

A DIFFERENT WORLD: AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENT WELL-BEING IN BLACK AND
WHITE STUDENTS AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

by

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DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Drs. Peter and Marcia Millet. Thank you for demonstrating what it meant to be a hard worker every single day. I have been blessed to witness your successes and am motivated everyday. It is an honor to walk beside you in this journey of education and service. Thank you for holding my hand every step of the way and assuring me that I was loved and never alone. Thank you for always assuring me of the power I hold within. I am who I am today because you sacrificed so much for me. I love you!

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-Mackenzie Janelle Millet

ABSTRACT

A DIFFERENT WORLD: AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENT WELL-BEING IN BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

by

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The purpose of the study was to compare the relationship between student involvement and student well-being in Black and White students at a Predominately White Institution. Research has shown that students who are involved in organizations have more positive collegiate experiences. The primary areas of the study focused on student involvement, student well-being, and student racialized experiences and the relationship with anxiety, self-esteem, depression and psychological stress. Ultimately, this study examined the factors that contributed positively or negatively to the experiences of students on campus and provided recommendations for increasing the emotional well-being of Black students at Predominantly White Institutions.

The methods for this study used a quantitative, cross-sectional approach. Data collection involved survey data which explored relationships between variables and the testing of differences between groups for significance. More specifically, it used descriptive statistics, cross tabulations (chi-square), one-way ANOVA, correlations between continuous measures and compared the size of correlations.

The key findings of this study were that majority of students were involved in at least one organization on campus. Both races of students stated their reasons for joining

were due to enjoyment in the organizations, positive feelings of connectedness, sense of belonging, and celebration of cultural traditions. Additionally, students reported to have lower levels of depression and anxiety when they were involved in organizations on campus. This finding suggests that it is not the quality or number of organizations in which students are involved that impacts their emotional well-being; rather, it is the quality of experiences. Students indicated that negative experiences with microaggressions resulted in stress, anxiety, and depression, and a decrease in self-esteem. Furthermore, students reported having higher levels of self-esteem when they felt integrated within the university community.

The implications of this study are for institutions to encourage student involvement on campus and to form connections outside of the classroom. Involvement on campus has proven to result in positive outcomes in student experiences and significantly contributes to their levels of stress, depression, anxiety and self-esteem. It is imperative that colleges aim to curate spaces that are comfortable for all students and take strides towards fostering student success.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nelson Mandela (2003) once stated, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” In the United States the goal of education is often actualized through the attainment of a college degree. However, prior to the Civil War, there was virtually no access to higher education that was available to previously enslaved people. The history of this country is replete with the many challenges that were faced by this group of Americans that made educational attainment extremely difficult if not impossible. Despite these challenges, many newly freed slaves sought to better their life circumstances and saw education as the vehicle that would allow them to do so (Franklin & Moss, 1988). These challenges began to slowly lessen following the end of the Civil War in 1865. Even then however, there were very few institutions of higher education that would admit African Americans. Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) routinely denied admission to this particular demographic, and Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) were just coming into existence. Those few who did manage to gain admission to Predominantly White Institutions often studied in undesirable conditions and were treated poorly during their time at those schools. The discrimination experienced by African Americans certainly deterred many from seeking or completing a higher education degree.

This chapter will start by exploring the experiences of Black and White students at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) through historical lenses including discussion of a number of precedents setting legal cases and conclude by exploring these same

experiences in today's contemporary society. It will examine the prevalence of Black students on Predominately White campuses and compare their experiences to those of White students. The study will also examine the relationship between student involvement and the emotional well-being of students.

Background to the Issue

This section presents a review of the relevant background on topics related to this research project. The primary factor that supports the rationale for this project is that increasing numbers of Black students now attend Predominantly White Institutions. These findings set the stage for the many challenges that are faced by this demographic in this particular setting.

Today there are approximately 19.7 million students enrolled in degree-granting colleges and universities around the world (NCES, n.d.c). Since the formal requirement for desegregation of institutions of higher education in the 1950's there has been an increasing number of Black students attending Predominately White Institutions. (NCES, n.d.). In the mid to late 1970's approximately, 10% of Black college age persons attended Predominantly White Institutions. The U.S. Department of Education reports that currently 70% of Black students attend Predominantly White Institutions. During this time there has also been a corresponding decrease in the number of Black students attending HBCUs. The highest proportion of African American attending HBCUs was in the years prior to desegregation when they had no choice other than to attend those institutions. However, since desegregation this number has steadily declined. The fact that increasing numbers of African American students are receiving college degrees when coupled with the finding that fewer of them are attending HBCUs supports the

finding that increasing numbers of African Americans are attending PWIs. There are several factors that contribute to this finding including: greater financial assistance, more educational resources, access to more opportunities, and often being in closer proximity to their homes.

From their inception, HBCUs have been the destinations of choice for Black students. These institutions have provided diversity to the area of academia, provided access to higher education to those who otherwise might not have had such opportunities, and created welcoming and nurturing environments for students. Unfortunately, the financial challenges facing these institutions has caused serious challenges to their ability to provide adequate financial support to students (Pratt et al., 2019). Reports from accrediting agencies such as the, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), one of the primary accrediting bodies for HBCUs state that, lack of financial stability is one of the primary institutional challenges facing these institutions. Problems common to many HBCUs include rising tuition rates, unstable patterns of recruitment and retention, low levels of alumni giving, high levels of student indebtedness post- graduation, lack of scholarships, leadership instability as evidenced by the revolving door of College Presidents, low endowments, and often-unstable institutional infrastructures (Fook & Sidhu, 2015; Pratt, et al., 2019). These institutions often face very real challenges such as having to choose between: 1) making payroll or paying utility bills, 2) awarding scholarships or giving salary increases, 3) addressing deferred maintenance issues or purchasing adequate resources for classrooms, labs, and offices.

As financial challenges continue to exist in many Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), the number of Black students who graduate from these institutions is steadily declining. Many students make the decision to leave regarding financial hardships that prohibits them from having an enjoyable experience. A large amount of HBCUs struggle to have money for student scholarships, residential maintenance upkeep and academic resources (Brown & Burnette, 2014; Hodge- Clark & Daniels, 2014). Though they are admirable institutions enriched in tradition, many struggles to be financially stable institutions for students who cannot afford to attend without financial support (Strayhorn, 2008). These challenges often result in students transferring to large Predominately White Universities that have the resources, finances and support to accommodate these students at a level other HBCUs cannot. Although the goal of HBCUs is to provide support and guidance to underrepresented students, the constant struggles that they face have the effect of driving increasing numbers of African American students to attend other institutions.

Historical Legal Cases

Starting in the late 1800s the racist policies and practices of many Predominantly White Institutions unfairly denied African Americans the right to attend those schools to pursue their educational dreams. Ultimately, these unjust practices ended up in court and resulted in a number of landmark legal decisions. A brief synopsis of some of the most recognized and transformational cases follows in Table 1.1. This table lists the legal case, the year the decision was made, and a summary of the decision.

Table 1.1*Synopsis of Landmark Cases in the Desegregation of Higher Education*

Legal Case	Year	Decision
Plessy v Ferguson	1896	The Supreme Court upheld the controversial doctrine of “separate but equal.” Black and White students could legally be sent to different schools and prohibited from attending the same school if both schools were equally resourced.
Missouri ex rel. Gaines v Canada	1938	The Supreme Court ruled in creating a separate law school for Black students to attend. In coordination with the Missouri General Assembly, the Lincoln University School of Law was created to primarily focus on educating Black students. This case was the turning point that paved the way for future Black law students.
Sipuel v Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma	1948	The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Ada Sipuel to pursue law school at University of Oklahoma who became the first Black woman to ever attend an All-White Law school in the Southern region.
Briggs v Elliott	1949	The U.S. District Court denied the request of Black students to have school desegregation. However, the court began to allow Black students to have similar resources and opportunities as the White students while still physically separated. This case is recognized as the first case to challenge segregated schools and became a part of the suit filed in Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954.
Sweatt v. Painter	1950	The Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of Herman Sweatt to attend the University of Texas Law School after originally being denied because he was a Black man.
McLaurin v Oklahoma State Regents	1950	The Supreme Court overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine to allow George McLaurin to attend the Oklahoma University School of Education to pursue a Doctorate in Education. McLaurin was initially denied due to his race despite his high academic performance. Additionally, in this ruling universities were no longer allowed to deny or mistreat students of color.
Bolling v Sharpe	1950	The D.C. Board of Education denied a petition from group of Black parents for their 11 children to be enrolled into John Phillip Sousa Junior High School, an all- White, heavily endowed school. The case was dismissed leaving the Black students to continue learning in the same inadequate and underfunded environments. After consistent advocacy for their children, the Supreme Court ruled in the overturning of doctrine “separate but equal.” This case served as a turning point in the education desegregation of school aged children.

Table 1.1 (cont.)*Synopsis of Landmark Cases in the Desegregation of Higher Education*

Legal Case	Year	Decision
Belton v Gebhard and Bulah v Gebhart	1952	These two cases, while separate, were focused on issues of discrimination. Belton v Gebhart concerned a group of parents from Claymont, a neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware, who were required to send their Black children to a segregated, impoverished and poorly maintained school that was nearly 20 miles roundtrip. Bulah v. Gebhart concerned a Black mother of Hockessin, Delaware, who requested the school system to provide transportation to her daughter and other students along the same path. Black students were denied their request and also admission to the all-White school after petitioning to be enrolled. The Delaware Court of Chancery agreed that the students were being mistreated and had the right to Equal Protection Under the Law. The courts ruled to allow Black students to now be enrolled in the all-White neighborhood school.
Brown v Board of Education	1954	In a unanimous 9-0 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the doctrine of separate but equal violated the 14 th amendment to the Constitution, which prohibits the states from denying equal protection of the laws to any person within their jurisdictions. The challenge was that while this case marked a triumph for justice and equality, it was met with fierce resistance, primarily from southern states.
Civil Rights Act	1964	This law empowered the federal government to end segregation based on race, and banned discrimination based on a number of variables including race. It prevented segregation in all public locations including restaurants, parks and schools.
Higher Education Act	1965	This Act authorized funds to be used to enhance Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The statute authorized the "Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program" and the "Strengthening of Historically Black Graduate Institutions Program inclusive of eight sections: General Provisions, Teacher Quality Enhancement, Strengthening Institutions, Student Assistance, Developing Institutions, International Education Programs, Graduate and Postsecondary Improvement Programs, and Additional Programs.

Desegregation of schools was a monumental step forward in terms of providing opportunities and equality for Black and other marginalized populations. In many of the previously addressed cases, White institutions prohibited access to higher education for students of color, created barriers for funding and educational resources, and denied them

the basic human decency that was afforded to White students. In many cases, rather than granting them access to their institutions, they chose to create entire separate institutions so they would not have to share resources with them. The mistreatment and discrimination of students of color has been present for centuries and though Black students can now enroll in White institutions, racism and poor campus climate continues to impact large numbers of students.

In efforts to further invalidate the experiences of Black and other minority students, the Regents of the University of California v. Bakke case served as an example of racial challenges in academic spaces. In 1978, Allen Bakke, a White man was denied entry to the University of California Medical School after he claimed to have higher test scores than the small percentage of minority students who were admitted (Britannica, 2022). Bakke testified that he experienced racial “reverse discrimination” as the few spots that were taken were reserved specifically for minority students to fill the institutions diversity quota (Britannica, 2022). Bakke’s White privilege served in his favor as the Supreme Court agreed the decision was unconstitutional and required the medical school to accept him (Britannica, 2022). Ultimately, this case was the starting point of affirmative action in educational spaces and while many argue that race is not a factor, it continues to be a challenge for many students today.

In the 1970s to 1980s, Critical Race Theory was developed in response to the “colorblind” ideations that were present in several institutions around the world (Crenshaw, 2019). It was introduced to highlight the racist underpinnings of legal cases and doctrines that were present to hold laws and policies accountable (Crenshaw, 2019; Martinez, 2014) . In 1994, it was been adapted into an analytical framework to

specifically address instances of racism in educational settings (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). For years, this model has been used to understand and critique educational practices that continue to exist in these spaces (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Initially based in law, CRT is an application of critical theory based in race, law and power (Crenshaw, 2019; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Historically, leaders of institutions were remiss in terms of addressing racism within their communities which served as a driving force for its creation (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). There was a belief that with the implementation of CRT, higher education institutions would have the tools needed to foster more inclusive and diverse settings and dismantling systems of oppression and privilege (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This framework addresses five tenants (counter-storytelling, the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, interest conversion, critique of liberalism) and how they assist in examining racial issues in higher education, their impact, and ways to be beneficial if properly addressed (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Specifically for this dissertation, Whiteness as property is significantly present as this tenet has been demonstrated in school and businesses as well as in the creation of policies to ensure White people receive access to resources that are prohibited from others (Dixson & Rousseau, 2018). Whiteness as property dates back to segregated areas such as schools, theaters, restaurants, stores and other recreational activities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Whiteness comes with power and freedom to enjoy activities that others cannot. Whiteness is associated with reputation and stature, rights to move freely without fear and access to resources specifically catered to them (Ladson-Billings, 1998). These policies transferred into educational settings in later years, and although students have the

opportunity to apply for any college today, many institutions remain rooted in racist practices (Dixson & Rousseau, 2018). Race has a huge impact of the educational structure as a whole, and in order to mend this gap, there must be an extension of invitations to serve all people and create a more equal and equitable society in all areas of academia (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Conceptual Framework

An understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of this project requires an examination of students: 1) Level of Student Involvement, 2) Student Well-being, and 3) Racialized Experiences. Level of Student Involvement refers to a student's level of involvement on the campus outside of the classroom (Astin, 1984). Student Well-being refers to students level of depression, stress, anxiety, self-esteem (Ramón-Arbués et al., 2020). There are two primary components to racialized experiences: campus climate, and the quality of experience with other race persons (Astin, 1984). Black students who have a history of negative experiences with White persons, and Black students who perceive the campus climate to be unsupportive may be less likely to become involved in extracurricular activities (Lewis et al., 2013). In turn, students with low levels of involvement in the life of the campus outside of the classroom may experience poor levels of emotional well-being.

The basic premise is that students that have higher levels of involvement in the life of the campus and feel part of the campus will have higher levels of psychological well-being than students who merely go to class and then go back home. Black students on White campuses who just go to class and home are likely to feel more isolated,

disengaged and alone (Astin, 1999; Koo, 2021; Winestone et al., 2022). These feelings are correlated with poor psychological well-being.

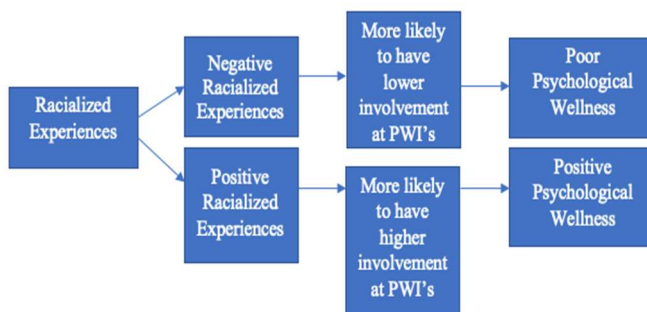
Racialized experiences come into play because students who have a history of negative racialized experiences will be less likely to become engaged outside of the classroom when on PWI campuses (Koo, 2021). Research also shows that these types of behaviors are closely related to college attrition (Burke, 2019; Strayhorn, 2012; Tinto, 1993). The conceptual model created by the juxtaposition of these two concepts would state that:

1. Students who have a history of negative racialized experiences will be less likely to be involved in the life of a PWI campus outside of the classroom. They are more likely to just go to class and then go home. They will have low levels of involvement.
2. Students will low levels of involvement (which were precipitated by negative racialized experiences) will feel more isolated and will experience lower levels of psychological well-being.

This model is illustrated by the graphic below.

Figure 1.1

The Relationship Between Racialized Experiences and Psychological Well-being



This figure is two-fold and illustrates the paths for individuals who have a history of negative or positive racialized experiences. It also shows the impact of these experiences on individuals as they matriculate through a predominantly White institution. Individuals who have experienced negative racialized experiences are likely to manifest low levels of involvement at the dominantly White institutions. Their histories of unpleasant racialized interactions make it probable that they will feel uncomfortable being involved in any non-required activities on the campus. It is unlikely that they would be willing to expose themselves to negative racialized interactions unless required to do so. These individuals are likely to just go to class and other required activities and be minimally involved in the social life of the campus. Consequently, this isolation and the associated dearth of socialization and support are likely to lead to lower levels of psychological Well-being.

Conversely, individuals who have experienced primarily positive racialized experiences are more likely to feel comfortable in a predominantly White environment which may manifest itself in higher levels of involvement in the life of the campus. In addition, this added level of comfort makes it more likely that in addition to going to class, they are also more likely to become engaged in non-academic and social activities on the campus. This higher level of involvement, socialization, and connectedness are likely to be positively related to positive psychological well-being. valence

Problem Statement

Since the desegregation of schools there has been an increasing number of Black students attending Predominately White Institutions. Many of the challenges experienced by these students are related to their well-being at these institutions (Museus et al., 2018;

Strayhorn, 2010). The relationship between student involvement and student well-being is a complex issue for all students, but some challenges are felt more acutely in marginalized students. This study specifically focuses on Black and White students and identifies factors that contribute to their overall experiences whether positive or negative. Through examination, the critical components that will be explored by race are students' level of involvement, anxiety, self-esteem, depression, stress and racialized experiences. These factors will provide insight into the overall quality of students experiences while on campus. To date, many Black students fail to receive the same opportunities to achieve as do their White peers (Allen et al., 2018; Museus et al., 2018). In order for progress to be made regarding negative racial experiences on college campuses, there must be a thorough understanding of all contributing factors. In order to bolster student retention and college completion, student involvement is imperative as they navigate during these years on campus.

Specific questions to be addressed are:

1. Do Black students and White students on a Predominantly White college campus differ in their levels of student involvement?
2. Do Black students and White students on a predominantly White college campus differ in their levels of psychological well-being?
3. What is the relationship between student involvement and student well-being in Black and White students on a Predominantly White college campus?
4. What is the relationship between racialized experiences and level of student involvement?

Significance

The dissertation broadly examined theories that serve as a guide for the levels of well-being in Black and White students on a predominantly White College campus and assess how Well-Being is impacted by level of involvement in the life of the institution. The research could advance the current state of knowledge in the field by identifying variables that are correlates of well-being and recommend ways to increase it for both Black and White students. If Black or White students are found to have lower or higher levels of well-being, that finding will be discovered. More specifically, this research focused on four components of well-being: depression, psychological stress, anxiety, and self-esteem.

This research specifically addressed three primary areas: student involvement, student well-being, and student racialized experiences. In-depth analyses will examine various groups of students for the purpose of identifying the impact that student involvement has on their experiences. Research has proven that students who are involved in clubs and organizations have a more positive collegiate experience (Guilmette et al., 2019; Knifsend et al., 2020; Tinto, 1993); therefore, this research tested those findings based depending upon the results from the participants. Though this study will only be focusing on Black and White Students, these issues are also present in the lives of student of color in several institutional settings.

This study focused solely on Black and White students. These groups were specifically selected because historically these are the two racial groups that demonstrate the greatest disparities in numerous areas. This includes differences in education, mental and physical health, socio-economic status, the legal system, the workplace and

numerous other areas. The current study focused on one of these areas of disparity, education, which affects about 19,000,000 in the United States each year. Discord between these groups has a long and turbulent history in this country. This started during the slavery in the 1700's and persists to the current day, most recently demonstrated by movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement which followed the killing of George Floyd.

In sum, education is necessary to transform the state of this nation. Regardless of the level of education, the more people who are culturally aware and have experience interacting with those of different backgrounds is likely to lead to increased tolerance for people who are different than oneself. To some degree, there will always be disagreements regarding societal topics, but with the collaboration of all working to improve the spaces we enter, there is potential for transformative experiences for all. The more people who are educated equates to what Nelson Mandela would refer to as more "...weapons to change the world."

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the United States there are nearly 4,000 colleges and universities enrolling nearly 20 million students (NCES, 2020). The four-year graduation rate for students attending public colleges and universities is 33.3% (NCES, 2020). The six-year graduation rate for this same set of students is 63% (NCES, 2021). At private colleges and universities, the four-year graduation rate is 68%, while the six-year graduation rate for public institutions is 62% (NCES, 2021). There are several factors that are related to student graduation rates and overall success in college, one of which is emotional well-being.

Student involvement may be defined as the quality and quantity of student participation in organizations and activities outside of the classroom (Astin, 1984). Student well-being may be defined as student level of stress, depression, anxiety, and self-esteem (Ramón-Arbués et al., 2020). A moderating variable that may have an impact on student levels of involvement is racialized experiences which are defined as campus climate and student experiences with other race persons (Koo, 2021). Therefore, the three main areas to be assessed are Racialized Experiences, Student Involvement and Student Well-being.

One factor that the literature shows may have a moderating effect on student well-being is their level of involvement in the life of the campus outside of the classroom. (Koo, 2021; Webber et al., 2013). Historically, Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) were spaces created solely for the education of White students. While significant progress

has occurred to make these institutions more inviting, in many instances these institutions continue to be neither supportive of nor welcoming to students of Color (Adams & McBrayer, 2020; Koo, 2021). The civil unrest of the past several years, has served to exacerbate the challenges that Black students continue to face on White College campuses (Bleich et al., 2019; Lee & Hopson, 2019; McManus et al., 2019). Furthermore, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, students of various backgrounds are struggling mentally, emotionally, and academically. Student involvement and connectedness may be the centerpiece that works support student well-being and for the entire student body. It is the bridge that connects students and allows them to explore their interests and be supported by peers.

Racialized Experiences

A critical component of every collegiate experience is the degree to which they feel welcome on the campus. In many college environments, the degree to which students are welcomed is at least partially related to their race (Koo, 2021; Morales, 2014; Park, 2018). Racialized experiences refer to the quality and quantity of experiences students have had with others of different races, both on and off the college campus (Astin, 1984; Lewis et al., 2013; Morales, 2014). These feelings vary from person to person as individuals are impacted in differently by their interactions with others. Since the Supreme Court outlawed segregation in schools in the 1954 Board of Education case many Black students have chosen to attend college at Predominately White institutions, and as such have been members of the minority group at these schools. These schools are populated with students from of a wide range of backgrounds, races, beliefs, values, etc. and have the potential to contribute to either a welcoming or inhospitable campus

climate. Additionally, all students come to college with their own baggage (Strayhorn, 2012). Students bring to the campus, the emotional sequelae of their precollege racialized experiences. While on campus, students will often have interracial interactions with others whether inside the classroom, within campus organizations or in residential housing and each interaction impacts the entirety of their experience.

Campus Climate

Campus climate may be described as the typical behaviors and practices present at a school. It has been described as the way an institution “feels” (Hurtado et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2014). For example, students may describe a school as feeling “warm and inviting” or “cold and alienating.” Climate is interpersonal and may be demonstrated in the attitudes and behaviors of people on the campus. The climate may result in either perceived positive or negative experiences for students (Hurtado, 1998).

Factors which contribute to an institution’s climate include but are not limited to 1) attitudes and demeanor of the students and administration, 2) services that are in place to protect and serve students, 3) efforts to handle racial or gendered issues on campus, 4) intentional and genuine efforts to make all students feel welcome, 5) level of cultural acceptance, and 6) supportive initiatives for students mentally, academically, socially, and professionally (Koo, 2021). Campus climate is a significant aspect of the college experience as it has a direct correlation with student well-being, student involvement, retention, persistence, and overall transitional experiences (Hurtado, 2012). When a more positive climate is present, students are more likely to be involved in campus activities because they feel welcome and comfortable which usually results in more positive

outcomes in terms of their psychological well-being (Koo, 2021). The perception and internalization of campus climates is different for every student.

Campus climate may also be impacted by the type of institution. One way that is commonly used to differentiate between different types of institutions relates to the racial composition of those institutions. Two major categories of institutions in the United States are: 1) Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) and 2) Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The climates of these two types of institutions may be experienced quite differently depending on the race of the student. As of 2021, approximately 70% of Black students attend PWIs (NCES, n.d.). Black students attend PWIs for several reasons including the greater financial assistance that is available at many Predominantly White Institutions, greater educational resources, and closer proximity to the homes of many students. In these situations, the overall campus climate is critical. With such large numbers of students entering these spaces, if the climate of institution is historically rooted in hostility, discrimination and racist principles, the Black students will likely not excel at the same rate as the White students. Koo (2021) stated that Black college students attending PWIs reported perceiving a more negative campus climate than their White peers who reported a more positive climate. According to Morales (2014), Black students face racial and gendered discrimination and microaggressions from non-Black students on their college campuses at much higher rates than others. Additionally, in a survey that explored campus climate at Predominately White Institutions, 87% of White students viewed the campus as respectful or very respectful, while only 47% of Black students felt that way (UC Berkeley Office of Planning & Analysis, 2010).

Campus climate can have a significant impact on one's level of sense of belonging which can indirectly impact their overall sense of well-being. If a student feels comfortable, welcome, and has a sense of purpose, they are more likely to thrive in a particular setting, compared to those who feel outcast and alone. In "College Students' Sense of Belonging: A Key to Educational Success for All Students" Strayhorn (2012), spoke of the importance of "belonging" in any setting, but particularly in a campus setting. The author addressed the significance of student inclusion and involvement on campus. It was stated that transitioning can be difficult, but it is often felt more acutely by persons who are in the minority in an environment. Many times, these students struggle to identify their sense of self and how they fit in. According to Strayhorn (2012) students are often forced to confront ethnic identity issues for the first time as they struggle to fit into an often-alien feeling culture.

Campus climate plays a significant role in racialized experiences as it sets the tone for the type of experiences the students will encounter (Koo, 2021). When Black students enter predominately White spaces, they are never sure how they will be received. While some places have progressed and become more welcoming of other races, that is not the story for everyone (Morrison, 2010). Black students carry an immense amount of weight with them every day simply because of the challenges associated with the color of their skin such as discrimination, microaggressions, stereotype threat, racism, and harassment. College is a transformative experience that encourages students to learn, think critically, and vocalize their thoughts and take the steps to be prepared in the future (Giroux, 2016). Students are likely to have a more positive and enriching experience if they enter a space where they are visibly welcome, able to be their authentic selves, feel supported, and have a

sense of purpose and belonging (Strayhorn, 2012; Tinto, 1993).

Experiences with Racial Diversity

In recent years the United States has experienced a great deal of racial turmoil. From the 2017 killing of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, to the killing of George Floyd in 2020, to the killing of Tyre Nichols in 2023, race has been and continues to be a hot button topic in American society. The fact that instances of shootings and killings of unarmed Black people in the United States continues to this day, is evidence that racism, social injustice, and discrimination remain prevalent in our society. A 2019 study by Bleich et al. found that a significant number of Black people in the United States reported experiencing discrimination in a number of areas including health care, employment, interactions with police, and negative racial interactions. Higher education is not immune to the racial challenges experienced in the larger community.

The experiences that students have on campus are significantly related to their well-being and are likely related to the predominant climate of the institution (Johnson et al., 2014; Koo, 2021). These experiences are significant when students of Color students attend Predominantly White Institutions instead of HBCUs. The students' experiences at these two types of institutions can be very different. HBCUs were created for the purpose of educating Black students and have a history of making them feel at home (Brooks & Allen, 2016). Whether large or small school, these institutions tend to create close-knit environments between the students, faculty, and staff (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). HBCUs understand the challenges that Black people in the United States have endured for centuries and work tirelessly to ensure that every student understands their culture and history on a deeper level that they can connect with (Jackson, 2016). Educators and

administrators tend to view each student as their own child or family member (Brooks & Allen, 2016). There is a visible effort to ensure students feel valued, seen and heard even beyond the gates of the institution (Brooks & Allen, 2016). There are several traditions at each school that connects the students to their peers, alumni, and founders (Jackson, 2016). Historically, HBCUs have been perceived as safe spaces where students share lived experiences with others who have walked the same path before them. Students are able to be their true authentic selves and express their identities through their hair, fashion, and culture (Brooks & Allen, 2016). Some aspects of the college experience are closely associated with HBCUs such as: Black sororities and fraternities, step teams, pageantry, and historic traditions specific to each institution (Brooks & Allen, 2016). Collectively, these experiences create positive cultural climates that make students want to be there, learn, and grow as a person.

In contrast, the experiences of Black students at PWIs often include feeling emotional stress, isolation and disconnected from the campus (Johnson et al., 2014). Many PWIs were founded on racist and elitist practices that prohibited Black people from gaining an education. Though they can now attend, many of their experiences are not positive and are very unlike the experiences of those who attend HBCUs. Adams & McBrayer (2020) stated that some colleges or universities have requested students to wear their hair in a certain way due it being “too distracting” for other students (Adams & McBrayer, 2020). Furthermore, professors have used racial undertones and microaggressions when pronouncing the names of non-White students and provided nicknames because their given name was too difficult to pronounce (Ghouse, 2022;

Najjar, 2022). Though these actions may be perceived as minor, they negatively impact the experiences of students and do not help them to feel welcome.

More recently, when Donald Trump was elected to be President of the United States, Black and other marginalized students stated that they lived in fear of possibly being harassed, mistreated, or brutalized after witnessing it happen to others within their community. Black men and women are constantly abused, invalidated, and undervalued at an alarming rate that brings uneasiness when doing simple tasks such as driving, jogging, shopping, etc. (Adams & McBryer, 2020). During Trumps' presidency there was a significant increase in brutality and violence against Black and Brown bodies of this generation and leaders in power allow for it to continue by not taking proper steps to address the many issues that occur (McManus et al., 2019). The nation continues to be filled with hatred. For several years, it was common for Black students to turn on the television and see someone who looked like them was being shot by police (McManus et al., 2019). Their experiences also include being followed in stores, fearful of going outside alone, or even just taking a leisurely stroll. At a time where Black people are being arrested for walking while Black, studying while Black, sleeping while Black along with several other everyday activities, these predominately White spaces can pose as a threat (Adams & McBrayer, 2020). These experiences play a large role in creating the lack of belonging felt by many Black students who are attending predominantly White institutions of higher education.

Microaggressions were founded on the base of discrimination and oppression. They are inclusive of conscious or unconscious expressions of verbal, behavioral, and environmental acts (Sue, 2010). Microaggressions are frequently experienced by Black

students attending school at predominantly White institutions (Koo, 2021; Ong et al., 2009; Sue, 2010). These negative experiences often create challenges because students find themselves picking and choosing their battles due to the mental strain associated with choosing which issue to address (Lewis et al., 2013). Linnabery et al., (2014) noted that these experiences are held by both Black men and women as well. These factors continue to have effects on the psychological and physical health of these students and can also impact their academic performance and retention rates.

Race is a factor that continues to have a major impact on the educational experiences of students. However, it often creates a particular challenge for Black students. The history of educational attainment for Black students in the United States is fraught with challenges, unrest, inequity, and disparity. From the late 1800's when HBCU's were created for the education of Black students, to the mid 1900's when the first colleges were desegregated education has always created particular challenges for Black students. College campuses offer unique cultural experiences for many students. These environments are filled with students from with various backgrounds, ethnicities, beliefs, values, and traditions. For example, college could be the first-time students interact with others who don't look like them or share the same beliefs or values (Torres, 2009). There are some students who may experience a cultural shock and struggle to adjust when it comes to sharing a living space with someone of another race, political background, or religion for the first time (Torres, 2009). In recent years, many colleges have been more intentional in bringing awareness to cultural and religious holidays to ensure students of all backgrounds well welcome and seen (Fouad et al., 2016; NCES, 2021). Additionally, with the many instances of civil and political unrest, brutality of

marginalized communities, financial insecurities and international warfare, colleges have become more aware of the purpose it serves to students. In an effort to show support and solidarity, many institutions have extended additional resources and assistance to ensure they feel supported (Fouad et al, 2016; NCES, 2021). These services are imperative to ensure that students have the most positive experiences while in college.

Essentially, college campuses are melting pots of many different types of students. If the environments are welcoming, they have the potential to expose and educate students on cultures unlike their own. Unfortunately, research has shown that students of Color face more challenges during their collegiate experience when compared to others (Johnson et al., 2014, Linnabery et al., 2014; Morales, 2014). Ultimately, Black students continue to experience racism and discrimination.

When Black students are directly or indirectly impacted by racism, if internalized, they may experience lower levels of self-esteem (Garriott & Tyler, 2008). Additionally, the author stated that these actions may have a deleterious effect on other areas of their college experience, such as: self-confidence, self-efficacy, academic performance, and level of involvement. There has been a long-documented relationship between the effects of racism and self-esteem within marginalized communities, especially among students (Tawa et al., 2012). Students may also experience issues regarding their emotional and mental well-being which in turn may cause a ripple-effect in the many aspects of their lives which ultimately leads them to self-isolation (Strayhorn, 2012).

The impact of engagement also differs by race . Unlike the experiences of Black students, Koo (2016) noticed that regardless of whether White students are engaged or not, they still feel connected and comfortable in the campus climate. These findings are

expected as White students tend to find solace simply in the comfort of their privilege and do not have to extend into other groups or organizations to have a sense of belonging (Koo, 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Unfortunately, Black students do not have the same luxury and require more to produce positive experiences on campus. When Black students encounter poor campus climates and have negative experiences, these unfortunate situations tend to have effects on their psychological and physical health (Johnson et al., 2014).

When Black students are not comfortable congregating with or joining predominantly White organizations, they will often engage with each other in organizations that cater specifically to them. In “Race on campus: Debunking myths with data,” Park (2018) spoke about “*self-segregation*” meaning that people of certain identities choose to cluster themselves together and interact primarily with others in the same community. In doing so, students can breathe and unpack the stressors of their lives-together in a safe and comfortable environment. Park addressed the fact that many Black students find their sense of belonging in clubs where they are not the “token.” The idea of tokenism addresses the process of individuals suffering socially and psychologically due to being within a population with very few students of Color (Billings, 2021). At colleges and universities, tokenism applies to minority students that are few in number and presents negative outcomes in various ways. These students often feel isolated, targeted, and experience an immense pressure to perform at higher rates academically (Park, 2018). Additionally, the author addressed the insecurities and stereotype threat that occurs each time students of Color step foot into classrooms that are aligned in a field where people who look like them are few. Society has deemed people

of Color as unintelligent and not worthy of filling the same spaces as White people. These communities of students must work twice as hard to be recognized, have an immense pressure to perform well on assignments and articulate their remarks in a clear and concise manner. These challenges are seen to some capacity and even more at prestigious universities because White students have historically been perceived as more elite or competitive (Billings, 2021). If students of Color internalize these ideas, they also have higher chances of suffering from mental illnesses as the constant pressure to serve as a positive representation for themselves and other underrepresented students takes a toll on the mind and body (Billings, 2021).

In addition to students who are involved in athletics, music, government or other types of activities, many Black students have found solace through membership in the Divine Nine, Black fraternities and sororities that were established to serve, protect, and provide students with the tools, resources and community that could not be found in White spaces (Williams, 2021). Historically, many White sororities and fraternities have either intentionally or unintentionally demonstrated racist practices which have had the effect of contributing to a divide between students on campus (Williams, 2021). On PWI campuses, membership in fraternities and sororities serve as a primary means of social connectedness for Black students (Williams, 2021). Even those who have had negative racial experiences may find support within these organizations (Jackson, 2016; Williams, 2021).

In recent years, these organizations have lifted many of their restrictions and accepted students of Color as members. While these actions may seem like growth, many of their efforts appear to be performative measures. From the outside, it appears that these

organizations have taken steps towards genuine inclusion while all they have done is displayed tokenism of their few members of Color (Gillon et al., 2019; Park, 2018). Tokenism may be defined as an action in which racially marginalized groups are presented as if they are welcomed and accepted by the dominant group. However, this action is not genuine but is carried out solely for the purpose of the dominant group wishing to give the appearance of inclusivity. For example, a predominately White organization may accept one or two students of Color to give the appearance that they are an inclusive organization, when in reality they harbor negative thoughts and feelings about members of that particular group. The barriers that have been in place to prohibit students of Color to excel at the same rate as White students have played a major role in causing students of Color to stick together more closely.

To evolve and grow as a society, humans must allow themselves to be immersed within cultures beyond their own. Park (2018) noted the importance of interracial interaction as being beneficial for all students because it allows people to rid themselves of misperceptions of others that may have been deeply rooted within them. Interacting with other race persons on campus allows students to learn, view the world and others through different perspectives and gain a new understanding of the individuals and communities around them. In doing so, these efforts allow them to challenge their thinking and broaden their knowledge.

Race and racialized experiences, whether positive or neg contribute to the degree with which students become involved in the life of the campus outside of the classroom (Morrison, 2010). While some institutions are considered “melting pots” filled with a wide range of cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, traditions, and beliefs, that is not

the case for all. Predominately White Institutions often tend to lack racial diversity which creates difficulties for students of Color when navigating in these spaces (Morrison, 2010). Students who have a positive sense of self despite any negative racial experiences they may have encountered may in the best position to adjust and flourish on Predominantly White college campuses. It is crucial for students to feel valued, seen and a sense of belonging to have the best experience.

Level of Student Involvement

During new and transformative events such as attending college for the first time, the student experience is more positive when students are involved within their campus community. Astin (1984) and Tinto (1993) stressed the importance of student extra-curricular involvement during the college years of students if they are to have the most fulfilling experiences that are in many cases closely associated with retention and persistence to graduation. Research has consistently shown that students who are involved in the life of the institution outside of the classroom have more positive outcomes, both academically and non-academically, than students who are not so involved (Astin, 1984; Center for the Study of Student Life, 2020; Webber, 2013). Additionally, many students have further contributing factors that create further challenges to the college. These factors include financial challenges, employment obligations, familial responsibilities, and health concerns. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the lives of millions of students around the world. As students became increasingly more displaced, many reported struggles with mental illnesses and academic performance (Dennon, 2021). All of these situations created additional roadblocks to students continued involvement.

Student involvement refers to the specific amount of time, energy, and dedication a student spends participating in campus activities within the classroom and participating in extracurricular activities such as social events, sports, clubs and organizations outside of the classroom (Astin, 1984). All students are individuals. While some may be significantly involved in organizations, hold leadership positions, or be involved with sports, others may be considerably less engaged and participate only in the academic portion of campus life. It has been shown that in general, students who are involved in extra-curricular activities tend to have more positive collegiate experiences overall, feel more connected to their institution and peers, have strong psychological well-being, and perform better academically (Strayhorn, 2012). Similarly, research by Hill and Winston (2010) suggested that undergraduate students who are involved in campus life outside of the classroom, such as in programs, organizations, athletics, extracurricular activities, and other types of involvement tend to have better outcomes. Conversely, students with lower levels of involvement tend to have poorer senses of wellbeing and higher attrition rates.

College students rely heavily on human interaction and social networks to thrive and grow, feel a sense of happiness, belonging, and overall sense of positive well-being (Son et al., 2020). Though all students are different and require different levels of interaction for success, social involvement is beneficial for the majority of people. Astin (1984) defined student involvement as “the amount’ of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience”(p. 518). According to the author, involvement is not isolated to specifically academic activities, but also refers to the amount of time and energy spent engaging with peers, faculty, and attending events on campus. Regardless of the type of involvement on campus, whether social or

academic, all activities play a vital role in the college experience. Types of student involvement include but are not limited to: Student government, fraternities and sororities, choir, band, cultural clubs, mentoring organizations, campus outreach, pageantry, political, sports, and other organizations specific to various interests or hobbies.

Outside of the classroom, many students are involved in clubs and organizations that provide them with networks of likeminded people. To flourish and transition in unfamiliar spaces, students often seek to find communities that cater to their interests and that are aligned with their beliefs. In “Leaving college: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition,” Tinto (1993) focused on the student’s social life, number of friends, relationships with faculty, staff, and administrators, and overall enjoyment of the college experience. This study examined the experiences of college students by exploring the factors that contributed to positive or negative experiences during their time on campus. Results showed that involvement in organizations and on campus programs fostered a deep sense of purpose and belonging which is positively related to student success (Tinto, 1993).

Students who are involved in extra-curricular activities on college campus also acquire transferable skills that are applicable in other areas of their lives beyond graduation (Bennett, 2002). Being involved in clubs and organizations allows students to be amongst others who share various cultures, traditions, worldviews, and interests. They are surrounded with people who have different levels knowledge and connections that could be beneficial when applying for internships, jobs, or different opportunities of interest.

Living Learning Communities

In recent years, several institutions have expanded on campus initiatives which provide opportunities for students to engage with peers for learning opportunities beyond the classroom. These spaces are referred to as Living-Learning Communities or Special Interest Housing (Webber et al, 2013). Depending on the design of the institution, students will either choose to be a part of a specific residence based upon a particular interest or placed by the college housing committee based on some other criteria (Webber et al., 2013) . These communities are comprised of areas that include, but are not limited to entrepreneurship, community service, religion, technology, social justice, first-generation students, and athletics (Inkelas et al., 2003). While students live in these residences, they will meet with professors and administrators who will guide them through lectures, projects, social involvement activities, assist in tutoring and advising (Inkelas et al., 2003). This residential style allows students to be involved with their peers in intimate settings while learning topics that are specifically targeted for their interests, participate in service projects, and have opportunities to bond and form deep relationships outside of the classroom (Inkelas et al., 2003; Webber, 2013).

These communities were created to allow students to be immersed within the college experience while creating community with people who have similar backgrounds and interests. Additionally, Living-Learning communities create well-rounded, culturally engaging spaces that raise awareness in areas that are often unaddressed and allows students to use their voices and be challenged in a safe environment (Webber et al, 2013). When accepted by peers, these students often excel socially and academically as a sense of belonging also often provides a sense of security. Student participation in these

communities often leads to positive academic performance and enhanced critical thinking skills (Bennett, 2002; Kuh, 2004; Webber et al, 2013). These experiences are beneficial because they encourage students to reflect, listen to alternative perspectives and narratives, challenge their beliefs and prepare them for the world beyond college.

Ultimately, whether in a Living Learning Community or in traditional housing, students who live on campus have more positive outcomes in grade performance and retention rates compared to students who live off campus (Huhn, 2006; Webber et al, 2013). Unfortunately, students who live off campus are often placed at a disadvantage because they do not have the same level of access to events on campus (Huhn, 2006). Students who live on campus have the advantage of being within close proximity of campus events, service activating, bonding with other students and making more connections simply because they are constantly within a campus setting (Huhn, 2006; Schudde, 2011).

Student Involvement and Career Readiness

Uninvolved students may be defined as those who strictly go to class, attend required campus events or townhalls, and return to their residencies with occasional attendance at sporting matches or campus events (Center for the Study of Student Life, 2020). This population is not personally involved in clubs, leadership positions or social settings outside of the classroom. Moderately Involved students are those who are minimally involved with just a few organizations. They are typically only involved in one or two activities inclusive of: choir, sporting teams, fraternity/ sorority, student government, community service-based organizations and other student interest clubs (Center for the Study of Student Life, 2020). Highly involved students dedicate a

significant amount of time to their extracurricular involvement and acquire many service hours that would make them a competitive candidate for organizations that value community involvement (Center for the Study of Student Life, 2020). These students also tend to be scholars in honor societies, leadership positions and many other organizations simultaneously (Center for the Study of Student Life, 2020).

Employers report that students who are involved on campus tend to be better career prepared when compared to those who are not (Fouad, 2016). Moderately involved or highly involved students present as more competitive candidates for internship and fellowship opportunities because in many cases they not only have strong academic portfolios, but present as well-rounded, experienced and involved student (Silva et al., 2016). These individuals tend to be multifaceted and knowledgeable about various areas and have useful skills and competencies in their areas of interest. Furthermore, students who were highly involved had sets of skills and characteristic traits that made them stand out more than those who were minimally involved or completely uninvolved. Highly involved students are 18% more career ready than uninvolved students and moderately involved students are 11% more career ready (Center for the Study of Student Life, 2020).

Involvement is a critical component to the student experience. It ensures that students are receiving a well-rounded experience that will be beneficial for them personally and professionally (Fouad, 2016). These are transformative years that encourage students to understand the importance of being immersed within all areas of the college experience. During these years students learn from each other, discover new

parts of themselves and set the foundation to prepare them for the next years of their lives.

Colleges and universities should ensure that all students feel that they belong and have a group of people that supports and understands them. Black students in particular reported feeling a stronger sense of belonging when they believed that they were welcome on their campuses (Koo, 2021). Tinto (1993) suggested that students who simply go to class and are not engaged in the life of the college do not feel connected with the institution and are at an increased risk for attrition. Moreover, feelings of exclusion have a significant impact on student learning. To be successful, students must have a sense of belongingness and acceptance at their school (Guiffrida, 2006). Tinto (1993) stated that it is imperative for students to be integrated with their environments in order to excel throughout these transitional years of their lives. These efforts will increase retention, persistence and graduation rates while also fostering an institutional climate of support and inclusion which is important for student success. When students participate in such activities, they form relationships that encourage them to progress in their journey of education. Overall, social support is an integral part of the student experience (Guiffrida, 2006).

Impact of the COVID-19 Era on Student Involvement

In March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, millions of students around the world were forced to learn and engage in social activities remotely due to strict stipulations with the virus. Due to this circumstance, student involvement became more challenging, and forced many students to struggle with the drastic change. Until recently, the severity of the pandemic forced everyone to conduct all business virtually,

and only leave the house for necessities or emergencies. In April 2021, 90% of college students reported that since the pandemic occurred, they have struggled with their mental health inclusive of anxiety and depression (Dennon, 2021). The peak of the pandemic was filled with fear, uncertainty, rage, and loneliness. People of all ages struggled financially as more than 114 million people lost their jobs and struggled to locate stable incomes to support themselves and their families (Dennon, 2021). This time was debilitating as the nation was at its lowest. While worldwide there have been over 6.3 million deaths and over a million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States, for many students it feels as like a never-ending cycle of chaos (Donovan, 2022). While many are filled with hopelessness, the number of students struggling with sleep and competition of their assignments reached 40% (Dennon, 2021).

With limited opportunities to engage with peers in person for class, clubs, athletic and social events, and the daily pleasures of college life, 97% of students stated that the pandemic negatively impacted their experiences outside of the classroom (Dennon, 2021). Studies have shown that students who are involved with extracurricular activities tend to have more positive outcomes, and present high levels of retention and persistence to graduation. While many courses transitioned to online learning, students have had to converse with their peers through a screen for class and for any clubs or any organizations they may have been involved with. Under these restrictions, 42% of students reported having difficulty meeting peers and forming friendships (Dennon, 2021).

Given the unprecedented circumstances of this time, many of the adjustments and consequences of constant isolation began to take a toll of students resulting in a decline in

persistence and retention rates at several colleges and universities. There was a 2.8% enrollment decline in 4-year institutions and a 1.5% decline in retention (Howell et al., 2021). This decline is due to a plethora of challenges such as: 1) parents not being in a position financially to support their child's academic expenses, 2) a gap in financial literacy to understand the financial aid process, 3) mental or physical health issues, 4) a lack of motivation to work remotely (Howell, et al., 2021). It is imperative for these students to remain supported as studies have shown that only 13% of college students who drop out return within five years (Howell et al., 2021).

Communicating through a screen can be time-consuming and tedious and often leaves students wanting to step away and decompress after hours of online activities which make it difficult potential bonds to be formed. During the peak of COVID-19, many students were living in fear of having the virus and the impact it would have on their loved ones. With such a high number of reported COVID cases and deaths, being present in class virtually was challenging for many. In order to keep students' well-being at the center, it is imperative to be empathic and supportive.

Student Well-Being

In order for students to be successful in college, they need to be strong both academically and emotionally. Students who are distressed will find it difficult to perform well academically (Strayhorn, 2012). The current study will examine student levels of well-being as demonstrated by assessment of depression, stress, anxiety, and self-esteem. Black students at PWIs have been shown to experience more challenges and face more barriers in college than White students in that same setting. Any examination

of student well-being should also include assessment of racialized experiences and student level of involvement.

Educational research suggests that students with a poor sense of wellbeing may find it difficult to succeed academically and socially (Astin, 1984; Strayhorn 2012; Tinto, 1993). There are number of factors that may impact a student's level of wellbeing including campus climate, experiences while on campus, sense of belonging and a host of psychological and environmental stressors such as alienation, self-esteem, depression and psychological stress (Koo, 2021). Individuals who are attending college for the first time often struggle with the stress that accompanies this newfound independence. In addition to the stress about academic performance that many students experience, some potential additional stressors may include: being the first in their families to go to college, economic difficulties, work related stressors, transportation issues, mental/emotional stressors. (Hill & Winston 2010). All of these factors may have a deleterious impact on the student and their adjustment to a new environment.

Additional stressors may include homesickness, academic stressors, and the imposter phenomenon (Strayhorn, 2012). Furthermore, having insufficient funds to pay college tuition can play a major role in the effect of whether students will persist and graduate from college as the cost of college attendance has increased at three times the rate of inflation over the last four decades (Hill & Winston, 2010). This financial stress has the potential to result in mental and emotional stress for students from financially challenged families.

In order for a student to maximize their college experience, it is imperative that they maintain a full and rich life both inside and outside of the classroom. In addition to

receiving an academic degree, college also presents an opportunity for students to develop life and survival skills. During this time, they will expand their interpersonal and networking relationships, discover their identities and interests in the world outside of academia, and prepare for becoming contributing members of society (Hill & Winston, 2010). When students participate in extra-curricular activities, they form relationships which help foster their growth and encourages them to progress in their journey of education. They learn that they are not alone and understand that they have a support system of like-minded individuals who share similar interests with them (Hill & Winston, 2010).

Students come to college with their own unique challenges and struggles from various life circumstances. It is often difficult for them to do their best work when they are not engaged; and when they are experiencing depression, anxiety, separation anxiety, relationship issues, phase of life issues, financial issues, and various other endogenous and exogenous life stressors. Some specific factors that have shown to have an impact on student well-being include: campus climate, campus experiences, all of which will have an effect of student's level of campus involvement.

Significant components that make up well-being include depression, stress, anxiety, and self-esteem. These factors contribute to the mental health and progression of students in college as they develop socially and academically.

Depression

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) defines depression as a mental illness that has a negative impact of the way people tend to feel about themselves (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This disorder commonly worsens one's

thoughts and emotions creating an internal world of fear and feelings of worthlessness. Though different for everyone, the symptoms range from, but are not limited to feeling deep sadness, a change in sleep and energy, loss of appetite, feelings of guilt and suicide, which is unfortunately the third leading cause of death for college students today (Mayo Health Clinic, 2021). In 2021, 44% of college students reported feeling depressed.

Battling depression in college can be exceptionally difficult as students are faced with challenging tasks at a young age. While some have familial support and have been granted opportunities to prepare mentally, physically, emotionally and academically, that is not the story for all (Verguwe et al., 2015). During the time students transition to college for the first time they are tasked with moving away from home to enter a new environment for the next few years (Verguwe et al., 2015). They must attend classes, engage with their peers, build connections, join organizations, discover their interests, and find the areas they are most passionate about. These are transformative years for students and requires support to keep them thriving during difficult moments.

Stress

Every day, students are battling stressors that have effects on their mental, emotional and psychological health (Johnson et al., 2014). The status of their mental health can impact their academic and professional performance if not properly treated. Along these lines, some may be working to support themselves, have health issues and struggles that nobody even knows about. Today, there is an increased amount of attention on the media as political recklessness, racial tensions, civil unrest and global health issues arise. Environmental stressors, such as racism and microaggressions, plague many

institutions of higher learning and may affect the quality of students' work (Morales, 2014; Morrison, 2010).

Furthermore, college students are tasked with curating strong time management skills, studying material, performing well academically, engaging inside and outside of class, adjusting sleep schedules, serving in clubs and organizations, and facing any unforeseen challenges that appear along the way. The American Institute of Stress stated that to date, college students fail to receive the suggested amount of sleep needed to perform optimally (American Institute of Stress, 2019). These issues occur for many reasons as numerous students struggle to balance their academic workloads with their social life, homesickness, financial hardships, health concerns, etc. First year students in particular struggle the most because they have not yet developed an effective schedule to support their new lifestyles.

In many instances, students may be forced to confront ethnic identity issues for the first time as they struggle to fit into an often-alien feeling culture (Strayhorn, 2012). Minority students also have a number of real-world issues that are specific to their culture such as where to get their hair cut/styled, where to attend church, being the only, or one a few minority persons in each class, forming friendships and socialization outside of the classroom, and feeling that they must be the representative for all persons of their racial group in the classroom. Attending a Predominately White Institution can be stressful for persons who are members of minority groups while White students are less likely to experience these same stressors.

Anxiety

Anxiety can be described as one of the most fearful and uneasy feelings which include but are not limited to, heart palpitations, restlessness, fatigue, excessive worry of impending doom, irritability, difficulty sleeping and nausea (Mayo Health Clinic, n.d.). While some are born with chemical imbalances resulting in mental illness, others are onset from a triggering event, PTSD, a gradual amount of stress buildup usually regarding family, work, and finances (DeMartini et al., 2019). This illness can be diagnosed or undiagnosed; however, can become debilitating for some if not met with therapy, proper management, or strategies for coping (DeMartini et al., 2019). People who experience anxiety often feel a sense of constant worry at times which at times results in depression.

College students are under an immense amount of pressure with classwork, extracurricular activities, making friendships, and adjusting to this new environment. Some may be coming from larger or smaller towns and feeling uncomfortable with their new college setting creating social anxiety (Topham & Russel, 2012). If students do not take the necessary steps to maintain their mental health, they are at risk of facing more challenges that can impact their academic performance and relationships on campus. Colleges and universities also are equipped with services to assist students who may need professional help. The displacement of students due to the COVID-19 pandemic has created anxiety for many due to being forced into isolation and primarily communicating through a screen (Howell, et al., 2021). Many students reported a decline in academic performance, mental health and overall well-being (Howell, et al., 2021).

Self Esteem

Self-esteem can be defined in many forms, but is essentially a form of acceptance of oneself, individual appreciation, worthiness, and belief one's abilities (Ummet, 2015). Self-esteem is the outcome of how someone perceives themselves and compared with how they wish to be seen. If someone is pleased with whom they are and how they appear, exhibit self-respect, are satisfied with their abilities and feel comfortable in a space, they are likely to exhibit high self-esteem. In contrast, if someone is not pleased with their appearance, abilities, harbor feelings of incompetence and worthlessness, they are more likely to exhibit lower levels of self-esteem (Ummet, 2015). Self-esteem is an important factor in determining the adjustment of students to new environments.

During a student's formative years which are described as the period of late adolescence into early adulthood, is when students are most impressionable, vulnerable, and willing to alter themselves to fit in. During these times, students may begin to question themselves or their worth (Ummet, 2015). Their level of esteem is dependent on how comfortable they feel in these environments as they continue to develop their sense of self (Ummet, 2015). As they matriculate different spaces with different people, they will likely form relationships that will aide them in being more open and comfortable. Aiming to navigate self-autonomy and control of one's life a task that requires healthy developmental practices and a strong-willed mindset (Ummet, 2015). Students come from a wide range of backgrounds and while some may have been supported to use their voice, complimented on their appearance, reminded of their value and power, that is not the case for all.

Race Related Incidents

In recent years, there have been an increasing number of instances of brutality and killings of Black men and women of various ages by White policemen and citizens.

Though there are hundreds of examples, a few are as listed in Table 2.1. All the examples listed below resulted in the death of the named individuals. Furthermore, all victims were killed by police officers except for Trayvon Martin and Ahmaud Arbery who were killed by a neighborhood citizen.

Table 2.1

Examples of Brutality and Killings of Black Men and Women in the Past Ten Years

Name	Age	Year	Location	Occurrence
Trayvon Martin	17	2012	Sanford, Florida	Walking home
Sandra Bland	28	2015	Waller County, TX	Traffic stop
Philando Castile	32	2016	Falcon Heights, MN	Traffic stop
Elijah McClain	23	2019	Aurora, CO	Walking home
Casey Goodson	23	2020	Columbus, OH	Walking home
Breonna Taylor	26	2020	Louisville, KY	Police home raid
Ahmaud Arbery	25	2020	Satilla Shores, GA	Jogging in neighborhood
Ma'Khia Bryant	16	2021	Columbus, OH	Youth altercation
Daunte Wright	20	2021	Brooklyn Center, MN	Traffic stop
Rayshard Brooks	27	2021	Atlanta, GA	Sitting in parking lot
Dante Kittrell	51	2022	South Bend, IN	Mental illness encounter
Chris Kelley	38	2022	Topeka, KS	Mental illness encounter
Amir Locke	22	2022	Minneapolis, MN	Police home raid

These disgraceful and sickening acts of pain and injustice are often broadcasted in the media and tend to spark protests and civil unrest in several settings around the world (Givens, 2016). Going to convenience stores and restaurants, driving around cities, walking home, and jogging in neighborhoods are common events that should never result the end of someone's life. Unfortunately for many students of Color, these simple activities can strike fear within a matter of seconds.

Students sometimes believe that they also are only capable of being perceived negatively and will often struggle to counter the narratives that have been told for years. The weight that comes along with seeing people who look like you killed by the hands of those whose duty is to protect and serve is an unshakable experience that is felt by members of the Black community every day. The feeling of not being safe, constantly seen as a threat and being seen as inferior to other students takes a tremendous toll on the mental state and well-being of students (Givens, 2016).

White students are constantly surrounded by people who look like them, can relate to their experiences, and understand the privileges they hold that other communities cannot attest to (DiAngelo, 2018). There is a simplicity in Whiteness that students of Color do not have the luxury of having (DiAngelo, 2018). Whiteness, in many situations, comes with power and freedom to enjoy simple activities that other may face consequences for (DiAngelo, 2018). This perception has been demonstrated in numerous settings even beyond college campuses.

Historically, Predominately White Institutions have a reputation of deep racial tensions which have fostered a poor sense of belonging and well-being for generations of Black students (Morrison 2010; Strayhorn, 2012). Poor climates have a psychological

impact that adds stress and further complicates an already difficult experience. In “Examining the Effects of Stress and Campus Climate on the Persistence of Students of Color and White Students: An application of Bean and Eaton’s Psychological Model of Retention” by Johnson et al. (2014) discussed the magnitude of racial climates and the tremendous effect on Black student college experiences. The experiences of Black students at White institutions are often negative if there is not a large presence of other people with shared identities or opportunities to be engaged on campus (Johnson et al., 2014). These experiences are not to be generalized over an entire population of students, as everyone’s experience is different. Students at institutions with unhealthy climates often have increased psychological stress that contributes to an experience that is often already fraught with challenges. Oftentimes on Predominately White campuses that have a reputation of deep racial tensions, there are clear messages sent that make a statement and cause negative behavior towards one or more racial groups (Johnson et al., 2014). Continuous actions of discrimination and hatred can lower student persistence and retention as many of the students targeted search for an escape at other institutions.

The barriers that have been in place to prohibit students of Color to excel at the same rate as White students has played a major role in the explanation of students of Color continuing to stick together (Park, 2018). Black students on predominately White college campuses would be more inclined to congregate with other races if they felt genuinely welcome and were seen as a reflection of the student body population and professors (Park, 2018).

College experiences for Black and White students are incredibly different and there is not a “one size fits all” approach to meet the needs for all students. In “Two

Separate Worlds: Students of Color at a Predominately White University,” Morrison (2010) conducted a study that examined 21 students of Color and their overall experience at their institution. For years, education has been the most significant vehicle for students to make a difference in their lives for themselves and also the families and communities who depend on them (Morrison, 2010). Many of the students within the study felt as though they were constantly being stereotyped and expected to fit into a box that society has created for them. They discussed the daily challenges that they faced that other students didn’t. A number of the barriers that these students are met with are not recognized as challenges and go unseen by privileged identities because they are not directly impacted. To exist on a campus and feel as though it is not a space for you is taxing on the mind which tends to create other issues regarding a student’s well-being, self-esteem and overall sense of belonging.

Universities will see growth and positive outcomes from students if the proper steps are taken to meet their needs and ensuring that the campus climate is safe and welcoming for all (Koo, 2021). Tinto’s (1993) work suggests that when students participate in extra-curricular activities, they form relationships which help foster their growth and encourages them to progress in their journey of education.

Many Black students in predominately White areas have experienced *Imposter Syndrome* which is described as a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their abilities/ accomplishments to perform well, accompanied by a persistent fear of being exposed as a “fraud” (Vergauwe et al., 2015). Unfortunately, it is common for these groups of students to feel as though their voice is silenced and has nowhere to turn to. Vergauwe et al. (2015) suggested that the stress experienced in these environments is

often accompanied by feelings of worthlessness, depression and problems in concentration. Feelings of alienation and social isolation have proven to be major sources of stress for Black students at Predominantly White universities. With negative experiences on campus due to personal reasons or the campus climate, has an impact on the amount of involvement a student will participate in. Furthermore, Predominantly White University campuses are perceived as oppressive, which reflects the additional stress some students experience.

Summary

There is a parallel between student involvement and student well-being that ultimately shapes the experiences of college students. Though every student is different, research consistently shows that students who are involved in on campus activities are more likely to have positive outcomes regarding their emotional well-being, self-esteem, sense of belonging, and academic performance during their collegiate years. Many institutions face a number of idiosyncratic issues surrounding the college experience of Black students, particularly in terms of their sense of belonging. To make a step in the right direction towards improving Black student sense of belonging at Predominately White Institutions, there should be more intentional promotion of multicultural competencies. This recommendation is focused on the idea of creating more culturally aware spaces in communities that are not accustomed to it diversity. This competency is a pathway that brings awareness and understanding to any individual or community that has falsified any beliefs regarding a certain group of people. It is essential that all student affairs professionals work to provide a comfortable and inviting environments for all students, enhance their learning, bolster their sense of purpose, and provide them with an

immeasurable amount of support. Ultimately these efforts will assist in creating a more improved, culturally aware, environment.

Students come to college with their own challenges and struggles from various life circumstances. They carry their own unique set of baggage and issues. It is very difficult for students to do their best work when they are not engaged; and when they are experiencing depression, anxiety, separation anxiety, relationship issues, phase of life issues, financial issues, and various other endogenous and exogenous life stressors. Targeted training/development will be provided to faculty and staff so that they can recognize student issues and know when to engage students and when to refer them to the appropriate support resources. Further examination is warranted that examines the perceived sense of belonging of African American students on White college campuses.

As such, Black students need an experience that will allow them to learn, understand, grow, and find their voices to form their own perceptions of their newly discovered areas. Additionally, they should be given an opportunity to engage in dialogue and think critically about the perspectives of persons whose opinions and beliefs differ from their own and topics which they are not too familiar with. In other words, the university should foster an environment that will provide all students with an opportunity to learn and grow. These adjustments will be beneficial to Black Students, White Students, and the university as a whole.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Research Design

This study explored the relationship between student involvement and student well-being in Black and White Students at a Predominately White Institution. Historically, Black and White students have had drastically different experiences in educational settings. Research has shown that Black students on White College campuses face significantly more challenges to their emotional well-being than do White Students in that same environment (Koo, 2021; Ramón- Arbués et al., 2020). Recently, this problem has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as increasing numbers of students struggled academically and experienced increased levels of anxiety and depression (Dennon, 2021). Therefore, this dissertation examined the relationship between the level of extra-curricular involvement of Black and White students on a Predominantly White college campus and their emotional well-being. In doing so, it also controlled for the effects of racially related positive or negative experiences Black students have had.

The current study used a quantitative, cross-sectional approach. Data collection involved the collection of survey data which will best allow for the examination of relationships between variables and the testing of differences between groups for significance. Quantitative research involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of numerical data (Graziano & Raulin, 1993). This approach is useful when the researcher is trying to test for cause-and-effect relationships, identify the strength of non-causative

relationships, and when looking for patterns in groups of data sets (Graziano & Raulin, 1993). In most cases the researcher will conduct analyses on a sample of a population with the intent of generalizing the results of the study to a larger population.

The current study is both correlational and cross sectional. This study did not involve a “treatment” of any kind and is within the category of “correlational research.” Correlational research is used when the researcher is assessing the strength of the relationship between two or more variables (Graziano & Raulin, 1993). It is important to note that correlation, even when strong, does not equal causation. The reason that causation cannot be attributed in correlational studies is because of the possible effects of a possibly unknown third variable, or because of unknown directionality between the variables (Graziano & Raulin, 1993). Because data were collected from participants at a single point in time, the design is cross sectional. Cross sectional research is the process of collecting and analyzing data collected at a given point in time across a sample or samples. I collected data for each participant in the study in a single survey. Advantages of cross-sectional research are that it: 1) can be used to prove or disprove assumptions, 2) allows for multiple variables to be assessed at a given point in time, 3) fairly inexpensive in many cases. Disadvantages of cross-sectional research are that it: 1) Does not determine causality, 2) because the study is a snapshot in time, the researcher cannot guarantee that results are representative. Ultimately, even with the disadvantages that are listed, a cross-sectional approach fit the desired research needs.

Setting

All data was collected from undergraduate students on the campus of University X, a Predominantly White public institution located in a midwestern state. In 2021

University X the student enrollment population for undergraduate students was over 13,000 (University X, n.d). Of those students, roughly 70% were White, and 8% were Black (University X, n.d.). This type of setting was chosen because 1) the study could be completely anonymously and as such is able to protect the identities of study participants, institutions, and or organizations, 2) analysis of results allows for clear relationships between variables to be presented and tested for significance, 3) larger sample sizes can be used to gather information making it more likely to have valid results, 4) larger sample sizes can be used to gather information allowing for greater generalizability of results. University X was chosen because it was necessary to collect data from a college campus that included both Black and White students.

University X is in a large predominately White, affluent, and suburban county that is roughly 80% White and 15% Black. University X is home to approximately 16,100 students within the undergraduate and graduate schools. As a large, public, Research 2 (R2) institution, students of different backgrounds choose to attend University X for a variety of reasons. However, the experiences of Black students attending a PWI in a White suburban area are often described as isolating, intimidating and worth exploring on a level that will help validate their feelings and provide insight into the climates of these spaces (Campbell et al., 2019; Mwangi et al., 2018).

Participants

Participants in this study identified as Black/African American or White/Caucasian. Though it is understood that issues regarding the student experience and well-being impact more than just these two racial groups, current study will focus solely on these two groups. This study examined differences between Black and White

students on a number of variables including: level of involvement, and level of emotional well-being. For African American students, there will also be an examination of the effect of controlling for the effect of racialized experience on the level of involvement.

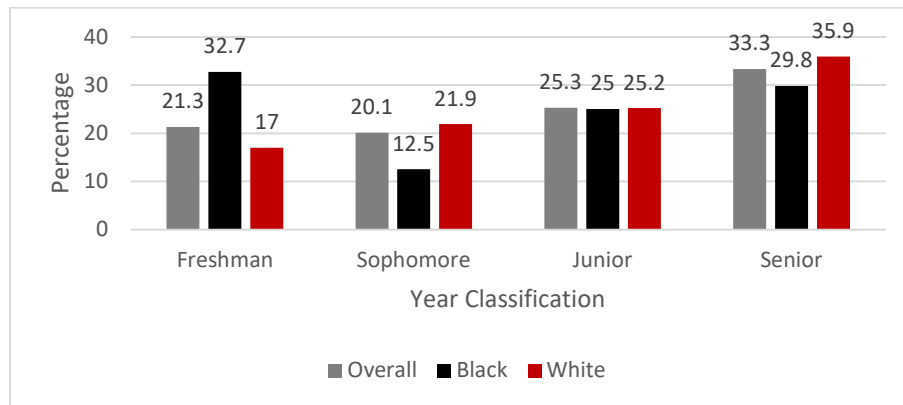
The current study used the definitions provided by the United States Census Bureau (census.gov) in determinations of race. The Census Bureau recognizes five racial groups: (1) White, (2) Black or African American, (3) Asian, (4) American Indian and Alaska Native, (5) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. The United States Census Bureau website provides the following definitions, “White is defined as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. Black or African-American is defined as a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (para. 1, census.gov). Consistent with the methodology utilized by the United States Census Bureau, “An individual’s response to the race question is based upon self-identification. The Census Bureau does not tell individuals which boxes to mark or what heritage to write in. Similarly, the currently study will allow participants to self-identify as Black or White” (census. gov, 2022, para. 1). Understanding how people racially self-identity is significant when analyzing data. This information can be useful when comparing themes that appear to explore any cultural differences among racial groups.

The total number of participants was 496. Of this number 329 (65.4%) were White and 105 (20.9%) were Black. The mean age of the White students was 21.05 (SD =3.36). The mean age of the Black students was 21.71 (SD = 4.99). Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of year classifications for the overall sample. Each bar shows the percentage of the sample. In this figure, as with every figure in this dissertation, grey bars show the results

for the overall sample, black bars show the results for Black students, and red bars show the results for White students.

Figure 3.1

Distribution of Students by Academic Rank

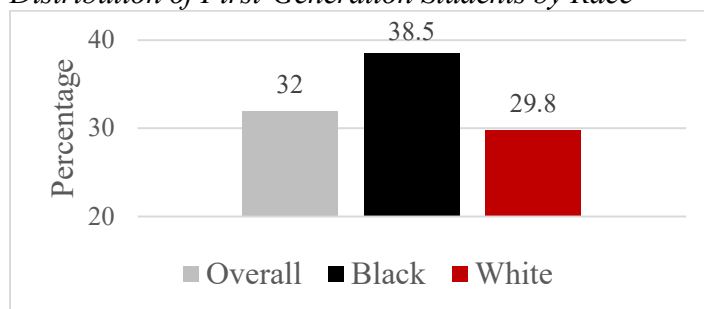


For the most part, college seniors were the most likely to take part in the study while followed by college juniors, sophomores, and freshmen respectively. Chi-square analysis showed two areas of significant differences between Black and White students ($\chi^2 = 13.73$, $p = .003$). Compared to random chance distribution, more Black students who responded were freshmen (*adj. res.* = 3.4) and fewer Black students who responded were sophomores (*adj. res.* = -2.1).

Figure 3.2 shows a comparison of participants who were first generation students the overall sample and by race. This figure is formatted in the same manner as Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.2

Distribution of First-Generation Students by Race

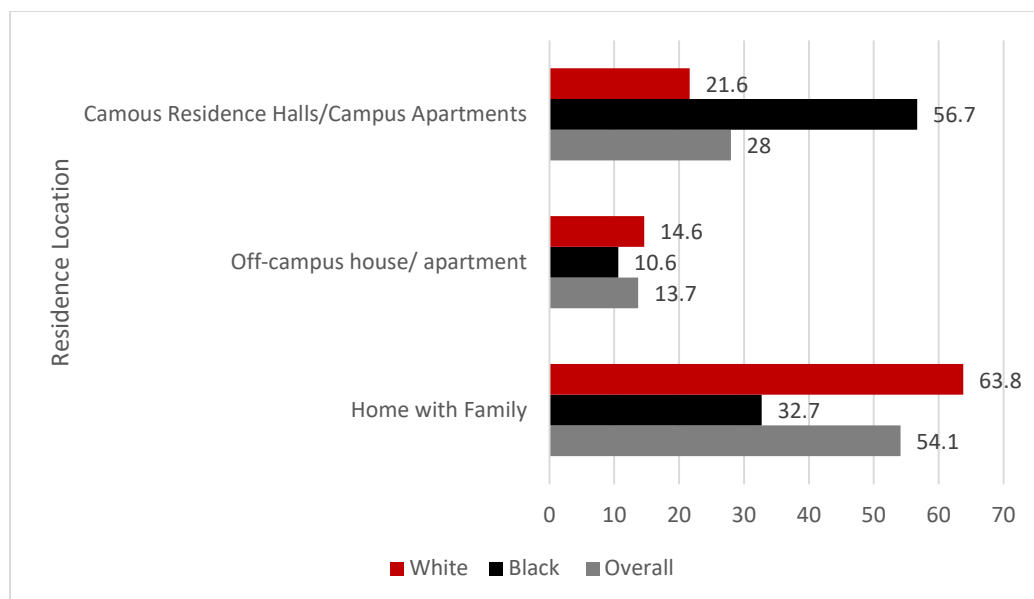


Black students reported somewhat higher rates of First-generation students compared to White students. The difference was suggestive, but of marginal significance ($\chi^2 = 2.74, p = .10$).

Figure 3.3 shows a comparison of locations where students resided while in college such as on campus, off campus, or with family.

Figure 3.3

Comparison of Residence Locations While in College by Race



There was a significant difference by race in the percentage of students who reported living at home with parents. Nearly twice as many White students reported living at home with parents than did Black students ($\chi^2=47.049, df=2, p<.001$).

Historical Context of University

University X was founded in 1957. In 1965 a social justice advocate was hired as Associate Dean of Students and Director of Special Projects and their role was centered around increasing levels of diversity and inclusion on campus and emerge students, faculty and staff of different races. During their 28 years at the university, they also served as

Associate Dean of Student Services and Assistant Vice President. Their efforts were the starting point of the university cultivating a safe and more welcoming environment for all students on campus. Their continuous work allowed for the University to admit its first Black student who graduated in 1965 with a sociology degree.

In addition to the significant work from the Associate Dean of Students, the Project 20 initiative was created to make an effort towards enrolling more Black students to the university. This project was sponsored by several corporations who supported its mission of providing high school graduates who had relatively poor academic outcomes and would not be traditionally invited to attend college. This project enrolled these students based on their individual potential to excel and gave them a chance to attend. In 1971, 12 of the student participants graduated from the university.

Sense of belonging is incredibly important for Black students who live and learn in predominately White spaces. In 1968, the few Black students on campus came together to create the Association of Black Students which served as a safe space for them to engage with each other in a comfortable environment. This organization gave them opportunities to be involved on campus outside of the classroom and further enhance their overall collegiate experience. These students worked tirelessly to ensure their voices were heard regarding issues of race by hosting events and participating in several initiatives in neighboring communities. The name of the organization was changed to Black Liberation Caucus in 1971.

As the university gradually began to make strides towards cultivating welcoming environments for Black students, the institution celebrated its first African American Celebration Month in 1969. This month was dedicated to recognizing the significant impact

of Black individuals around the world, neighboring communities and on campus. It also signifies progressive efforts of inclusion of Black students as the enrollment rate increased to 15% in 1970 and the Black Alumni Association was established in 1974.

To further support the impact of Black students on campus, the Office of Student Services created a booklet entitled, “Black Profiles” which highlighted Black student leaders, faculty and staff on campus and recognized their achievements. This publication was distributed to the student body in 1981.

In addition to recognizing the efforts of Black students on campus, in 1990, a senior student formed Mission: Unity; later renamed as Cross-Roads. This initiative was curated to serve as a safe space to discuss difficult dialogues regarding race, culture and campus climate at the university. This establishment encouraged students of all backgrounds to voice their concerns and provide their peers with insight to help them understand others better. Two years later in 1992, a more formal center was created which was the Office for Minority Equity and later named as Center for Multicultural Initiatives. This office was created after around 150 Black students hosted a sit in to protest the absence of an office specifically for minority students. In addition to the spaces that were created to support minority students, the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives was established in 1993 and served as a space to further advocate for the needs of students regarding diversity, inclusion and equity of resources.

Many students face challenges regarding race and culture as they transition into college, therefore; in 2011, the Center for Multicultural Initiatives curated a program to support during this period. The center hosted a summer enrichment experience to support high school students transition into college. This program focused on academic preparation,

social networking, team building and becoming comfortable being in new spaces away from home.

In a 1969 interview, a contributing author for the university newspaper interviewed President of the Association of Black Students about the climate of the campus for Black students. When asked if the education at the university was relevant to Black students, they answered that it was not. Additionally, they shared that the School of Education does not prepare students to make an impact in the world beyond graduation. They also shared that the Sociology department provides a lot of literature, but professors lack effort to provide students real world experiences to better prepare them. The President of the Association of Black Students emphasized the importance of having a thorough understanding on the backgrounds of students, especially of Black students in order to make an impact and connection. One of the major issues that was discussed is the transition many Black students have when entering White spaces, such as the university, when they have been immersed in predominately Black communities for their whole lives. These students have to adjust, get acclimated with their new climate, engage with others of different backgrounds and discover their new social settings. These are all factors that are different for each student and can be a challenge for many.

To assist in this transition, the President of the Association of Black Students spoke about the Project 20 (described above) as it played a vital role in preparing students for the college academic experience. When asked if the initiative was helpful, they stated, “Yes, I think it has helped a lot; because it provides students with tutors...I think a lot of Black students are coming through with a lot better grades...(<redacted>, 1969, p.4)” As more Black students began to enroll into the university as well as others around the nation, there

was a perception that the quality of education was deteriorating. This belief was invalid and infuriating for many. Unfortunately, when these issues were addressed to administration, the President of the Association of Black Students noted that their concerns were often unaddressed and seemed to lack concern for the experiences of Black students on campus. These experiences ultimately resulted in distrust of administration and poor relationships between students and staff on campus.

As the institution was growing more liberal and diverse, many Black students still felt an underlying sense of racial prejudice from their White peers. This 1969 interview also addressed the unsolicited out-pouring of funds into the Black communities surrounding the institution in hopes of it solving racial tensions. These actions were perceived poorly from the Black communities and recognized as a tone-deaf response to serious racial concerns. Many of the concerns that were addressed regarding race and cultural spaces at the institution remain a challenge. A “one size fits all” approach is not feasible to address the needs of students, especially those of Black students in White spaces. While money has the power to make a difference in several sectors, it does not have the capacity to comprehend the needs of students who require a more thorough and intentional approach. Racial issues have been an issue at this institution since its inception; however, many students and administrative figures are working to ensure students are provided equitable resources to have the most positive collegiate experience.

Data Sources

This quantitative study is comprised of one survey with seven different components. The Demographic Information section which I created is a multiple-choice format survey used to collect data regarding the participant’s age, race, year in school and other general

assessment questions to gain an idea of the sample population. Those details will also be crucial when analyzing results to discover any trends and survey findings.

The Student Involvement section that I designed is in a multiple-choice format and measures the number of activities in which students are involved on campus, the types of organizations, their time commitments, the reasons they joined the various organizations, and ultimately the quality of their experiences.

The Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1972) is designed to rate the current level of depression and measure its intensity within participants. This instrument consists of 21 items to which participants respond using a 4-point scale. Participants are instructed to circle the option with the statement that is most associated with how they feel. Scores for individual items can range from 0-3 with higher scores indicating higher levels of depression.

The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1956) consists of 10 items. Participants were asked to read each statement and select the choice that best relates directly to how they feel about themselves. Once completed, they received a total score. It is important to note that for items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 was scored as the following: 1 (Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), 4 (Strongly Agree). For items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10, the scoring is reversed and was the following: 1 (strongly agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Disagree), 4 (Strongly Disagree).

The Cohen Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, 1983) is designed to measure individual stress levels within participants. This model consists of 10 items which are responded to with a 5-point scale which asks about their feelings and thoughts during the last month. Participants are instructed to write the number that best indicates how they

feel. Scores on individual items can range from 1-5 with higher scores indicating higher levels of stress.

The Zung self-rating anxiety scale (Zung, 1971) is a 20-item self-report instrument that measures four manifestations of anxiety: motor, cognitive, autonomic, and central nervous system symptoms. The items on the scale are then combined into one composite measure, with higher scores indicative of greater levels of anxiety. Data can be analyzed to produce an overall anxiety score as well as sub scores for the four identified subcategories.

Racialized experiences were assessed by utilizing the Recent Everyday Racial/Ethnic Discrimination Module Field Test, an eight-item instrument survey measuring everyday discrimination (Shariff-Marco et al., 2011). In both instances higher scores are indicative of higher levels of negatively described racial incidents.

It is important to note that the Beck Depression Inventory, Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale, Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, and Cohen Perceived Stress Scale are all indicators of psychological well-being. It is not the indicator itself that signals well-being, rather the response given by participants indicates well-being or lack thereof. Well-being would be indicated by low scores on depression, stress, and anxiety, and by a high score on self-esteem. Lack of well-being would be indicated by high scores on depression, stress, anxiety, and a low score on self-esteem. It is not the instrument that indicates well-being or lack thereof, rather the scores that are given in response to the instruments.

Data Collection Procedures

I sent email communications to university students to solicit their participation. There was no in-person collection of data. The entire project was conducted using electronic communications to describe the study along with its purpose, significance, and criteria for inclusion. These communications also stated the necessary qualifications for participation in the study. All participants were entered into a lottery where they had the opportunity to be selected as recipients of a gift card. Participants were given access to all instruments and documents by clicking on a link that was emailed to them. This link took them to a Qualtrics survey which included all survey instruments.

I solicited assistance in getting access to this information from the Office of Student Affairs. This communication also provided next steps for students who wished to participate. Upon receipt of responses from those who had stated their interest and who met the stated criteria, participants were provided with further guidance to complete the next steps. Additionally, the participants received a Cover Letter introducing the primary researcher, the purpose of this study and the survey materials that were to be completed. They were also given an Informed Consent document. All surveys required the participants to answer in a multiple choice, fill in the blank, or Likert scale format.

Protection of Human Subjects

Participants' confidentiality and privacy were protected during the data collection and data analysis parts of the study by following the guidelines set forth in the informed consent document. In this document participants were provided with 1) a description of the research study, 2) text informing participants that participation was is completely voluntary 3) text informing participants of the purpose of the research, 4) a description of

the procedures in which they would be involved, 5) notification of any risks associated with participation in the study, 6) a statement of confidentiality which told them that they would remain anonymous and results would be reported in aggregate form, 7) any potential risks which they face by virtue of taking part in the research, 8) any potential benefits which they might realize by taking part in the study, 9) notification that they could withdraw from participation in the study with no negative consequences or repercussions, 10) any available alternative to participating in the research study, 11) resources that they could use in the case of any potential adverse consequences, 12) researcher contact information.

Participants also received a cover letter that provided them with a brief description of the research, explanation of the purpose of the study, estimated time for completion, and thanked them for their participation in the study. It also provided instructions in terms of what they would be asked to do sequentially. Lastly, the IRB approval letter is available for review in the Appendix.

Data Analysis Strategies

The initial analysis of data will consist of descriptive statistics including:
Frequencies of certain variable were calculated including:

- 1) Number of participants by race
- 2) Number of participants by academic rank
- 3) Mean age of all participants which will be further disaggregated by race.

Additional analyses will explore differences between groups, including testing for significant differences by race on the following variables.

- 1) Anxiety

- 2) Depression
- 3) Self esteem
- 4) Stress
- 5) Reported quantity of extracurricular activities
- 6) Reported quality of extracurricular activities

All data analysis in this study was conducted using the following methods:

- 1) Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are informational coefficients that summarize a set of data. The statistics can describe either an entire set of data, otherwise known as a population, or a sample, which is a portion of the total population. The most common types of descriptive statistics are measures of central tendency, variability, and distribution. Measures of central tendency describe the mathematical average of a set of data. The most frequently utilized measures of central tendency are the mean, median, and the mode. The mean is the mathematical average of a set of data. This is used most frequently with continuous data that are normally distributed. The median is the score at which 50% of the scores in the data set lie above, and the other 50% lie below. This is the appropriate statistic for the data set includes scores that are extreme outliers. The mode is the most frequently occurring number in a set of data. This statistic is most appropriate to use with nominal data. Measures of variability refer to how spread-out scores are around the mean. The most frequently utilized measures of variability are the standard deviation and the variance. The standard deviation is the square root of the variance. It describes how spread out a particular score is around the mean in the original unit of measurement. The distribution of scores refers to the frequency with which scores within a data set occur.

2) Crosstab analysis with chi-square test statistic

Cross-tabulation (or, alternately, Chi-Square analysis) uses categorical predictors and outcomes, comparing the observed frequency of each cell to the expected frequency one would expect under the assumption of no relationship. In this analysis, the overall result concerning whether there is a relationship between predictor and outcome is tested by the chi-square test statistic. In addition, the likelihood of there being more or less in any given cell of the cross-tabulation is tested with the standardized adjusted residual. This statistic is considered significant if it is greater than 1.98 (hence more in the cell than predicted by chance) or less than -1.98 (hence fewer in the cell than predicted by chance). In this analysis, the argument for significance for both the chi-square and the standardized adjusted residual was set at $p > .05$.

3) One-way ANOVA/t-test

This analysis compares the size of differences observed among means between groups (the mean square distance between groups) with the difference of each observation from its group mean observed within each group (the mean square distance within groups). As such, this analysis determines whether at least one group differs significantly from any of the others. If the F-test identified significant differences overall, I further examined the individual contrasts between groups in a post-hoc comparison, using the Fisher Least Square Distance (LSD) test. Additionally, they are mathematically the same thing when you are only testing means of two groups.

4) Correlations between continuous measures

A correlation provides an estimate of the relationship between two variables, testing whether on average a unit change in one variable is consistently related to a change in the other variable.

This determination is made by comparing the covariance shared between the two variables in the analysis, as measured by the cross-product of the sum of the distance of each data point to its mean, to the combined sample variances of each variable in the analysis. As such, the correlation can range theoretically from negative one (a perfect inverse relationship) to positive one (a perfect relationship). The test of significance tests the likelihood of observing the given correlation when the actual relationship is zero.

5) Comparing the size of correlations

A Fisher's z transformation allows the size of a correlation between the same two measures to be compared two independent samples, even when the samples are of different sizes. The calculation of the transformation computes the z value as the inverse hyperbolic tangent of the correlation coefficient using the formula: $(1/2)\log[(1+r)/(1-r)]$. Because the resulting estimate follows the z distribution, the size of the difference between the z values for each sample can then be calculated. Analysis of the size of this difference follows the statistical significance table used for z distributions, in which a difference greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96 is considered statistically significant.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Survey instruments were provided to students by the primary researcher to gather information related the areas of student involvement and well-being. This study is targeted to gather an understanding of the differences of the following: the level of involvement in Black students and White students on a Predominantly White college campus, the levels of levels of psychological Well-being, the relationship between student well-being in Black and White students, and the relationship between racialized experiences and level of student involvement.

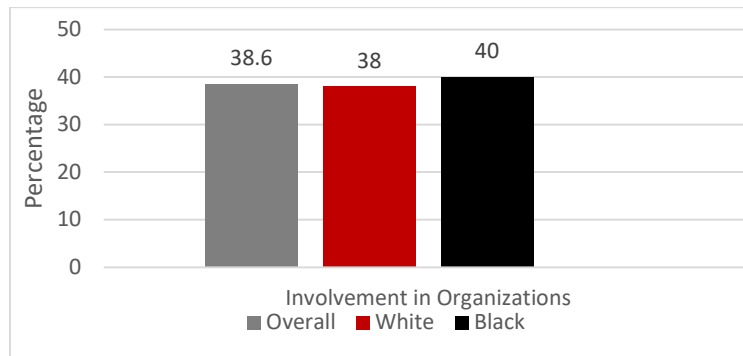
Comparing Student Involvement Reports by Race

Overall Level of Student Involvement by Race

Analysis of data shows that 260 (51.7%) students reported being involved in at least one student organization. More specifically 34.5% reported being involved in between 1-4 organizations on campus. When analyzed by race, 43.6% of White students and 48.8 % of Black students indicated they were involved in between 1-4 organizations. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of students who are involved in on campus organizations for the overall sample and by race.

Figure 4.1

Student Involvement in Organizations by Race

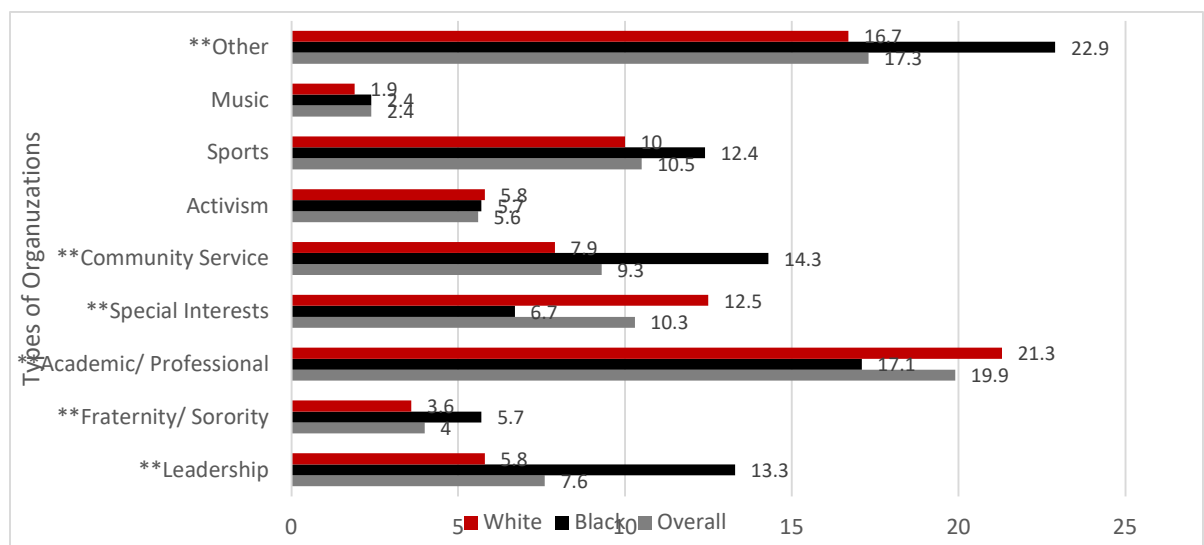


Types of Organizations joined by Black and White Students

Figure 4.2 shows the different types of organizations students reported being involved with on campus. The percentages are listed to indicate the level of involvement for each group and are categorized for the overall sample and by race. This figure is formatted using the same colors as Figure 4.1. Areas in which the racial percentages differed significantly between Black and White students are designated with two asterisks.

Figure 4.2

Student Involvement in Various Types of Organizations Broken Down by Race



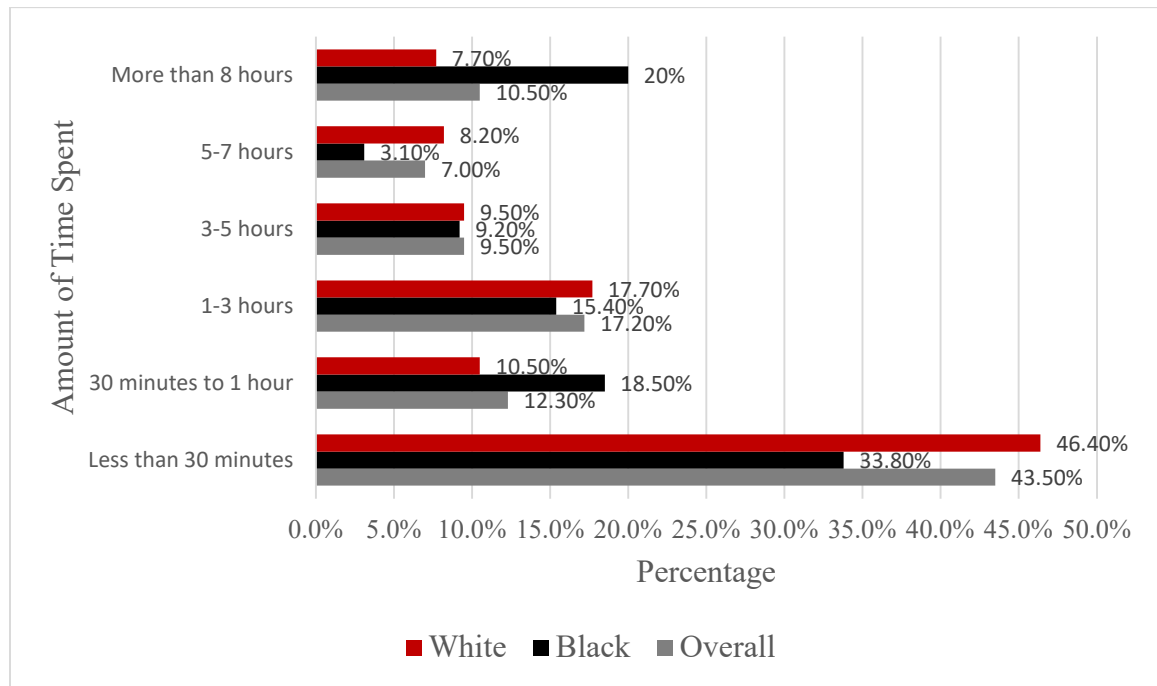
Of the nine types identified in this item, there were significant differences between the two groups of students for six types. A higher percentage of White students indicated that they joined student organizations which emphasized special interests and academic/professional than did Black students. On the other hand, a larger percentage of Black students reported involvement in community service organizations than did White students, in fact almost twice as many. Black students were also significantly more likely to be members of fraternities or sororities than were White students. Finally, a higher percentage of Black students reported having more leadership experiences in their student organizations on campus.

Amount of Time Dedicated to Involvement in Campus Organizations

Figure 4.3 shows the amount of time students dedicated to involvement in organizations on campus. The percentages of each group are again shown for each of the time responses for this question.

Figure 4.3

Amount of Time Dedicated to Organizations



Overall, most students spend less than 30 minutes per week involved with their various organizations. The most frequently given response related to the amount of time students spent involved in their organizations on a weekly basis was less than 30 minutes per week. Spending less than 30 minutes weekly involved in the work of student organizations was reported by 46.4% of White students and 33.8% of Black students. There were significant differences in the amount of time reported by Black students compared to White students ($\chi^2=13.6$, $df=5$, $p=.018$)

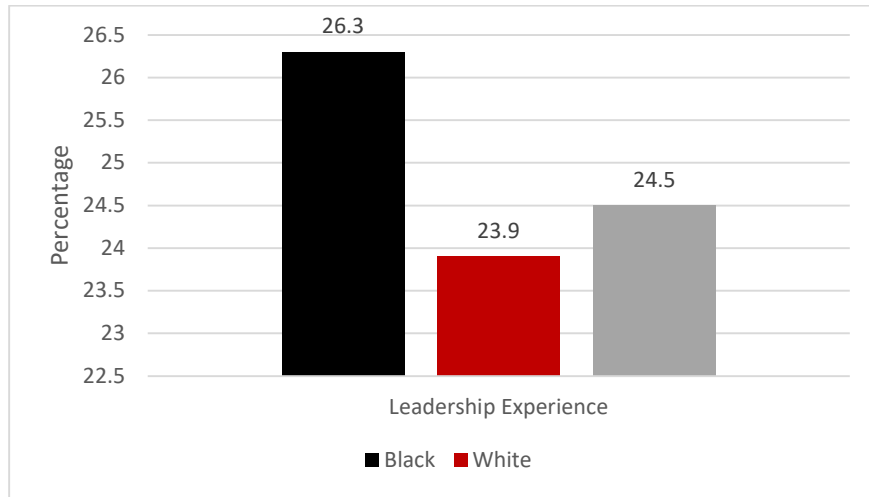
Student Involvement in Leadership Type Organizations

A higher percentage of Black students reported having more leadership experiences in their student organizations on campus. Though it was not a significant difference, more Black students were involved compared to White students. Figure 4.4 shows the percentage

of students who indicated current or past leadership role experiences in organizations by race.

Figure 4.4

Comparing Percentage of Leadership Experience in Student Organizations by Race



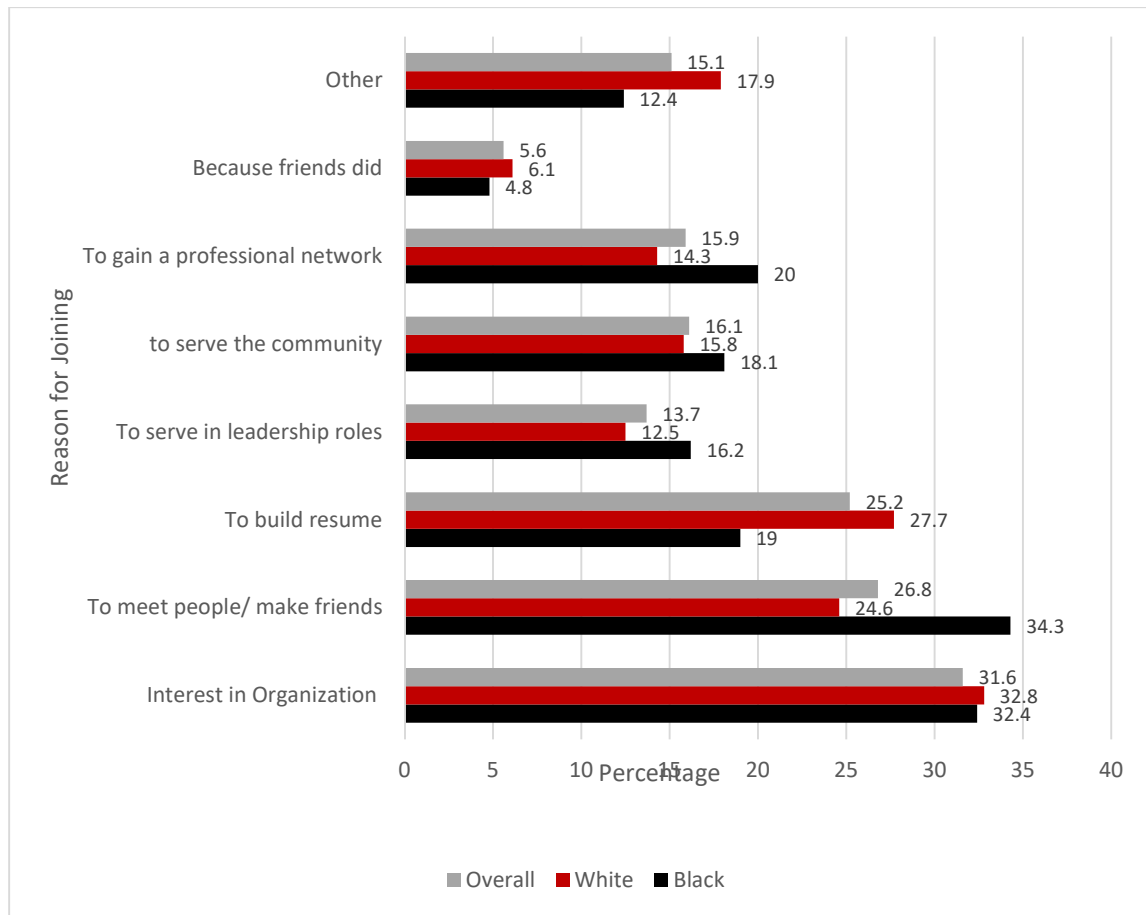
Both Black and White students indicated having leadership experiences in organizations in the past. While Black students reported leadership experiences at a higher level, the difference was not significant. This higher percentage may simply be indicative of the fact that since there are fewer Black students on campus, by necessity, higher numbers of Black students will be required to serve in leadership capacities.

Reasons for Joining Student Organizations

Figure 4.5 shows the reasons that students decided to participate in the organizations they are involved in. These findings are reported for the overall sample and by race. This figure is formatted in the same manner as Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.5

Reasons for Joining Student Organizations by Race



There was some degree of overlap in the reasons Black and White students gave for joining student organizations. However, the importance of the common reasons varied by race. For Black students the primary reasons for joining student organizations were: 1) to meet people and make friends, 2) because of a genuine interest in the organization, and 3) to gain a professional network respectively. The top three reasons given by White students were: 1) because of a genuine interest in the organization, 2) to build their resumes, and 3) to meet people and make friends. It is noteworthy that for Black students two of the primary reasons for joining organizations involve expanding their social networks, both during and after

graduation from college. The number one reason was to meet people and make friends hence creating a more welcoming and inviting climate. This may also be an attempt to bolster their level of social engagement while on campus, and to position themselves to take advantage of networking opportunities post-graduation. White student respondents gave only one response related to expanding their social networks. Their response of wanting to meet people and make friends on the campus was their third reason, as opposed to it being the primary reason given by Black students for wanting to join organizations. This may imply that they were more concerned with socialization during their college years, and less concerned about networking opportunities post-graduation. In fact, establishing networking opportunities was the second from the last reason given by White respondents as their reason for joining student organizations. This may imply that they have knowledge of opportunities for networking success that are unrelated to their college experience.

Student Experiences as Members of Student Organizations by Race

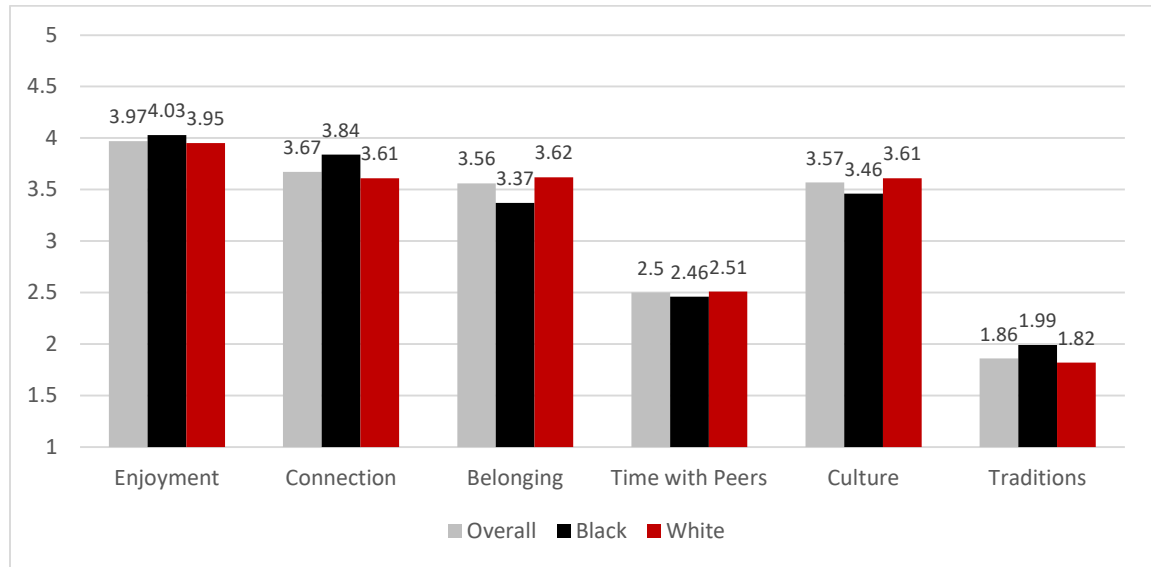
Students were then asked about their experiences in students organizations, responding to the following six items:

1. The degree to which students enjoy the organizations in which they are involved
2. The degree to which joining an organization made them feel more connected to their peers
3. The degree to which students feel that they belong at the institution
4. the amount of time spent with peers outside of organizational meetings
5. the degree to which students believe that their school acknowledges and slash or celebrates cultural traditions for various races and ethnicities on campus
6. The degree to which students partake in institutional traditions

Figure 4.6 shows the average response to these questions.

Figure 4.6

Student Experiences in Organizations by Race



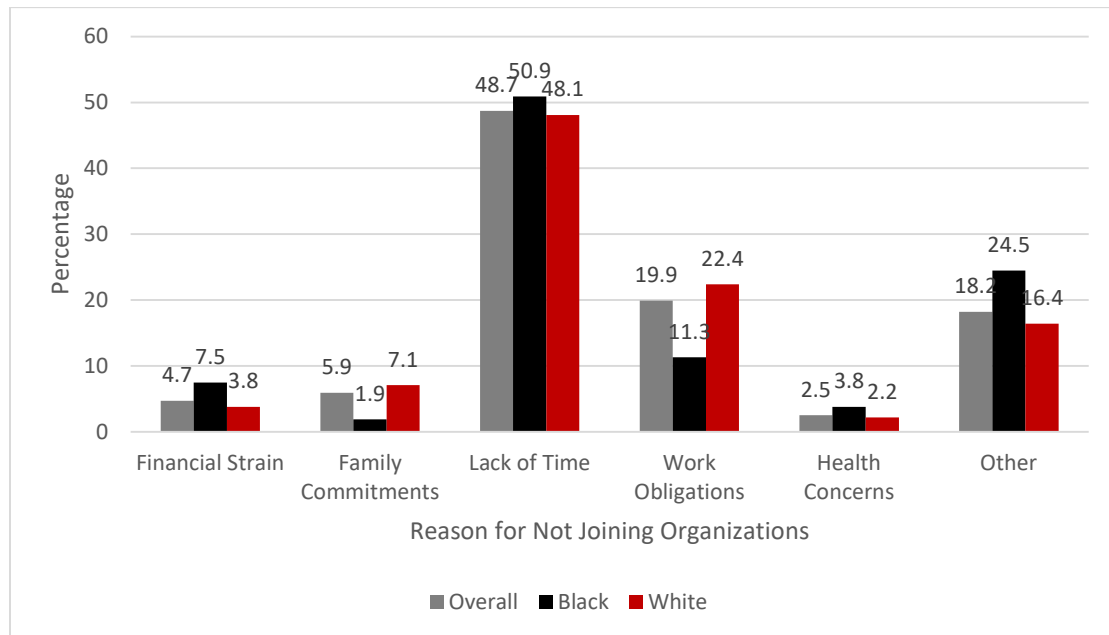
While there was a variation in the responses for different survey items, the responses for Black and White students were similar. There were no statistically significant differences by race on any of these variables. For the rest of these analyses, these items were combined into one composite measuring positive feelings of involvement with the organization.

Reasons for Not Joining Student Organizations

Figure 4.7 shows the racial differences in reasons that students decided not to participate in organizations on campus.

Figure 4.7

Reasons for Not Joining Student Organizations by Race



While Black and White students did not differ significantly on any of these variables; both groups indicated lack of time as the primary reason for not joining. Additionally, twice as many White students were occupied with work obligations compared to Black students. In regard to family commitments, significantly more White students selected not being able to participate when compared to Black students. Student involvement plays a large role in the experiences of students on campus and there is a plethora of reasons that students choose to be involved in certain organizations. Ultimately, these are the experiences that will foster higher retention or attrition rates.

Racial Differences on Measure of Well-being

The primary dependent variables of well-being were assessed for differences by race. Table 4.1 shows the ANOVA results for each test, with the outcome that was tested listed on the left. Each outcome shows a row for between groups calculations, within

groups calculations, and the total. Table 4.2 shows the differences in outcomes for Black and White students in Stress, Self-esteem, anxiety, microaggressions and depression.

Table 4.1

Well-being Scores by Race

	Black Students Mean (Std. Dev.)	White Students Mean (Std. Dev.)	<i>F</i> value (<i>p</i> value)
Stress	1.92 (0.61)	1.98 (0.58)	0.62 (.43)
Esteem	2.94 (0.68)	2.81 (0.60)	2.83 (.09)
Anxiety	3.17 (0.80)	3.03 (0.66)	2.24 (.14)
Microaggressions	1.95 (0.70)	1.69 (0.49)	13.29 (<.001)
Depression	2.51 (0.76)	2.54 (0.66)	0.13 (.72)

These results showed no significant differences between Black and White participants on stress, self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Black participants reported significantly higher levels on microaggressions than White participants.

Impact of Involvement on Well-being Indicators Compared by Race

In order to examine whether student involvement had the same or different impact on well-being indicators for Black and White students, I ran a series of correlations between the various measures of involvement with each well-being measure. A negative correlation means that an increase in one variable is associated with a decrease and the other variable. Conversely, a positive correlation means that an increase in one variable is associated with an increase in the other variable. In these analyses, the desired result

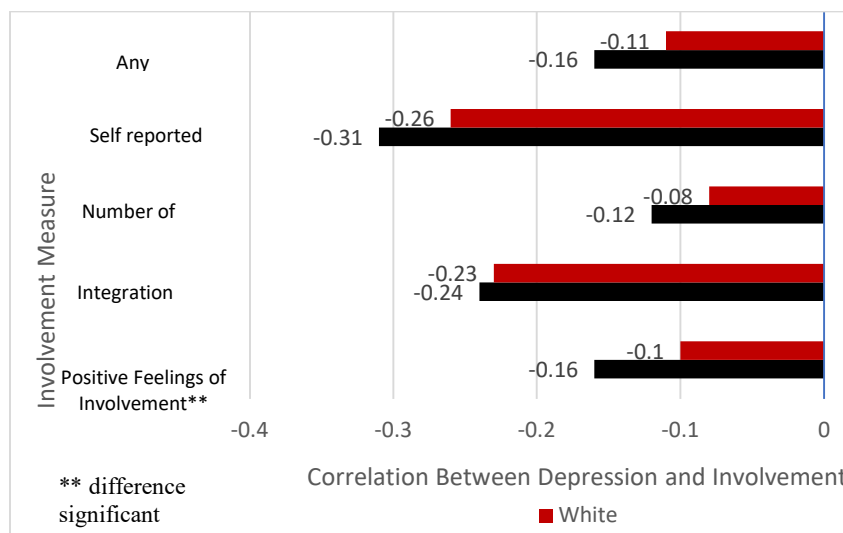
would be that involvement be negatively correlated with indicators of difficulty (stress, depression, anxiety) and positively correlated with indicators of emotional well-being (self-esteem)

The Relationship Between Depression and Involvement

Correlations comparing the relationship between depression and involvement were calculated for both Black and White students. Figure 4.8 shows the comparison of the relationship between depression and involvement for Black students compared to White students. In this figure, significant differences in the size of the correlation coefficients are indicated with two asterisks at the end of the involvement measure.

Figure 4.8

Comparing the Relationship Between Depression and Involvement for Black Compared to White Students



For both Black and White students self-reported feelings of involvement and belonging were negatively correlated with feelings of depression. Stated differently, students with higher levels of involvement and belonging reported lower levels of depression.

Following this, for both Black and White students showed the strongest correlation

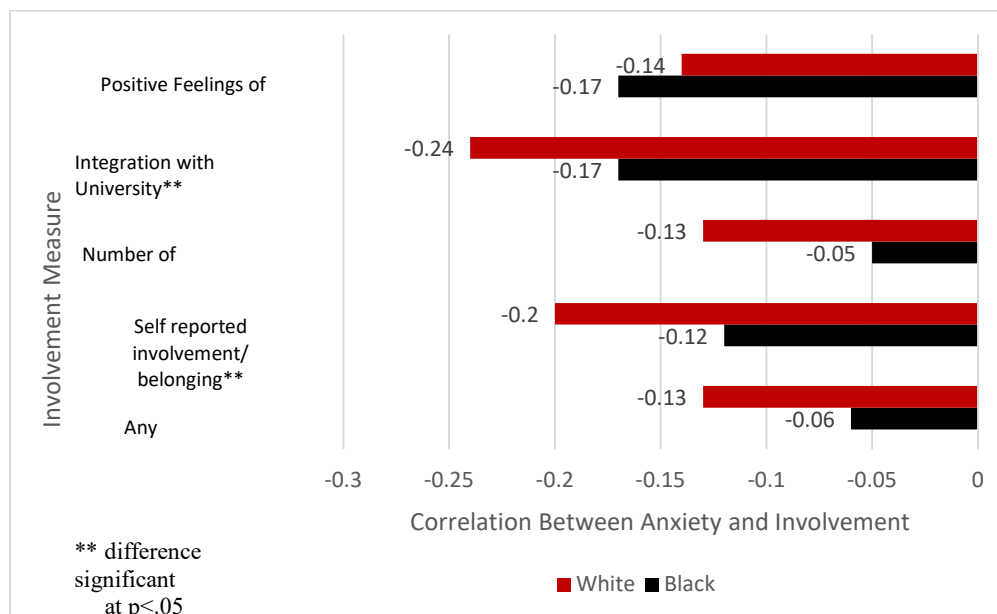
between feeling integrated into the life of the university and feelings of depression. Students who are integrated into participating in campus activities and traditions showed the lowest levels of depression. Interestingly, for both Black and White students the weakest relationship was between the number of organizations in which they were involved and level of depression. This suggests that it is not the quality or number of organizations in which students are involved that impacts their emotional well-being; rather, it is the quality of their involvement and the organizations.

The Relationship Between Anxiety and Involvement

Figure 4.9 shows the results of the correlation between the same set of involvement indicators and students' self-reported level of anxiety. This figure is formatted in the same manner as Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.9

Comparing the Relationship Between Anxiety and Involvement for Black Compared to White Students



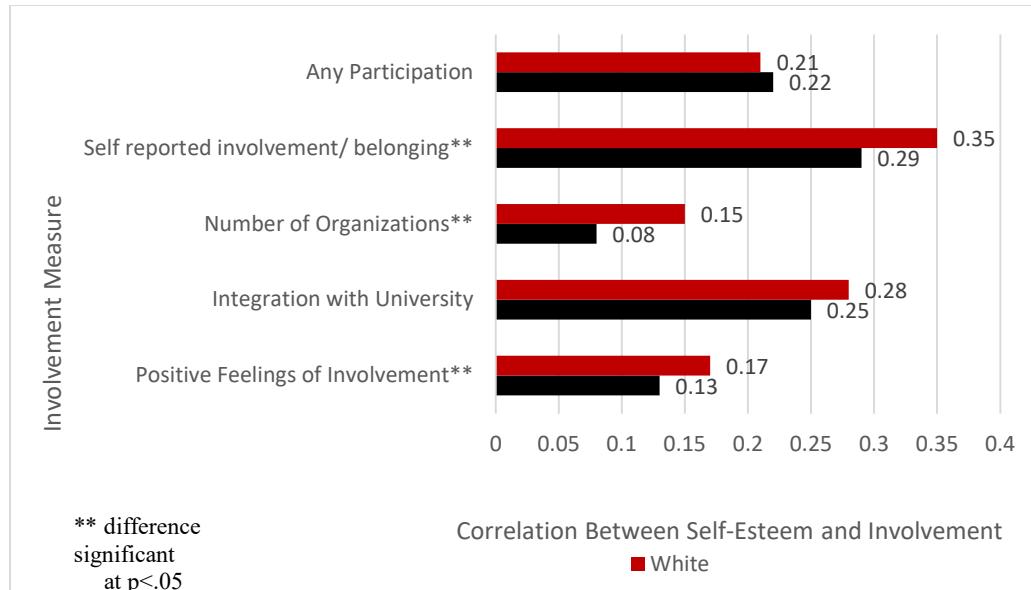
For both Black and White students, feelings of integration with the university were negatively correlated with feelings of anxiety. Stated differently, students who felt highly integrated with the activities and workings of the university were most likely to report lower levels of anxiety. Similarly, for Both Black and White students anxiety was negatively correlated with involvement in campus activities, and positive feelings about that involvement. For both Black and White, all of the students, the number of organizations in which they were involved was negatively correlated with feelings of anxiety. Stated differently, students who were involved in more organizations reported lower levels of anxiety. In sum, being involved in campus organizations, having a positive sense of belonging at the university, feeling a part of the institution, and the number of organizations were all negatively associated with feelings of anxiety.

The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Involvement

Figure 4.10 shows the results of the correlation between the same set of involvement indicators and students' self-reported level of self-esteem. This measure is the only one in which a positive correlation is expected. This figure is formatted in the same manner as Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.10

Comparing the Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Involvement for Black Compared to White Students



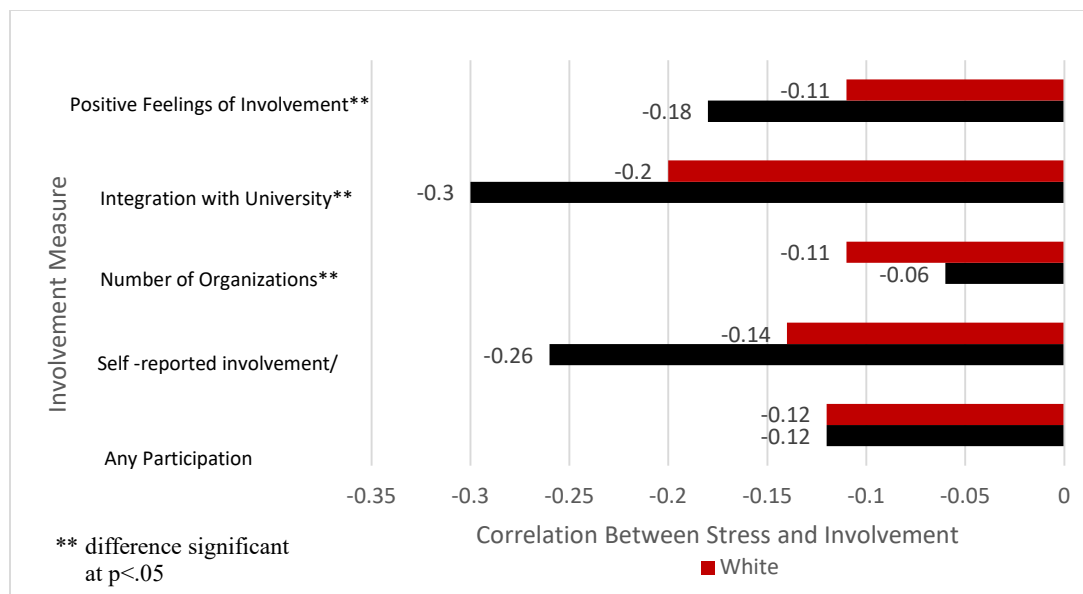
For both Black and White students, the variable with the strongest correlation with an indicator of well-being (self-esteem) was self-reported feelings of belonging. For both groups high levels of perceived belonging were positively correlated with high levels of self-esteem. For both Black and White students, the second strongest relationship was between self-esteem and feelings of integration with the university. These were also positively correlated. Students who were well integrated into the history culture and traditions of the university have the highest level of self-esteem. The variable that had the weakest relationship was self-esteem when the number of organizations in which students were involved. While positively correlated, the relationship was very weak. Once again, this suggests that it is not the number of organizations in which students are involved that impacts their level of self-esteem; it is the quality of their involvement in the organization or activity.

The Relationship Between Stress and Involvement

Figure 4.11 shows the results of the correlation between the same set of involvement indicators and students' self-reported level of stress. This measure is the only one in which a positive correlation is expected. This figure is formatted in the same manner as Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.11

Comparing the Relationship Between Stress and Involvement for Black Compared to White Students



For both Black and White students self-reported feelings of involvement and belonging were negatively correlated with stress. Stated differently, students with higher levels of involvement and belonging reported lower levels of stress. Following this observation, for both Black and White students showed the strongest correlation between feeling integrated into the life of the university and stress. Students who are integrated into participating in campus activities and traditions showed the lowest levels of stress. Interestingly, for both Black and White students the weakest relationship was between

the number of organizations in which they were involved and stress. This finding suggests that it is not the quality or number of organizations in which students are involved that impacts their emotional well-being; rather, it is the quality of their involvement and the organizations.

The Relationship between Microaggressions and Measures of Well-Being

Table 4.2 shows the relationships between the different outcome measures considered in this analysis for the full sample. Increased micro- aggressions were related to increased stress, anxiety, and depression, and related to decreased self-esteem.

Table 4.2

Examining the Correlation between Microaggression and Other Indicators of Well-being – Overall and Comparing Black with White Students

	Overall Correlation with Microaggression	White Students Correlation with Microaggression	Black Students Correlation with Microaggression
	<i>r</i> (<i>p</i>)	<i>r</i> (<i>p</i>)	<i>r</i> (<i>p</i>)
Stress	.31 (<.001)	.24 (<.001)	.48 (<.001)
Esteem	-.16 (.003)	-.12 (.052)	-.42 (<.001)
Anxiety	.35 (<.001)	.31 (<.001)	.54 (<.001)
Depression	.35 (<.001)	.30 (<.001)	.56 (<.001)

Table 4.2 shows that increased micro-aggressions were related to increased stress, anxiety, and depression, and related to decreased self-esteem. In comparing the relationships between Black and White students, the direction of relationship was the

same for White and Black students, but the strength of the relationship was much stronger for Black students than it was for White students. For stress, anxiety and depression, it was almost twice as strong. For self-esteem, the negative relationship was marginal for White students, but significant and almost 3.5 times larger for Black students.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the relationship between student involvement in the life of the campus outside of the classroom and student well-being. Participants were Black and White undergraduate college students attending a large, predominantly White, midwestern university. Well-being was measured by student self-reporting of depression, psychological stress, anxiety, and self-esteem. Student involvement was measured by assessing the quantity and quality of student engagement in college activities and organizations. Recognizing that the impact of race is also important, the study also examined the effects of racialized experiences in the lives of students. The purpose of the study was to see if student involvement in the life of the campus was associated with positive feelings of well-being.

This chapter contains the following: a summary and implications of the findings, limitations, and directions for future research.

Summary and Implications of Findings

Involvement on Campus

Analysis of data showed that the majority of students surveyed reported being involved in at least one organization on campus. For the most part, White students expressed a greater involvement in academic and professional organizations, while Black students reported greater involvement in community service, fraternal, and leadership development organizations. Students provided a wide range of reasons for their involvement in campus organizations. The most frequently given reasons were: 1) their overall enjoyment in their respective organizations, 2) positive feelings of connectedness to their peers, 3) strong sense

of belonging with the institution, and 4) celebration of cultural traditions for various racial groups. These factors contributed to the overall positive experiences reported by students on campus.

Both Black and White students who were not part of organization stated that lack of time was the primary reason for not joining. Interestingly, the majority of students who had been involved in an organization reported spending less than 30 minutes per week with their organizations. In addition to time constraints, the majority of White students stated that work obligations and family commitments were their primary reasons for not spending more time involved with organizations, while for Black students stated financial concerns as the second most frequently given reason. While Black students reported more involvement in campus activities than White students, the difference was not significant.

These findings were consistent with the literature as they addressed the relationship between student involvement and well-being (Strayhorn, 2012). Students who were involved with clubs and organizations outside of the classroom reported having a stronger sense of belonging, lower levels of stress and depression and feeling that they were more connected to the institution when compared to students who simply went to class and did not engage otherwise. Overall results suggested that one way to safeguard students from negative psychological states is to have them engaged in the life of the college outside of the classroom. Students who show up for class and then return to their residences have among the poorest outcomes both academically, socially, and psychologically (Burke, 2019). Additional analyses found that while many college students reported numerous challenges to becoming involved in student organizations or activities, it was important enough for the majority of them to choose to become so involved. For this dissertation

study, White and Black students reported different organizational interests and different reasons for both joining or not joining. While many White students may have been exposed to many academic resources and opportunities to prepare them prior to college, their interests remained within organizations focused on academics and professional careers. Black students appeared to be more involved in organizations that will prepare them for success after graduation from college. These students have opportunities to engage in post-college networking activities that are available by membership in fraternities, sororities and other community service-based organizations and activities. These may be additional reasons students chose to be involved in leadership organizations.

Depression

The analyses on depression showed that for both Black and White students, feelings of involvement and belonging were negatively correlated with feelings of depression. Students who reported having higher levels of involvement in campus organizations had lower levels of depression. Additionally, both Black and White students showed a negative relationship between feeling integrated into the life of the university and feelings of depression. Furthermore, students who participated in campus activities and traditions showed the lowest levels of depression. Interestingly, for both Black and White students the weakest relationship was between the number of organizations in which they were involved and level of depression. This result suggests that it is not the quantity or number of organizations in which students are involved that impacts their emotional well-being; rather, it is the quality of their involvement in the organizations.

This finding suggests that being involved in on-campus activities is closely associated with positive outcomes that may generate lower levels of depression. For both racial groups, when students were involved, they felt more of a sense of connectedness, belonging, and were able to participate in organizations of particular interest to them. These factors ultimately resulted in lower depression rates. This result suggests that one way to decrease the likelihood of students becoming depressed is to have them become involved in organizations and activities that are meaningful to them. It is important to note that it is not the number of organizations that is critical, rather the quality of student involvement in the organizations is the critical point.

These findings showcased the importance of supportive communities and safe spaces for students as they embark on new and challenging experiences. As students transition into college, they are navigating a new space with several stressors that are contributing either positively or negatively to their experiences. These events can be very daunting for some if they are doing this process alone and are not a part of clubs or organizations outside of the classroom. These connections are beneficial to students because it lessens their feelings of loneliness, sadness and fear because they are surrounded by others which ultimately results in lower levels of depression in students.

In addition to these findings, a number of variables: (1) level of participation, (2) self-reported level of involvement/ belonging, (3) number of organizations and (4) positive feelings about their involvement in campus activities, were shown to have a different relationship to depression for Black students than it did for White students. While the relationship was negative (i.e., more involvement was related to less depression) this association was significantly stronger for Black students than it was for White students.

These findings suggest that being involved in activities and organizations outside of the classroom may serve to buffer students from feelings of depression. Students who feel that they are part of the campus community, and who actively participate in activities and organizations on campus are likely to demonstrate more positive affect. Because the data were cross-sectional, the causal direction of the relationship is not clear. It could suggest that increasing involvement and the corresponding positive emotions associated with these connections had a greater impact on Black students' depression levels compared to White students. In this interpretation, the depression experienced by Black students may have been more specifically linked to feelings of not belonging, which were not as relevant for White students' depression. On the other hand, it could also suggest that stronger feelings of depression were a greater barrier to participation and involvement for Black students than they were for White students. In this interpretation, the process of becoming involved and deriving feelings of inclusion from involvement were overall harder for Black students compared to White, such that depression worked as an important barrier for these students.

These differences between racial groups are consistent with existing research as Kodish et al., (2022) stated that Black students are significantly more prone to experience depression, anxiety and suicidal ideations. Engaging with peers on campus serves as a positive event that allows students to feel connected and a part of a community (Kodish et al., 2022). Students of Color, but specifically Black students are less likely to seek or be offered mental health treatment or advocacy compared to White students which allows the cycle to continue. Negative racial experiences of Black students impacts their academic performance, level of engagement with peers, level of depression and isolation

and increases suicide risks compared to their White counterparts (Kodish et al., 2022). In addition to these experiences, Black students are more likely to be victims of multicultural distress, racism, and discrimination compared to White students which can often lead to feelings of isolation, fear, anger and ultimately depression (Kodish et al., 2022).

Anxiety

Data analyses for anxiety suggested that for both Black and White students, feelings of integration with the university were negatively correlated with feelings of anxiety. Therefore, students who felt highly integrated with the activities and workings of the university and were engaged with others were less likely to report high levels of anxiety. For both Black and White students, anxiety was negatively correlated with involvement in campus activities, and positive feelings about that involvement. Additionally, Black and White students reported that the number of organizations in which they were involved was negatively correlated with feelings of anxiety. Ultimately, the results indicated that students who were involved in more organizations reported lower levels of anxiety.

This finding suggests that being involved in campus activities and organizations is closely associated with positive outcomes and lower levels of anxiety. For both racial groups, when students were socially involved, they had lower levels of anxiety. Students are under an immense amount of pressure while at college in regard to their academic performance, new environment and people, and discovering new interests. Therefore having communities to relax and engage in with peers with similar interests is beneficial for positive experiences. Specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic, students faced

more challenges regarding levels of anxiety as many studying remotely and were socially isolated, fearful of contagion and were restricted from engaging in-person with others. Being able to connect with peers in organizations on campus was crucial to the well-being of students and their level of stress. Being involved in campus organizations and active on campus creates a sense of belonging and improves the overall campus climate both of which are associated with lower levels of anxiety.

These findings are consistent with research by LeBlanc & Marques (2019) which found that social isolation and loneliness predicted mental health problems including anxiety. The findings of the current study address the impact of isolation and the negative impacts it has on the well-being of students. Ultimately, if students experience a comfortable and caring climate where they are surrounded by supportive groups of people and are engaged in activities that are meaningful to them, they are less likely to experience significant levels of anxiety.

In addition to these findings, a number of variables 1) integration with the university, 2) self-reported involvement/ belonging, 3) number of organizations and 4) positive feelings about involvement in campus activities were inversely related to anxiety. Unlike the results for depression, this association was significantly stronger for White students than it was for Black students. This suggests that students who are actively involved in campus activities and organizations, and who feel good about that involvement, and who feel like they belong and are part of the institution are less likely to experience anxiety. Again, the cross-sectional data invites two interpretations. Stronger relationships between involvement and the reduction of anxiety for White compared to Black students may suggest that involvement was more directly connected with sources

of anxiety for White students. Black students may have had more or different sources of anxiety that increased involvement did not impact. In the other direction, feelings of anxiety for White students may have been a larger barrier to becoming involved with the University than it was for Black students. Both interpretations would suggest that Black students' feeling of anxiety were not as directly tied to aspects of involvement.

The differences between racial groups are consistent with existing research as Spring and Rogers (2021) stated Black students were more likely to experience anxiety compared to White students. Black students have more experience with Imposter Syndrome and lack of belonging as this demographic frequently is victim to discrimination and racism in everyday life, while also at times on their college campuses (Sprung and Rogers, 2021). These experiences foster depressive feelings and isolated states of being as many struggle when navigating through these challenging phases (Kodish et al., 2022). Student involvement on campus is imperative to the well-being of students as many are faced with many stressors such as societal, familial, health-related, professional, etc. (Sprung and Rogers, 2021). When students do not feel a sense of connectedness or positive integration with the spaces they are in daily, they can feel as if they do not belong which can negatively result in levels on involvement on campus (Kodish et al., 2022). Ultimately, these experiences can result in increased levels of anxiety if not treated properly.

Self-Esteem

Analysis of data suggests that for both Black and White students the variable with the strongest correlation with an indicator of well-being (self-esteem) were self-reported feelings of belonging. For both racial groups, high levels of perceived belonging were

positively correlated with high levels of self-esteem. For both Black and White students, the second strongest relationship was between self-esteem and feelings of integration with the university. These were also positively correlated. Students who were well integrated into the history, culture and traditions of the university reported the highest levels of self-esteem. The variable that had the weakest relationship was self-esteem when the number of organizations in which students were involved. While positively correlated, the relationship was very weak. Once again, this result suggests that it is not the number of organizations in which students are involved that impacts their level of self-esteem; but it is the quality of their involvement in the organization or activity.

This finding suggests that being involved in on-campus activities and organizations is closely associated with positive feelings of self-esteem and high levels of perceived belonging. Students enter college at very different developmental and experiential levels. While some are prepared and secure in their identities, that is not the case for everyone. When students find groups of people who they connect with and form relationships, a sense of belonging is developed which fosters positive self-esteem. When students join organizations, they are becoming part of a network of people who share common interests and goals which can serve as a supportive environment.

These findings are consistent with the clinical literature which suggests that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and social engagement (Harris & Orth, 2019). The literature on self-esteem describes it as the outcome of how someone perceives themselves in comparison to how they wish to be seen (Ummet, 2015). The more comfortable people are with who they are, their abilities and overall self, the more positive the outcome and the higher the self-esteem. Students are more comfortable in spaces where

they feel they belong and have genuine connections. Colleges are filled with a plethora of students of different backgrounds, races, beliefs, etc. and when there is a sense of belonging and welcomeness, students exhibit positive self-esteem. This experience can be very daunting for first time students, and positive environments significantly makes a difference in the quality of their experiences. White students are more likely to feel good about themselves when they are actively involved. This may suggest that while feelings of belonging are related to positive self-esteem for all students, this relationship may be even stronger for White students. For many Black students, feelings of self-esteem may be related to more internal mechanisms and are less reliant on external validation to feel good about themselves.

In addition to these findings, a number of variables 1) integration with the university, 2) self-reported involvement/ belonging, 3) number of organizations and 4) positive feelings about their involvement in activities and organizations, were more positively related to feelings of self-esteem for White students than they were for Black students. These results were similar to those observed for anxiety and have a similar set of interpretations. Stronger relationships between involvement and increased self-esteem for White compared to Black students may suggest that involvement was more directly connected with students' self-image, leading to greater self-esteem for White students. Black students may have had more or different sources of esteem that increased involvement did not impact. In the other direction, feelings of positive self-esteem for White students may have been a more important element contributing to becoming involved with the University than it was for Black students. Both interpretations would

suggest that Black students' feeling of self-esteem were not as directly tied to aspects of involvement as they were for White students.

The differences between racial groups are consistent with existing research as Jochman et al., (2019) addressed racial discrimination as a primary cause for lower self-esteem amongst Black college students compared to White students. Forms of discrimination at Predominately White Institutions can be especially difficult for Black students because of the lack of support and community that exists in these spaces. Many times Black students will be the only one in their classes which creates another layer of isolation, pressure and self-doubt often (Jochman et al., 2019). During these moments of vulnerability, Black students tend to also experience microaggressions which has detrimental effects to their mental health (Nadal et al., 2014). If internalized, these stressors have the potential to result in low self-esteem and decreased levels of involvement on campus (Jochman et al., 2019). Many racial challenges stem from a long-standing history of racism towards Black students on White campuses and when issues arise on campus it makes it even more taxing to navigate through as their feels and experiences are often invalidated. These negative experiences result in Black students not feeling welcome on their campuses, nor being involved with organizations or feeling comfortable on campus in general.

Stress

Analysis of data showed that for both Black and White students, reported levels of involvement, and feelings of belonging, were negatively correlated with stress. Stated differently, students with higher levels of involvement and belonging, reported lower levels of stress. Involvement is an essential and positive factor for students on campus.

Both Black and White students demonstrated strong correlations between campus integration and stress. Students who are integrated into participating in campus activities and traditions showed the lowest levels of stress. The weakest relationship was between the number of organizations in which they were involved and stress. Therefore, as with depression, it was the quality rather than the number of organizations in which students were involved that impacted their emotional well-being. The quality of the experiences has the largest impact on reported levels of stress.

This finding suggests that being involved in activities or organizations on campus is closely associated with positive outcomes and lower levels of stress. For both racial groups, when students were involved, they reported lower levels of stress. Students have various stressors for many reasons whether related to academic performance, family, health, finances or other personal matters. Participating in organizations on campus is an outlet for many and allows them to interact with their peers in a positive manner. Many students join organizations that are of a specific interest to them and are in areas that they genuinely enjoy. Therefore, they have the opportunity to bond with their peers and not worry about the outside factors that are negatively contributing to their experience. For minority students in particular, attending a Predominantly White Institution have additional stressors related to racial issues and microaggressions, cultural differences and a plethora of other experiences specific to this demographic of students. Some organizations are centered around these individual areas and allows students to connect with others and feel safe. The implications of these findings are that one way to decrease the likelihood of students becoming stressed is to have them become involved in organizations and activities that are meaningful to them. It is important to note that it is

not the number of organizations that is critical, rather the quality of student involvement in the organizations is the critical point. Students who are actively engaged in meaning social activities are less susceptible to experiencing psychological stress.

These findings were consistent with the clinical literature which shows an inverse relationship between stress and engagement. Research by Moriarty et al., (2021) found that students with higher levels of social connectedness were less likely to report high levels of psychological stress. Students come to college with stress from endogenous and exogenous factors which are only multiplied when they become immersed in college with new responsibilities. Students have to adjust to their new lifestyles and though it may be challenging, with supportive networks of students and involvement in organizations of interest, the levels of stress lessen.

In addition to these findings, a number of variables: 1) self-reported involvement/belonging, 2) positive feeling of involvement, and 3) integration with the university were negatively related to stress. The association was significantly stronger for Black students than it was for White students. These results mirrored those observed for depression. It could suggest that increasing involvement and the corresponding positive emotions associated with these connections had a greater impact on Black students' stress levels compared to White students. In this interpretation, the stress experienced by Black students may have been more specifically linked to feelings of not belonging, which were not as relevant for White students' stress. On the other hand, it could also suggest that stronger feelings of stress were a greater barrier to participation and involvement for Black students than they were for White students. In this interpretation, the process of becoming involved and deriving feelings of inclusion from involvement were overall

harder for Black students compared to White, such that stress worked as an important barrier for these students. In both casual directions, this finding suggests that for all students, but particularly for Black students, being involved in campus activities and feeling part of the institution, tended to have a buffering effect against stress.

The differences between racial groups are consistent with existing research as Ingram and Wallace (2018) discovered the relationship between racial tension and stress. Interestingly, Ingram and Wallace also noticed a relationship with issues of racial discrimination amongst Black students being linked to alcohol related issues which has the potential to impact their academic performance, social skills, involvement and overall well-being. It is believed that many college students turn to alcohol as a source of coping to navigate through challenging experiences. Being involved on campus is significant for Black and White students for different reasons. Black students rely on organizations to serve as a safe space from racism, discrimination, microaggressions and other cultural challenges and these platforms allow them to be immersed in communities of others who share similar interests. These spaces are crucial especially during times of civil unrest as many instances of brutality of Black people is often broadcast and has long lasting and detrimental impacts on the lives of all, but especially amongst college students (Ingram and Wallace, 2018; Desmond et al., 2016, Carbado, 2017). White students having a stronger relationship with the number of organizations is in alignment with existing research because it addressed the societal differences between the two races. Black students join for a sense of belonging, community and safety. White students are involved in organizations pertaining to networking, academic and professional

engagement, maintaining a certain social status or socioeconomic status (Ingram and Wallace, 2018).

Microaggressions

Data analyses for microaggressions indicated that when students had negative experiences with microaggressions, either before coming to college, or since coming to college, there was an increase in stress, anxiety, and depression, and a decrease in self-esteem. The valence of the relationships was the same for both White and Black students. However, the strength of the relationship was much stronger for Black students than it was for White students. Historically, Black students have been faced with more racial stressors and economic hardships than their White peers. The negative relationship was marginal for White students, but it was felt more acutely by Black students.

This finding suggests that students who experienced racism, either on campus, or prior to coming to campus, were less likely to join organizations on this Predominantly White College campus and as such were more likely to experience poor levels of well-being. These microaggressions contribute to students feeling a lack of belonging. Unfortunately, when issues arise regarding microaggressions and race, culture, traditions, status, etc. it can result in students not wanting to engage with other students in organizations on campus. Colleges are filled with students of various beliefs, races, values, and cultures and when Black students are targeted, it can be triggering, uncomfortable and create negative feelings. Ultimately, White students are not as likely to be targets of microaggressions while attending a Predominately White Institution; however, in this situation, Black students are minority, and therefore are more likely to be the targets of microaggressions.

This result suggests that efforts need to be made on college campuses to address issues of racism or exclusion in an intentional manner. It is critical that a culture of inclusivity be maintained and a warm and inviting climate should be the goal.

These findings are consistent with the clinical literature which suggests that microaggressions and other forms of racism are related to devastating mental health outcomes (Williams, 2021). These findings relate to the literature because it described microaggressions as correlated with actions that were rooted in discrimination and oppressive behaviors that are frequently experienced by Black students or People of Color in predominately White spaces. The experiences of the students in the study resulted in negative outcomes in stress, depression and self-esteem when microaggressions were present. These actions also play a significant role in the relationship between levels of involvement and experiences of microaggressions. Though the experiences of all students are different, acts of microaggressions are inclusive of conscious or unconscious expressions of verbal, behavioral, and environmental acts that can have negative outcomes for Black students especially if internalized. Societal issues are present in many environments inclusive of college campuses and can cause mental strains and additional stressors to students who are targeted.

Limitations

There were two primary limitations of this study, 1) dealing with the sample itself and 2) those dealing with the instruments. The first limitation concerned the size of the sample. Included in this research were 496 students. Of this number 329 (65.4%) were White and 105 (20.9%) were Black. Since the study was just comparing Black and White students, data collected on students from other racial groups were not included in the

analyses. A larger sample size of Black students would have been desirable to increase power in the study. It is possible that a greater sample size might have resulted in a better ability to detect significant differences by race.

A second limitation deals with some participants stopping before the conclusion of the survey or skipping certain questions. As a result, the sample size for different analyses were not the same group across the study, as selecting only participants who completed the entire survey would have resulted in a sample size too small to detect differences if there were any. This issue was likely the result of the large number of instruments that were utilized in this research, there were seven altogether.

Directions for Future Research

Future research should include an expansion and inclusion of various genders in participants. Including these data would allow for analysis by gender which would have made the overall study stronger. It would allow the researcher to not only look for relationships between variables overall, but to assess for differences by gender. It would also allow for the assessment of differences by the interaction of race and gender. This analysis of data would not only be observing by race, but also by gender. The interaction of race and gender and would allow results to be generalized more specifically to certain groups. Future research should also include a larger sample size, which would increase the power of the study to detect significant differences between groups and would reduce the likelihood of a statistical Type I error. In addition to having a larger sample size, ideally the number of participants in each group should be approximately the same.

A great deal of additional work could involve the type of institution from which data are collected. The current study collected data only from a public, midwestern, predominantly White institution. Additional work could look not just at public institutions,

but also private institutions and religiously affiliated institutions. Results of analysis might also differ based on the size of the institution. According to a 2020 survey by the U.S. News & World Report, while some institutions have just a few hundred students and others have more than 60,000, the average college size in the United States is 6,354 students. This suggests that in addition to just looking at public and private institutions, future research might collect data from institutions of differing sizes, as well as from institutions in various parts of the country.

An extension of this research would have data collected not just from predominantly White institutions, but also from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions, and other types of institutions with large numbers of minority students. While the current study looked at the wellness of black students at predominantly white institutions, it would also be interesting to look at the wellness of non-Black students who are attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or other predominantly minority serving institutions.

In terms of the demographics of study participants, there are several potential avenues to be explored. Rather than looking exclusively at Black and White students at a predominantly White University, future research be expanded to include participants with different demographic characteristics. This could include racial groups as identified by the United States census including White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander) participants. Additionally, future research could also explore wellness of students in the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community.

Additionally, consideration of collecting data to assess well-being would be interesting to explore with students at the beginning of the year, as well as the end of the year. This would allow for changes in any aspects of students' experiences as it relates to the relationship between involvement and well-being over the course of time. It would also be beneficial to include a discussion on the long-term impact of well-being and persistence in college students as they matriculate. More specifically, a longitudinal study would clearly present ways various experiences directly impacted students over time.

Future research might explore the possibility of collecting the same type of data but using fewer or shorter instruments. If participants could complete the surveys in a shorter amount of time, they might complete the instruments more accurately and more fully. One additional area of assessment might examine the racial identity of program participants. Racial identity has been described as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tafjel, 1981, p. 255). It is plausible that the positive or negative beliefs that students have about membership in their own racial group might impact the interpretation of the racialized experiences, and ultimately influence their level of wellness on Black or White college campuses.

In addition to these efforts, there are several ways colleges and universities can make their campuses more equitable for the students which they serve. While a "one size fits all" approach is not feasible, it is imperative to have an understanding of the different necessities of various groups of students; especially students of racial and ethnic populations (Williams & Clowney, 2007). Additionally, several colleges have adopted platforms that address complex and uncomfortable conversations about racial and diversity

topics that are too often overlooked and not discussed. These programs were specifically created to educate members of the university about real world situations that impacts their students every day (Williams & Clowney, 2007). These conversations address several topics centered around race and identity with the intention of dismantling structures of oppression that remain present. Williams and Clowney (2007) also suggested that university should remove administrators on any level who fail to exemplify awareness for a developing diversity agenda as it is imperative to have an ever-present understanding of the impact of diversity, equity, and inclusion on college campuses.

Assessments are imperative to effective growth of any institution. It is particularly significant to track progression of diversity at institutions to ensure that students of Color are being included in the conversations that impact them directly (Williams, 2008). Recommendations would include increased numbers of diverse personnel on campus at all levels, campus-wide diversity trainings, inclusion in curriculum, and an increased number of diversity programming on campus (Williams, 2008). Furthermore, McNair et al., (2020) suggested using a “scorecard” to measure diversity by indicating progress on various levels. These methods would include tracking progress for various goals, objectives, and performance as they align with the mission of the institution. This would serve as a tool to ensure effort is intentionally made to address any gaps on campus and actively working to ensure change is occurring (McNair, et al., 2020). While there is a plethora of ways to include diversity and equity at institutions, each campus is different.

Conclusions

This research suggests that Black and White students may be similar in that both want to be accepted and to feel like they are included in their environments. It has been

demonstrated in this study that the quality of the experiences outside of the classroom have positive effects on the overall student experience. undergraduate students that are involved outside of the classroom in programs and organizations, athletics, extracurricular activities and engagement have better outcomes. It is imperative to have a full and rich life outside of the classroom to engage with peers and experience life for oneself.

During student's college experiences, they learn life and survival skills, interpersonal relationships and networking while discovering themselves, their identity and interests in world outside of academia. When students participate in such activities, they form relationships which help foster their growth and encourages them to progress in their journey of education. They are not alone and have a support system of like-minded individuals that share similar interests alongside them Specifically for Black students, when they are involved in organizations, feel connected to their peers and their institution, they are less likely to struggle with depression, anxiety and self-esteem.

For all students, college is a new and transformative experience that is different for everyone and institutions have to be mindful of the students who are enrolled. These are significant years for many as these years are the first time many of them are being away from home, immersed with other cultures, and overcoming many other personal challenges. Black and White students have different stressors and are affected differently by various situations that contribute to their experiences. Therefore, to treat all students as a homogenous group would be a disservice to them. In order for institutions to grow, there must be an honest evaluation of the students and an understanding no two students are the same. Knowledge of racial and cultural differences must be recognized as well as

any commonalities, challenges, and inequities. Taking these steps is crucial to resolving any significant challenges students may be experiencing.

The relationship between student involvement and student well-being sets the tone for the experiences of students in college. These activities serve as opportunities for students to be engaged outside of the classroom while also challenging and supporting them during this transitional and transformative season. Institutions have an obligation to not only educate students, but also provide them with interpersonal skills that will serve them beyond the classroom. Essentially, their role is to develop leaders who will challenge the present and enrich the future. It is imperative to understand that racial tensions continue to remain due to the lack of understanding and education about other races and ethnicities. Furthermore, racial inequalities in higher education and in professional settings has created a cultural divide that requires a lot of work to be resolved. In hope of creating change and resolving this problem, institutions should find ways to engage with their students and staff regardless of their race such as 1) providing racial trainings and workshops for student organizations and staff, 2) mental health seminars, 3) difficult dialogues sessions and 4) workshops on the impact of campus culture and campus climate. Racial inequalities in higher education has caused a terrible gap in the system of higher learning and there is much that needs to be done to resolve this issue. In some situations, if issues do not directly impact people of privileged identities, they get overlooked and ignored.

Much of this responsibility lies in the hands of the leaders and the decisions they make when minorities are considered.

It is necessary for institutions to take an accurate inventory of strengths and weaknesses and develop a plan for improvement. Ultimately, there is still much work to be done surrounding the area of higher education and student affairs and racial challenges. This field requires leaders who are dedicated to building a longer table instead of a taller wall and view people for who they are regardless of the color of their skin. Many of the issues that remain present in colleges and universities today.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board

Date: January 9, 2023

Study #: IRB-FY2023-128

Study Title: A Different World: An Examination of the Relationship Between Student Involvement and Student Well-being in Black and White Students at a Predominately White Institution

Submission Type: Initial

IRB Decision: Exempt

Research Team:

Mackenzie Millet
Julia Smith

Based on applicable federal regulations, the above referenced study has been determined to be Exempt, with the following categories:

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Letter and Consent Document:

This letter along with the IRB approved (date-stamped) consent document can be found in Cayuse in the Submission Details page under Letters and Attachments, respectively. Please make sure to use the most recent IRB approved version of the consent form in consenting participants.

Permission from Research Sites:

Please note the following:

- This IRB exemption determination letter means that this research has met one or more of the federal criteria for exemption per 45 CFR 46.104- Exempt Research.
- Before the research is initiated, permission to conduct research at a given site must be obtained from all research locations listed in the IRB submission. You must keep copies of all such permission letters for your files.
- It is the responsibility of each researcher to follow all applicable policies and procedures of any outside institution where the research will be conducted.

Modifications:

Any changes to this exempt project must be reviewed by the IRB prior to initiation by submitting a MODIFICATION request. Do not collect data while the changes are being reviewed. Data collected during this time cannot be used in research.

Record Retention:

Exempt projects will be retained by the IRB office for three years after the last action on the project.

You are approved to start the research. Please retain a copy of this notification for your records.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office.

Thank you.

The Oakland University IRB

Appendix B
Demographic Survey

Please select the option(s) that you best identify with.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What year in college are you?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
3. What is your race
 - a. Hispanic or Latino
 - b. White/Non-Hispanic
 - c. Black/African-American
 - d. American Indian and Alaska Native/Non-Hispanic
 - e. Asian/Non-Hispanic
 - f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander/Non-Hispanic
 - g. Two or More
 - h. Other
 - i. Prefer not to say
4. Are you a first-generation college student?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Describe where you have lived during the majority of your time in college:
 - a. At home with family
 - b. Off-campus house or apartment
 - c. Campus Residence Halls or Apartments

Appendix C
Student Involvement Survey

Please circle (1) answer that best answers each question. Fill in the blank if option is not provided.

1. Are you currently involved in a student organization centered around a specific interest? (Mentoring, community service, student government, robotics, etc.)
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
2. How many student organizations are you involved in? _____
3. Are you currently in a fraternity or sorority?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. No. But interested in joining.
4. What types of organizations are you in? (Check all that apply)
 - A. Academic/ Professional
 - B. Special Interest (e.g., Robotics)
 - C. Community Service
 - D. Activism and Awareness
 - E. Sports
 - F. Music/Choir
 - G. Student Leadership
 - H. Fraternity or Sorority
 - I. Other
5. How much time do you dedicate to your organization(s) **per week**?
 - A. Less than 30 minutes
 - B. 30 minutes to 1 hour
 - C. 1 – 3 hours
 - D. 3-5 hours
 - E. 5-7 hours
 - F. More than 8 hours
6. Do you currently hold, or have you previously held a leadership role in your organization?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No. But I aspire to hold a leadership position.

7. Why did you join the organizations (s) that you are in?
- A. The organizations are interesting to me
 - B. To meet people and make friends
 - C. To build my resume
 - D. To serve in leadership roles
 - E. To serve the community
 - F. To gain a professional network
 - G. Because my friend(s) did
 - H. Other
8. If you are not involved with an organization on campus, why aren't you?
- A. Too much financial strain
 - B. Too many family commitments
 - C. Not enough time
 - D. Work Obligations
 - E. Health Concerns
 - F. Other
9. If you are not involved with an organization, do you plan on being involved in the future?
- A. Very Unlikely
 - B. Somewhat likely
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Very likely
 - E. Definitely
10. In general, do you enjoy the organization (s) you are involved in?
- A. Not at all
 - B. Somewhat
 - C. Neutral
 - D. A little
 - E. Very much
11. Did joining an organization make you feel more connected to your peers?
- a. Not at all
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Neutral
 - d. A little
 - e. Very much

12. Do you have relationships with faculty and/or staff on campus?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
13. If you said yes to the previous question, how strong are those relationships in general? If you selected “No” to the previous question, select “F-Does not apply” below.
- a. Very Weak
 - b. Weak
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Strong
 - e. Very Strong
 - f. Does not apply
14. Do you feel like you belong at <redacted> University?
- a. Not at all
 - b. A little
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Moderately so
 - e. Yes. Very much so
15. How much time do you spend with your peers outside of meetings with your organization (s)?
- A. None at all
 - B. A little
 - C. Neutral
 - D. A moderate amount
 - E. A great deal
16. Does your school acknowledge and/ or celebrate cultural traditions for various races and ethnicities on campus?
- a. Not at all
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Neutral
 - d. A little
 - e. Very much
17. Do you partake in any <redacted> University Traditions?
- a. None at all

- b. A little
- c. Neutral
- d. A moderate amount
- e. A great deal

Appendix D

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

For each item circle the number that best describes how you presently feel about yourself.

- 1 Strongly Agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Disagree
- 4 Strongly Disagree

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

1 2 3 4

2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

1 2 3 4

3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

1 2 3 4

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

1 2 3 4

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

1 2 3 4

6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

1 2 3 4

7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

1 2 3 4

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

1 2 3 4

9. I certainly feel useless at times.

1 2 3 4

10. At times I think I am no good at all.

1 2 3 4

Appendix E

Beck Depression Inventory

In the past month, how often did you... (response categories Never, Seldom, Occasionally, Frequently)

... feel bothered by things?

...have a poor appetite?

...feel like could you not shake off the blues?

...have a larger appetite than usual?

...have trouble concentrating?

...feel depressed?

...had trouble doing daily activities?

...feel everything was an effort?

...have trouble sleeping?

...sleep too much?

...talk less than usual?

...feel lonely?

...feel sad?

...feel like you couldn't get going?

...feel discouraged about life?

...lose interest in things you used to enjoy?

...feel fearful?

...had trouble caring about things?

...have trouble making decisions?

...feel like you had less worth than other people?

Appendix F

Cohen Perceived Stress Scale

For each question choose from the following alternatives:

0 = never

1 = almost never

2 = sometimes

3 = fairly often

4 = very often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?

4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?

9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?

10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Appendix G

Zung Anxiety Self-Assessment Scale

Please answer all questions by placing a check in the box to the left of the number under the appropriate answer. Upon completion, all scales will be scored to receive a total.

		Never or Seldom	Some of the time	A good part of the time	Most or all of the time
1.	I feel more nervous and anxious than usual	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
2.	I feel afraid for no reason at all	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
3.	I get upset easily or feel panicky	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
4.	I feel like I'm falling apart and going to pieces	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
5.	I feel that everything is all right and nothing bad will happen	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
6.	My arms and legs shake and tremble	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
7.	I am bothered by headaches, neck and back pains	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
8.	I feel weak and get tired easily	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
9.	I feel calm and can sit still easily	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
10.	I can feel my heart beating fast	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
11.	I am bothered by dizzy spells	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
12.	I have fainting spells or feel faint	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
13.	I can breathe in and out easily	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
14.	I get feelings of numbness and tingling in my fingers and toes	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
15.	I am bothered by stomachaches or indigestion	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
16.	I have to empty my bladder often	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
17.	My hands are usually dry and warm	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
18.	My face gets hot and blushes	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
19.	I fall asleep easily and get a good night's rest	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
20.	I have nightmares	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

Appendix H

Recent Everyday Racial/ Ethnic Discrimination Module Field Test

Please read each question carefully and indicate in the space provided to the left of each item the number that best describes how often that experience has happened to you. Use the following scale to indicate your answer. Do not skip any items.

- 0 Never
- 1 Rarely
- 2 Moderately
- 3 Often

“In the past 12 months, how often have

- ___ 1. You been treated with less respect than other people?
- ___ 2. You been treated unfairly at restaurants or stores?
- ___ 3. People criticized your accent or the way you speak?
- ___ 4. People acted as if they think you are not smart?
- ___ 5. People acted as if they are afraid of you?
- ___ 6. People acted as if they think you are dishonest?
- ___ 7. People act as if they’re better than you are?
- ___ 8. You been threatened or harassed?”

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