerability is contagious in successful groups because it exemplifies people’s need for each other (2018). A simple act of showing vulnerability, like not being afraid to state what one needs or that one does not know the answers to everything, has even saved lives in the cases the author studied. To employ this skill

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successfully, a leader can, for example, make themselves disappear to give the team an opportunity to work together without the leader present. The leader trusts the team to make informed decisions without them needing to hold people's hand every step of the way.

Skills three, Establish Purpose, is perhaps the most basic of the three skills and one that we have all seen time and time again. Simply put, people need to have a reason to do the work they do every day and must have a roadway or guide with which to do it. Coyle states that a leader has the responsibility of making sure his or her priorities are ranked. However, they should also hear from where the group wants to go and what they believe to be priorities. This not only ensures people feel heard, but it also ensures his or her company goals are living things people feel connected to, thus propelling the drive behind accomplishing these goals (2018).

These three skills provide a good roadmap for both people seeking to work better with colleagues and those who lead teams. The examples that he used throughout the book were on-point and provided a good mixture of historical and current examples. While he discussed both kinds in detail, I do think he spent more time discussing some of the historical examples than some of the current issues. Though

useful, this added a heaviness to the text that did not necessarily fit the tone of the overall text and message.

As a leader, I am always looking for ways in which to improve my leadership. So much of this book resonated with me because it reminded me of the core of servant leadership. I can imagine a leader employing these three skills being a servant leader at heart. He or she is, after all, sharing power and giving it to the group of people he or she is leading while creating an environment where he or she can thrive as a team. I cannot imagine very many other kinds of leadership styles being okay with employing these skills are they are intended.

This book was also refreshing to me as a servant leader because I am usually focused on serving an individual, not how that focus and service impacts the team and our purpose.

One of my favorite takeaways from the book, and one that equally challenged me, was the emphasis on showing vulnerability. Even as a servant leader and someone who is more than willing to state they do not know the answer to something, showing vulnerability is something many of us, especially those of us in leadership positions, are conditioned to try and hide. The book gave thorough examples and reasons why the conversation on vulnerability needs to go deeper because it

is really the basis of trust. A person can easily apply this to their everyday work or even team building exercises more often to try and remove the stigma on vulnerability.

In all, I think this book ties well into the topic of group interaction as the basis for success. It certainly adds value to the overall subject of leadership because there is so much focus on the self in leadership that we don't take the time to truly consider HOW successful groups work together and what leaders did to create these teams. This book may be a very good one to consider for any organization to tackle leadership, conflict management, and human development issues and it would make a great addition to

curricula inside the classroom. It has certainly become one of my favorite leadership books to date

I would, without a doubt, recommend this book to anyone, both new and veteran professionals, because it provides a more holistic view of leadership. Leaders are always asking themselves the million-dollar question, "How can my team work better together?" Instead of answering the question through individualized professional development plans for people that often do not have follow-up or ties to the group, the book provides essential skills with which to build successful teams by nurturing them as a whole.

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Lucero Aradillas is a doctoral student pursuing her Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership at Georgia Southern University. She currently serves as the Director of Diversity Education at Agnes Scott College.. She holds her bachelor's degree in political science from Kennesaw State University and her master's degree in professional communication and leadership from Armstrong State University, now named the Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern University, where she served in various leadership roles within the Division of Student Affairs. Lucero's research interests include retention practices and models for underrepresented students, particularly Latinx students, and leadership profiles within Latina administrators in higher education.

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College in the Crosshairs: An Administrative Perspective on Prevention of Gun Violence (Book Review)

Labanc, B. H., & Hemphill, B. O. (2015). *College in the crosshairs: An administrative perspective on prevention of gun violence*. Sterling, VA: Stylus. 184 pp. ISBN: 978-1-620-36352-2. \$39.95 suggested retail price.

Carlie Cooper (Georgia Southern University)

Violence has existed on college campuses throughout the history of higher education in America. In the Colonial Era of higher education, tension between faculty and students often led to riots and revolts led by disgruntled students (as cited in Thelin, 2011). During the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Era, demonstrations on campuses were occasionally met by violent overreactions of law enforcement (as cited in Cohen and Kisker, 2010). In recent decades, violence on college campuses has been marked by the use of guns, leading to casualties, like in the tragic case of the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007. *College in the Crosshairs: An Administrative Perspective on Prevention of Gun Violence* examines gun violence on campus and seeks to provide suggestions to limit

such violence. In the following sections, I will summarize the contents and argument of the book and provide an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

About the Editors

College in the Crosshairs: An Administrative Perspective on Prevention of Gun Violence was edited by Brandi Hephner LaBanc and Brian O. Hemphill. LaBanc is the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and a scholar in campus crisis management. Before starting her current role, she served as the Associate Vice President in the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Northern Illinois University. Hemphill currently serves as the President of Radford University, and has held previous administrative

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roles including Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Northern Illinois University. He is a known scholar in the field of gun violence and threat preparedness.

LeBanc and Hemphill share similar administrative experience in higher education and are both scholars in campus safety. These experiences and scholarly work not only inform their roles as editors of this book but qualifies them to speak on the subject. Each chapter has well curated suggestions for campus administrators, which were clearly chosen based on their professional experience and research.

Content

College in the Crosshairs is a collection of chapters that examine different aspects of violence on college campuses. The topics include an overview of homicides related to higher education in recent years, considerations based on school type, the guns on campus debate, and preventative measures.

Overview of incidents in recent years.

In the opening chapter, "Murder in Academia," the author categorizes homicides from 2009-2014 into *rampage shootings* or *conventional murders* with the ultimate goal of determining whether violence on campuses has lessened. The author concluded that rampage-type violence related to higher

education has increased, while conventional homicides have not increased (LaBanc & Hemphill, 2015).

In addition to this analysis of violence on campus, this chapter offers suggestions for reform. The author first recommends reform of gun policies in which guns are only allowed on campus for law enforcement and degree instruction. Additionally, the author recommends including additional services in campus counseling centers like help with managing chronic mental health conditions and conducting threat assessments. Finally, the author recommends that the federal government return to the original interpretation of Title II to allow for the use of involuntary leave for people who are a threat to themselves, instead of only a threat to others (LaBanc & Hemphill, 2015).

Considerations based on school type.

The book includes chapters that analyze the issue of violence on campus through the perspective of specific school types. Specifically, chapter 8 considers the perspective of a small college, and chapter 9 considers the community college. Small schools face challenges that are unique to their size, such as the lack of resources and staff due to limited funding. Small colleges are also experiencing an increase in competition from for-profit institutions (LaBanc & Hemphill, 2015). Com-

munity colleges also experience unique challenges due to their mission and size. They often have less funding which leads to fewer fulltime faculty and staff and less resources, like counseling services. These limitations make it difficult to prioritize programs such as violence prevention. With these challenges in mind, the authors of these chapters offer suggestions for tackling violence on campus tailored to the school type based on their unique characteristics.

The guns on campus debate.

The editors of the book include chapters that consider the place of guns on campus. In the years following the Virginia Tech shooting of 2007, more and more states have passed laws allowing the concealed carry of weapons on college campuses. These laws forced campus administrators to create new policies regarding guns on campus. In chapter 2, authors Melear and St. Louis provide readers with an overview of state laws that permit concealed weapons and additionally discuss recent legislation and litigation that are of note to higher education.

Preventative measures and suggestions.

The remaining chapters of the book offer suggestions for prevention of violence, as well as how to handle active violence on campus. These suggestions fall into categories such as emotional health, intervention,

risk assessment, and timely communication. In the category of emotional health, the authors recommend creating a comprehensive plan to improve well-being of all campus community members. This includes “creating a sense of urgency” and increasing buy-in to improve the campus climate (LeBanc & Hemphill, 2015, p. 82). In addition to this, administrators should prioritize counseling resources on campus and partnerships with community mental health providers. Intervention is also an important piece in prevention. The authors of “Creating an Emotionally Healthy Community” recommend incorporating “gatekeeper training programs” in which “campus members who are in a position to observe behavior...provide initial outreach to someone who may be struggling” (LeBanc & Hemphill, 2015, p. 96).

These examples illustrate a portion of the range of suggestions offered; the authors include many more suggestions for prevention, intervention, and management of campus violence. Some of these recommendations include creating a crisis management team, implementing a communication system, and conducting active shooter drills.

Argument

The common argument found in each chapter of the book is that higher education administrators should study violence on campuses and share policies and procedures to

attempt the prevention of future violence. This is succinctly captured in the forward written by ACPA Executive Director Cindi Love and NASPA President Kevin Kruger: “we should act as agents of responsible policy by adding to the conversation with lawmakers, campus leaders, and the public about what it takes to keep our communities safe” and “act as responsible stewards of our campuses, acting in good faith to comply with the legal and regulatory framework in which we practice” (as cited in LeBanc & Hemphill, 2015, p. xiv). The editors present a wide range of topics to educate and in turn catalyze higher education administrators to engage in the gun control debate in society and simultaneously foster a safe community on college campuses.

Strengths of the Book

College in the Crosshairs begins with a strong forward that introduces the content and purpose of the book. This forward is written by the Executive Director of ACPA and the President of NASPA, which elevates the level of authority the book provides. This is complemented by the experience and scholarly work of the editors, which no doubt provided valuable feedback to the chapter authors.

The book provides a robust overview of the issue of violence on campus. The chapters on small schools and community

colleges offer perspective of how this issue needs to be addressed differently on varying campuses. Additionally, the inclusion of a personal account of a gun violence incident in chapter 10 was a strong choice of the editors. It prevents the readers from becoming desensitized to the issue. This chapter also provides unique recommendations from the author, including the idea that counseling centers may not be the right resource for all students. In addition to these areas, the book includes sections on legislation, theory, and many strategies for prevention and crisis management.

Weaknesses of the Book

While *College in the Crosshairs* has many strengths, it is not without weaknesses. In the first chapter, the author provides an overview of homicides on college campuses in recent years. The main weakness was the method of rating *rampage shootings*. A few of the incidents included were either not on a campus, or not closely related to higher education. The inclusion of these incidents warps the numbers and could change the outcome of the conclusion of the chapter—that violence on campuses have gotten worse in recent history. The author does, however, explain the inclusion of these incidents.

Another weakness of the book was the disjointed tone from one chapter to the next. This is to be expected in a book that is

a collection of chapters by multiple authors, but still the flow could be improved. Related to this weakness is the inclusion of repetitive information. Because each chapter has its own introduction and conclusion, the issue of violence on campus was explained multiple times, leading to a repetitive feel in the book. For example, many chapters cited mental health being linked to perpetrators of campus violence. While this is an important fact, the readers do not need an explanation of that idea more than once.

The repetitive nature of the book leads to the final critique: organization. The repetition could be remedied by including a single introduction and conclusion for the book. The book could also be organized into sections based on subtopics. For example,

separating the book into parts such as Background, Legislation, Prevention, etc. may create a more cohesive flow.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the strengths of this book outweigh the weaknesses. The experience of the editors and well written and researched chapters provides an overview of the issue of violence on college campuses. Most importantly, the book offers many suggestions for both prevention and management of campus violence from creating an emotionally healthy community to using instant communication tools. I would recommend this book to higher education graduate school students, as well as higher education and student affairs professionals. It is an excellent addition to the library of any higher education administrator, present or future.

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