

The Never-Ending Story: An Analysis of Student Activism at Oregon State University

by
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A THESIS

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Yalda Asmatey

Racism on college campuses continues to create a toxic environment for students of color to learn and thrive in. In order for institutions of higher education work to address the complexities of the issues that students of color face, it is important to understand the context in which those issues exist. This study examines the history of student activism at Oregon State University (OSU) relating to campus racism and race relations and the administrative response to student demands. Using a qualitative research approach, I was able to use resources from the Special Collections & Archives Research Center at OSU to identify significant historical student activist events at OSU that were concentrated on race relations, institutional racism, and discrimination. The Black Student Union Walk-Out in 1969, the All OSU Boycott in 1996, and the Students of Color Speak-Out of 2015 were identified as the events to be investigated. Using the theoretical frameworks of Color Blind Racial Ideology, Critical Race Methodology, and Critical Discourse Analysis I was able to give meaning to the archival research. Four themes were developed from the research including campus climate, unchanging demands from students of color, student-administration relationship, and administrative response and approaches. The hope is that this study can be used to further understand race relations at OSU and inform future processes related to diversity and inclusion for the betterment of OSU as a whole.

Key Words: campus climate, race relations, student activism, higher education, institutional racism, diversity, inclusion, OSU, students of color, Black Student Union Walk-Out 1969, All OSU Boycott 1996, Students of Color Speak-Out 2015

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I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

Lyndi-Rae E. Petty, Author

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It is true that it takes a village to raise a child, or in my case, raise an independent archival researcher dedicated to racial and social justice. The journey to completing my thesis has been a whirlwind; a never-ending project that I will carry with me throughout my future endeavors. There are many people who I must give my sincerest ‘shout-outs’ to because without their guidance, support, tough love, and expertise, I would never have successfully completed this project and I probably would’ve ended up regularly crying in distress over the project.

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Researcher Background and Subject Interest

I believe it is important to acknowledge my interest in this subject matter, as well as how I came about choosing this topic, my positionality as a White cis-gendered female, and what I hope to achieve from this work.

My involvement with the Associated Students of Oregon State University (ASOSU) or student government was a highly transformative experience for me in examining my own identity and unearned privileges. Because ASOSU is intended to serve and represent all students through our work, my mandatory trainings for each position¹ I held included topics of social justice, inequities in higher education, identity, power, privilege, and oppression. Although these trainings were simply introductory and fairly surface level, I knew that I wasn't going to be complacent with this new knowledge of racial and social injustice. I started becoming more aware of things like microaggressions and started observing oppressive behaviors of myself and others, including language and actions. I also began to question the exclusivity of Sorority and Fraternity Life of which I am a part. I even distinctly remember attending the Students of Color Speak Out as a sophomore and feeling shocked, angry, and unsure of how I could help. In those moments, it really hit me that my White privilege had protected me from knowing about this reality that people of color experience every day. Between the Speak Out, the trainings, and hearing the stories from students of color, it deeply moved me to challenge myself and my peers to educate myself about these issues and what role I could play in challenging them.

After my third year as an undergraduate student I ventured to India for a 10-week internship. I was an ambitious Biology pre-med student that wanted to learn more about healthcare in another country and culture. Before going to India, I had taken an introductory public health course about the U.S. healthcare system and health outcomes. That introductory course provided me a basic public health understanding that only grew as I spent more time in India. My internship in India was transformational in a variety of ways. For one, I discovered that I was more passionate about influencing health outcomes systemically rather than an individual level. Another way in which my experience in India was transformational was how it reinforced the complexity and depth of privilege that I hold being a White, American woman in this world.

When I returned from India, I enrolled in Ethnic Studies 101: Introduction to Ethnic Studies. Little did I know that taking ES 101 would lead me on a path of discovery, challenges, passion to make a difference, and motivation to learn more. During this time, I was also starting to recognize institutional hypocrisies, including those at OSU, who claimed to provide inclusive spaces for people of all identities even though many of my peers reported otherwise. Realizing that the extent of my education and my upbringing have excluded the voice, movements, successes, oppressions, and general history of people of color in the United States led me to my original project of examining White supremacy in Oregon policy. However, after many attempts to narrow my project scope, I felt like I had more context to examine race relations at OSU since I am a student

¹ ASOSU Intern for Environmental Affairs (2013-2014), ASOSU Director of Wellness Affairs (2014-2015), ASOSU Vice President (2015-2016)

here. I wanted my project to center the voice of students of color, in addition to exposing the history of OSU. The impacts of all types of racism is a systemic health crisis. In many ways, it can be considered a pandemic due to how wide-spread it is and the severe impact it has on emotional, physical, spiritual, and environmental health. My passion for health equity is a significant motivation for this project.

In winter 2017, I had the chance to attend an OSU social justice retreat called Examining White Identity in a Multicultural World. This retreat allowed me to further understand Whiteness, White supremacy, and how I can be more involved in racial justice work. This was another key transformational experience that pushed me even harder to finish this thesis project.

I must take into consideration the relentless ways that my own identity, privileges, and implicit biases are inevitably entangled into my writing. The way that I view and interpret the archival documents are shaped by my own life experiences and the various institutions of which I have been a part of. I would like to also acknowledge that my background in biology has provided me with technical writing skills rather than writing for the social sciences which will be reflected in my writing. With the help of excellent mentorship and guidance I hope to be able to highlight the stories, experiences, and voices of the students at OSU who have faced institutional, interpersonal, and systemic racism in order to critically analyze OSU. I also hope to spark future conversations within the OSU community about the importance of this type of work and potentially inform future initiatives focused on creating an environment in which students of color can thrive.

It should be noted early on why I chose to identify students as Black as opposed to African American in my writing. In many documents, such as the *Scab Sheet*² and student proposals to administration, students personally identified them as Black students. Although this may not represent the perspective of all Black students at the time, I wanted to honor what was provided by the students who were directly involved with each event. For 2015, I chose to use students of color for the same reason, especially considering that the very event had ‘students of color’ in the title.

² See page 23 for more information.

Literature Review

Introduction

On the website and pamphlets of most universities across the nation, a person is likely to find pictures of smiling students who are studying together and seem to be enjoying their time at college. There will be students of many races and ethnicities depicted as a symbol of the “diversity and inclusion” that the institution holds. In addition, many students might come across the words ‘diverse’, ‘inclusive’, or ‘supportive’ and wonder what that means before they ever arrive at their respective campus. This type of marketing can convince, in particular, students of color that their prospective predominantly White institution (PWI) is a place where everyone belongs and can thrive regardless of their personal identity. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many of students of color upon arriving to their respective college campus. Not only is this demonstrated through personal accounts from students of color, but decades of data and records indicate that there are significant achievement gaps and retention rates between students of color and their White counterparts.

There is a long history of racial inequity in higher education given that students of color were prohibited from most educational institutions until *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) deemed that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. Prior to this case, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) had ruled that public facilities would remain “separate but equal”, though this was never a reality. Following *Brown v. Board* and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 came affirmative action policies that were intended to increase access and opportunity for students of color in higher education. This history must be acknowledged in order to understand how the current racial inequities came about on college campuses. Access to college is not the only barrier that students of color face in their journey through higher education. This thesis will be examining the experiences, trials, and tribulations that students of color face once they are enrolled and begin classes at a PWI.

Many PWI have taken great strides over the last several decades to improve the conditions on campus for students of color. This includes a variety of strategies that are generally aimed at improving retention, recruitment, campus climate, financial support services, and access to higher education. Despite the fact that these concerted efforts have made improvements in some areas, such as increased numbers in enrollment of students from underrepresented groups (Warikoo, 2016), students of color continue to face significant barriers in higher education that result in higher achievement gaps and lower retention rates. For example, in baccalaureate-granting institutions, underrepresented minorities are 16% less likely than their peers to earn a degree in six year (Engle et al., 2012). Even when students of color do graduate with a 4-year degree and beyond, recent research by Emmons and Ricketts suggests that racial and ethnic wealth gaps have actually increased for college graduates of different races and ethnicities in the most recent decades (2017).

While attending college, students of color face report encounters of daily micro- and macroaggressions³, culturally insensitive teachers and peers, symbols of racism, stereotyping, and general discriminatory behavior. These types of stressors can result in psychological and physiological responses that are similar to other forms of distress caused by betrayal and abuse (Schoulte, Schultz, & Altmaier, 2011). There is even evidence to suggest that ethnic microaggressions can lead to more severe psychological consequences than overt discrimination (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). With these types of social traumas occurring regularly for students of color, it comes as no surprise when they have lower retention rates, lower GPAs, and longer graduation rates than their White counterparts. Unfortunately, there is often a lack of awareness of this hostile environment from White students. Previous studies have suggested that students of color perceive their general campus climate more negatively than their White peers do (Reid and Radhakrishnan, 2003).

Of the many prominent public health concerns that exist on college campuses, such as high-risk drinking and sexual assault, campus racism is one that is in need of dire attention. Universities across the nation continue to direct their efforts towards ‘diversity and inclusion’, but is it enough? Well, student activism in the most recent decade suggests that the campus climate at PWI continue to be detrimental to the well-being and opportunity for students of color. The focus of this study will be examining the relationship between student activism and institutional change at OSU.

The relationship that students have with the university can be seen in a somewhat transactional way, students pay huge sums of money to the university and the university provides a service in return: education. Therefore, the student can be seen as a customer of the institution (Ahmed, 2002). When the customer is unhappy with some aspect of the education that they are receiving, they organize together and confront the institution in some capacity. When students realize that they can influence university decision makers, they act. This is exactly what students of color at OSU have been doing for decades and will presumably continue doing until the university can foster an environment that is truly supportive and inclusive of 'diversity'. This research seeks to understand why student activists at OSU continue to confront university officials with various demands. It will attempt to address the question: Over the last 50 years, has OSU, as an institution, been able to implement systemic changes that effectively support and empower students of color through their ‘diversity and inclusion’ efforts?

³ Microaggressions are defined as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group. Macroaggressions are broader communicative acts toward target or marginalized individuals on systemic rather than individual levels (Sue et al., 2007).

History of Oregon and Oregon State University

Before examining the history of OSU and race relations, it is important to provide context of the origins of the state and how racism shaped the present-day Oregon. Present day Oregon is often referred to by Oregon residents as a “liberal bubble”, a blue state, the land of gay rights and legalized marijuana. As “liberal” as Oregon may currently seem, it actually has a long, dark history of racism and exclusion that may partially explain why Portland, Oregon was named the “Whitest City in America”⁴ by *The Atlantic* in 2016. The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that the entire population of Oregon is comprised of only 2.1% of Black or African American people which is less than a quarter of the national percentage (13.3%). The disparities are similar for other racial groups in Oregon⁵.

The racial makeup of Oregon can be attributed to a long history of policies that excluded, specifically, Black people and other racial groups from having the same rights as White people in Oregon. Although slavery was never legally allowed in Oregon, it didn’t prevent Oregon from passing a variety of exclusion laws that prevented Black people from living there. For example, on February 14, 1859, Oregon officially gained statehood into the union with a Black exclusion clause written into its constitution banning Black people from residing, owning property, and making contracts in Oregon (Nokes, 2013). Oregon was the only free state in the entire union to constitutionalized exclusion laws. These exclusion clauses were not officially repealed from the constitution until 1926⁶. Though slavery was legally banned in Oregon, there are many known accounts of early Oregonian settlers disregarding the anti-slavery laws⁷.

Due to Oregon’s early exclusion laws, the Black population in Oregon has remained relatively small in comparison to the national population. However, this did not prevent the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) from having a widespread influence in Oregon in the 1920’s (Toy, 2017). By 1923, Oregon had an estimated 35,000 Klan members in more than sixty chapters around the state. Leaders of the KKK were known to be involved in local and state politics which means that Oregon’s more recent policies have been shaped by ideologies of prejudice, hatred, and exclusion. Oregon’s anti-miscegenation laws weren’t even repealed in Oregon until 1951.

This brief account cannot summarize Oregon’s extensive racist history. It is important to acknowledge that OSU was situated within this same dark history since it was officially established as a degree granting college in 1868, only nine years after Oregon constitutionally banned Black people from living or owning land in the state⁸ Let it also not be forgotten that Corvallis itself exists on the stolen land of the Confederated Bands of the Kalapuya. In 1855, the Kalapuya Treaty was enacted after years of harassment to grant permission to settlers to forcibly remove the indigenous people of the Willamette Valley (Jette, 2016). As a result of this displacement, the indigenous

⁴ <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/07/racist-history-portland/492035/>

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/OR,portlandcityoregon,US/PST045216>

⁶ https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/exclusion_laws/#.WalfzZOGPOR

⁷ Nokes, R. Gregory. *Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory*. Oregon State University Press, 2013.

⁸ http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/chronology/chron_1860.html

populations in Oregon and around the country, continue to face issues relating to access of education, health resources, food, and housing.

Although this history isn't comprehensive, it provides an important perspective about OSU's founding and its involvement in the systemic mistreatment of people of color. The first African American student to graduate from Oregon Agricultural College (OAC)⁹ was Carrie Beatrice Halsell Ward¹⁰ in 1926. As such, OSU had been an institution for 42 years before a single African American student was able graduate. In 1948, the first African American male, William Tebeau¹¹, graduated from Oregon State College (OSC)¹². During his time at OSC, he experienced discrimination from the college when he was prohibited from living in the dorms on account of his race. It should be noted that OSU have since named two buildings on campus in honor of these students.

OSU's history of injustice continued into the 1960's, particularly in the realm of athletics. The OSU men's basketball began in 1901 but did not see a Black athlete on the team until 1960. In fact, basketball, football, and track and field were segregated sports until the last decade of head Coach Gill's tenure in the 1950's¹³. This brings us to the year 1969 which is the beginning of the story I construct in order to understand how racism manifests at OSU in the present and examine what university officials do to address it. These untold stories must not be forgotten within OSU's institutional memory in order to move towards creating an institution and campus climate that will support students of all identities.

⁹ The institution's name was Oregon Agricultural College from 1890-1932

¹⁰ <http://photohistory.oregonstate.edu/works/untold-stories-guide/carrie-halsell-osus-first-african-american-graduate?>

¹¹ <http://photohistory.oregonstate.edu/works/untold-stories-guide/william-tebeau-osus-first-male-african-american-graduate?>

¹² The institutions name was Oregon State College from 1932-1961

¹³ <http://photohistory.oregonstate.edu/works/untold-stories-guide/the-desegregation-of-the-mens-basketball-team?>

Theoretical Frameworks

In order to construct meaning from the three student-led events that are the subjects of this study, I employed the three working frameworks of critical discourse analysis, critical race methodology, and color blind racial ideology to analyze the information that was gathered through research. These frameworks provide a platform that can be utilized to further understand the findings from this research and build on the existing literature in academia.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

One theoretical framework for understanding how power and racism is replicated through speech and text is called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to a prominent discourse analyst Van Dijk:

“CDA is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality”. (Van Dijk, 2015)

‘Discourse’ is understood as “a specific communicative event, in general, and a written or oral form of verbal interaction or language use” (Van Dijk, 2008). CDA is a linguistics approach to understanding social inequity. It aims to ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are implemented in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are a part of a conversation or a news report or other contexts (Van Dijk, 2015).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) summarized the main tenets of CDA as follows:

- CDA addresses social problems.
- Power relations are discursive.
- Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- Discourse does ideological work.
- Discourse is historical.
- The link between text and society is mediated.
- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
- Discourse is a form of social action.

This method of analysis will be particularly useful in analyzing how racism is maintained within the immense collection of speech and text that was gathered through research, especially as it pertains to the media, administration, and the response of the community during each of the events that are being analyzed. The evidence collected through research suggest that in many communicative events directed from the administration to the students or to the OSU community, there is elitism and racism that is maintained through their language. CDA challenges language that perpetuates elitism or racism, whether the communication was intended to be that way or not. Communication is the driving force of social behaviors, ideologies, and norms. If we can

understand communication in the context of OSU and student activism then we might be able to understand the actual events themselves.

Color-Blind Racial Ideology (CBRI)

Racial colorblindness has been defined in numerous ways within different fields of study, but in general it can be thought of as “the denial, distortion, and/or minimization of race and racism” (Neville et al., 2006). It is often referred to as a method of ending discrimination by disregarding race, culture, or ethnicity and treating everyone as equally as possible. An alternative definition of racial colorblindness, called strategic colorblindness, is the “avoidance of talking about race—or even acknowledging racial difference—in an effort to avoid the appearance of bias” (Apfelbaum et al., 2008). Color-blind racial ideology was built upon the general idea of racial colorblindness to further extrapolate how colorblindness is understood and observed in society. Several scholars describe it as “a dominant racially based framework that individuals, groups, and systems consciously or unconsciously use to justify the racial status quo or explain racial inequalities in the United States” (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Neville et al., 2006).

Color-blind racial ideology has been broken down by sociologists into two domains: color-evasion and power-evasion (Frankenburg 1995, Neville et al. 2013). Color evasion is defined as “denial of potential racial differences by emphasizing sameness” and power-evasion is defined as “denial of racism emphasizing the belief that everyone has the same opportunities” or the “denial/minimization of a) blatant racism, b) institutional racism, and c) White privilege”. Examples of color-evasion include “I don’t see race”, “I don’t see color”, or “we are all the same race: the human race”. Power-evasion, on the other hand, focuses on power relationships rather than the color of one’s skin. Examples of this can be understood as “Racism is no longer a major issue in American society”, “Everyone has an equal chance to succeed”, or “Racism against Whites is a major problem in society”.

Color-blind racial ideology is practiced amongst both White and non-White people, however, the implications are different considering that “for Whites, CBRI is linked to racial privilege and alumnus, and for people of color, CBRI is linked to internalized racism” (Neville et al., 2006). CBRI is important to consider because the consequences of ignoring or dismissing race as a source of inequity can be detrimental to society. Individuals who adopt CBRI are more likely to engage in racially insensitive behavior and therefore, CBRI doesn’t reduce racial prejudice contrary to popular beliefs about racial colorblindness (Neville et al, 2006)

Research on color-blind racial ideologies have suggested that color-blind racism has been increasing in various American social institutions such as institutions of higher education (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich, 2011). Furthermore, it has been found that White students who adopted a color-blind perspective as opposed to a multicultural mindset were more likely to display racial bias on both explicit and implicit measures (Richeson and Nussbaum, 2004). This concept is thus highly important to consider in this study of OSU because CBRI was identified many times within primary documents of speech and text from each time period. Understanding how CBRI appears in conversations or dialogue related to each event can help reveal the campus climate that was negatively

impacting students of color to a point where they felt compelled to bring awareness about the racial issues that existed on campus.

Critical Race Methodology and Critical Race Theory (CRT)

“If methodologies have been used to silence and marginalize people of color, then methodologies can also give voice and turn the margins into place of transformative resistance” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). An incredibly significant body of work that is essential when examining race and power in higher education is critical race theory (CRT). CRT was derived from a body of work that was called critical legal studies (CLS) when scholars Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman became distressed with the slow pace of racial progress in America during the 1970’s. Almost 50 years later, critical race theory presently lies within a highly complex and vast field of study including legal studies, ethnic studies, history, women’s studies, and sociology.

The first widely accepted publication to address the question of “How can critical race theory be applied to higher education?” was written by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate in 1995. Their work created a platform to challenge educators and scholars to understand how critical race theory could be a tool to inform institutions of education in matters of race and identity (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Due to its prominence within a breadth of academic fields, there are many varying definitions and approaches to applying CRT in academia and even in higher education. Renowned critical race theorists, Daniel G. Solórzano and Tara Yosso, argue that CRT as it relates to education can be defined as a tool that:

“advances a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and works towards the elimination of racism as a part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin” (2002).

CRT can be broken down into five tenets or components that are useful in understanding how critical race methodology can be used a useful tool that “challenges White privilege, rejects notions of “neutral” research or “objective” researchers, and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of color” (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

These five tenets of critical race theory described by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) include the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, the challenge to dominant ideology, the commitment to social justice, the centrality of experiential knowledge, and the transdisciplinary perspective. These elements are necessary to be able to critique and analyze institutions of higher education.

- *The intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination:* critical race analysis views race and racism at an intersection with other forms of subordination such as gender and class discrimination.
- *The commitment to social justice:* CRT is committed to social justice through the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty and the empowerment and liberation of subordinated minority groups.

- *The centrality of experiential knowledge:* The experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination.
- *The challenge to the dominant ideology:* Critical race theory challenges traditional claims that educational institutions make towards objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, equal opportunity. Critical race scholars argue that these claims disguise self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups.
- *The transdisciplinary perspective:* Critical Race Theory insists on analyzing race and racism by placing them both in history and contemporary contexts. In addition, critical race theory uses the transdisciplinary knowledge and methodological bases of other fields of study.

For the purpose of this research, one subset of critical race theory named critical race methodology (CRM) will be used to analyze and critically examine race relations at OSU's past and present with a focus on counter-story telling. Solórzano and Yosso define counter-story telling as “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are often not told (i.e., those on the margins of society)” (2002). Counter-story telling can take a variety of forms. For example, narratives can be used to tell another person's story to reveal their experiences and responses to racism and sexism as told in a third person voice. Another example, composite stories, draw on various forms of “data”, such as interviews, existing literature, empirical data, and primary sources to recount the racialized, sexualized, and classed experiences of people of color in a contextualized manner.

Solórzano and Yosso consider counter-story telling to be a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege and thereby challenge the dominant discourse on race. Due to the fact that institutions of higher education marginalize students and communities of color through decentering and dismissive patterns, critical race methodology must be employed to contextualize students-of-color experiences in the past, present, and future.

For this research, the methods of narratives and composite stories will be employed for each time period by examining the student proposals for change, *The Scab Sheet*, the film created by members of the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center in 1996, and the oral histories from the students who organized the Students of Color Speak Out in 2015. These sources will be then used to create a dialogue that can help explain the themes that connect each event together and challenge the traditional texts and narratives that currently exist for each student-led event. By emphasizing the stories and voices of the students who are impacted by racism it can help to further understand their experiences while emphasizing their knowledge as valid sources of information and provide a way to challenge systems of higher education such as OSU.

Methodology

Research Process

The process of identifying the subject of my research and developing my questions began with the simple method of conversation. My interest in exploring how systemic and institutionalized racism is maintained in Oregon policy led me on a journey of learning who were the “experts” on these topics in Oregon. I connected with the Oregon Historical Society, the Corvallis NAACP chapter, faculty and staff from OSU, and attended a lecture by a Gregory Nokes about slavery in Oregon. From there, I further explored the history of Oregon using the resources from the Valley Library at Oregon State University in an effort to pin point a topic. After many conversations, I determined that examining institutional racism OSU, rather than the entire state of Oregon, was a much more realistic project for my undergraduate thesis. Given my role and experiences as a student at OSU, I wanted to use this project to reveal some aspect of race relations at OSU that could be used in efforts of policy, programming, and administrative decision related to matters of ‘diversity and inclusion’ and ‘student success’.

Examining an entire institution and all of its complexities is no easy task. I started by creating a mind map with ‘race relations’ at the very center and placed the following sub-categories around the center: institution, culture, students, faculty, education, and culture. Each sub-category had several branches indicating issues related to each category. The process of creating, visualizing, and connecting the various aspects of institutionalized and interpersonal racism at OSU left me with many questions that brought me closer to choosing a topic. My initial questions included the following: (1) How are practices or policies unintentionally excluding people of color at OSU? (2) How is Whiteness maintained at OSU? (3) How can the university address systemic and cultural issues that create barriers and exclude non-White people? (4) How does OSU distance itself from racism? (5) How can OSU dismantle and rebuild an institution that was built for White men? (6) Over the past years, has OSU actually been able to create an inclusive space for all or are the issues masked by higher education jargon related to diversity and inclusivity? (7) How has OSU created a false sense of change or progress in regards to race relations?

With these questions in hand, I scheduled an appointment with Natalia Fernandez, the Oregon Multicultural Librarian for the Special Collections and Archives Research Center at the Valley Library at OSU, to discuss how I could potentially use the archives for my research. Together, we were able to identify a project that would fit in the scope of my mind map and attempt to answer some of my overarching questions. Many of the questions that arose from the creation of the mind map stemmed from my institutional knowledge from being present for the Students of Color Speak Out in 2015 and my ties to student affairs through student government and being an employee of Student Leadership and Involvement, a large department housed within the Division of Student Affairs.

I was aware that administration was making institutional changes with creation of the “Office in Institutional Diversity” in 2016, but to most students, including myself, it appeared that change was not visible beyond the creation of the office even though the Speak Out was two years prior. With that in mind, Natalia with her expansive knowledge of OSU’s history, helped me identify two other significant events in which students of

color made demands to university administration in OSU that were critical movements in shaping the university's programs and initiatives related to diversity, inclusion, and race relations. These students created a heightened awareness about the racial issues on campus and challenged the status quo through strategic organizing. Those events included the 1969 BSU Walk-Out and the 1996 All OSU Boycott. It was during the process of research in which I started to understand how much and how little has changed for students of color at OSU and how the university responds to "student unrest"¹⁴ By carefully examining each of these three events using the theoretical frameworks previous mentioned, I was able to identify four broad themes that connect each event and provide further insight about institutional racism at OSU.

"Studying Up" Methodology

One important overarching framework that is considered within my process of research is a methodology that encourages the idea of examining infrastructures of power and the people who maintain social and economic structures. In 1972, Laura Nader, a renowned anthropologist proposed the idea of "studying up" (Nader, 1971). In her famous essay, "Up the Anthropologist—Perspectives Gained from Studying Up", Nader discusses the importance for anthropologists to not only "study down", but also "study up". She poses the idea that "instead of asking why some people are so poor, we should ask why other people are so affluent?" (Nader, 1971). In anthropology and related fields, there is expansive research and literature on the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized, but there is very little research and information about the middle and upper class, the affluent, and the powerful. Nader calls for more attention to be focused on "studying up" these systems of power because they impact people's lives on multiple levels of society and if we are to further understand the complexities of society, we must understand both those at the top, bottom, and in-between.

She encourages studying major institutions and bureaucratic organizations in order to better understand how power is maintained in society instead of focusing research solely on the disenfranchised or the marginalized people of the world. However, she also suggests that it is still equally important to "study down" depending on the context of the problem or issue being addressed. Her essay emphasizes the need for anthropologists to "be at home in analyzing the networks of power—which on paper may not be there—in describing those unwritten customary behaviors that are completely indispensable for understanding, for example, what makes Congress tick" (Nader, 1972). This type of methodology, although proposed for anthropologists, can be extended into the domain of higher education which include institutions, business, and bureaucracy.

For the purpose of this research, I will be employing both methods of "studying up" and "studying down" in order to understand how OSU administration and its structures of power have approached matters of race, diversity, and inclusion in three different time periods. Using CDA to analyze the text, speech, and documents of administrators, or those who are at the top of the university, it can help to better understand the institution relative to those who are beneath it. It can also reveal any

¹⁴ "Student unrest" can be understood as a disturbed or uneasy state characterized by college students demonstrating, organizing, and protesting, and contesting in order to bring awareness to an issue, and ultimately enact change.

trends or patterns that occur in regards to race relations and how the institution handles the events that are the subject of this research. The “studying down” in my research is the process of providing a platform for the voices of students of color to exist in order to gain perspective and insight that is often excluded from dominant narratives within higher education.

Research Questions

I examined documents from each time period using collections from the Special Collections and Archives Research Center in the Valley Library at OSU. This involved searching through dozens of folders to read newspaper clippings from local and national media outlets, email correspondences between administrators, meeting minutes, proposals, and any other forms of communication that were relevant to the events of interest. Much of the student and public perspective was obtained through *The Daily Barometer* articles, *The Scab Sheet* underground newspaper, the ASOSU archive collection, and physical copies of student demands from each event. *The Daily Barometer* is the school paper that still exists today to publish stories about the happenings on campus and is funded through student fees that are determined each year by the Student Incidental Fees Committee¹⁵. *The Scab Sheet* is also a student driven underground newspaper that was created through grassroots organizing in 1969 in response to the poor coverage of the Black Student Union Walk-Out in *The Daily Barometer*. I was fortunate to be able to connect with the student organizers of the 2015 Speak Out to conduct individual oral histories about their experience at OSU. The primary purpose of the archival research was to address the following questions in order to thematically connect the three events that transpired over the 50-year time frame. Through the process of reading and analyzing the archival documents, the following questions listed below arose as a result of recognizing similarities and themes between the three events and are sub-questions to the overarching question:

Over the last 50 years, has OSU, as an institution, been able to implement systemic changes that effectively support and empower students of color through their ‘diversity and inclusion’ efforts?

Questions used to guide archival research:

- Was there a catalyst moment that sparked the initiation of the protest, boycott, walk-out?
- What was the campus climate prior to the protests?
- Why were students compelled to organize these events and make demands of the university?
- Were students in communication with administrators prior to the event?
- What were the strategies implemented by the students to make their demands and needs known by the university?
- How did the Corvallis community and beyond respond to each event?
- How did the administration and OSU community respond to each event?

¹⁵ <http://asosu.oregonstate.edu/branches/sifc>

- What were the immediate direct actions taken by the administration to address the concerns of the student demands and student unrest?
- Was there a system already in place to address student unrest?

Research Considerations and Limitations

The archival collections contain innumerable documents, but many of those documents were written by people in a position of power and privilege considering their role as an administrator. For example, the 1969 BSU Walk-Out edition of *Oregon Stater* was written by White individuals who held inherent bias and internalized racism. *The Oregon Stater* is OSU's magazine that is created by the OSU Alumni Association that is distributed to alumnus of the university several times a year. Although the piece can provide context, that context is written by someone who didn't personally experience racism. Even the article written in the *Oregon Stater* about the "other side", or the perspective of the Black Student Union, was written by a White male student. That said, it should be acknowledged that the voices of the Black students who were directly impacted by institutional and individual racism were not provided a publically recognized platform in which to express their experiences or perspectives as a Black student on a predominantly White campus.

Even with the hundreds of pages of administrative and student documents, these documents were vetted by administrators who submitted them to archives. It should not be assumed that every single record was kept and submitted to archives. These documents do not include the meeting minutes from every single formal or informal meeting. They also do not include the conversations that took place confidentially or were simply undocumented. This inherently creates a gap in research and in knowledge of the situations from both the administrative and student perspective.

A shortcoming in my research is the lack of student voice from oral histories or interviews from the students who were influential and dedicated organizers during 1969 and 1996. In 2015, I was a witness of the event and was connected to some of the people involved, so I had access to oral histories from students who organized the Speak Out. These oral histories are a source of strength in this research because it allowed the student organizers an opportunity to reflect on their experience and describe their motivations, challenges, feelings, and process of organizing that the students in 1969 and 1996 did not have. It is not possible to assume the exact feelings that students were experiencing during their time at OSU or during the events. This also holds true for administrators, faculty, staff, and community members of Corvallis who were involved with or present for the Walk-Out, the Boycott, or the Speak Out. Their perspectives are important as well, but given the timeframe and scope this project, it wasn't possible to obtain oral histories from those people. However, using the wide variety of primary sources collected through the research process, some of the unique perspectives of students, faculty, and administrators can be partially pieced together in order to understand the context of each event and how it impacted individuals on campus.

An important focus of this research is capturing the stories, experiences, and insights from the students who were involved in organizing these events because their perspective has been excluded in many ways from the institution. However, this choice to highlight these stories resulted in a deficit of a closer examination of the role of the

administration and institutional power dynamics. Without oral histories or interviews of administrators and a deeper investigation of the institution, power and race relations cannot be thoroughly explored in this research.

It's also important to acknowledge that while these events were widely known at the time they occurred by the OSU and Corvallis community and covered extensively in various media outlets, these are not isolated events at OSU, in the State of Oregon, across the United States, or even across the world. What occurs in the greater society can have large impacts on students and their beliefs. Students do not exist in a vacuum. They are heavily influenced by social, cultural, and political contexts that exist in their world. College students are often empowered to create change and voice themselves on and off their campuses due to events that are happening outside their daily lives. As long as the needs of students are not met at the institution, they will continue to express their desires for progress and change.

Themes

In addition to the previous theoretical frameworks that are used to analyze the archival research, there are also four themes that emerged through the process of research. These themes can be used to understand and piece together each of the events that occurred by drawing connections and analyzing the relationships between each of the student-led events. These themes can also be used to reveal the ways in which OSU has not changed.

- I. Campus Climate
- II. Unchanging Demands from Students of Color
- III. Student-Administration Relationship
- IV. Administrative Response and Approaches

Historical Context

BSU Walk-Out 1969

1960's: Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement

The 1960's in the United States marked a period of political and social unrest sparked by the acknowledgement of the infringement of human rights on a national and global scale. The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) embodied the idea of collective action in order to fight for a variety of human rights, including rights for Black people who were still suffering from the aftermath of hundreds of years of slavery by segregation policies and racism. In light of the anti-apartheid movements that were happening in South Africa, people also began to organize in the United States to end segregation and the discrimination of Black people. In addition to CRM were smaller movements including the student, peace, women's, and the gay rights movement. The 1960's was time in which people came together from all walks of life to stand up for the idea of basic human rights. With issues related to the Cold War, the Vietnam War, racial segregation laws, poverty, racism, and women's and gay right at the forefront of American life, people organized in ways that had never been seen before.

Historical figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, John F. Kennedy, Malcom X, and Lyndon B. Johnson are often placed in the spotlight of elementary and high school textbooks as critical advocates for racial progress in the 1960's. While they were certainly influential and impactful people, many other significant people, groups, events, and sub-movements are often left out of conversations related to the Civil Rights Movement and the 1960's. One such example is the Black Power movement.

The Black Power movement "beginning with its revision of Black identity, transformed America's racial, social, and political landscape...it also provoked a visceral reaction in White Americans who could more easily identify with civil rights activists than with Black Power militants" (Joseph, 2011). Characterized by fists in the air, the Natural Hair Movement¹⁶, and the Black Panther Party, the Black Power movement intended to achieve Black empowerment and reclaim Black identity through a variety of methods of activism, though often perceived as mostly violent. The Black Power movement encouraged more immediate action to gain Black rights as opposed to the more patient methods of Martin Luther King Jr.

Alongside many of these movements were students on college campuses who were distraught with the status quo of society and made their voices heard through protesting, sit-ins, rallies, petitions, and demanding change. Now place Black students at OSU in 1969 in the context of these 'radical' movements of the sixties and it's understandable why the Black Student Union felt empowered to

¹⁶ Originated in the 60's as a part of the Black Power movement. The Natural Hair Movement was one way to reshape Black identity by encouraging Black people to leave their hair in its natural state rather than using relaxers and other tools, which was considered a shameful act at the time.

Campus Climate

“It is unfortunate so many have interpreted our disruption to involve only a single incident, raising a single issue. It was not and is not a single issue” (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*). These words were spoken by President Jensen, the President of OSU from 1961-1969 following the term in 1969 in which the “disruption” occurred. The “disruption” he speaks of is that from the Black Student Union and their allies during winter term of 1969. The mission of OSU’s BSU is to “foster, support, and promote the social, political, and education growth of Black students. Also, to spread awareness and compassion through the education of our peers and service to our community”¹⁷. His quote presumably reflects the campus climate of 1969 throughout the duration of the events that ensued between the Black Student Union, the administration, and the OSU Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

In 1969, OSU only had 47 Black students. Of the 47 students, 18 of them were student athletes. In 1968, the total student enrollment was 15,791 (1967-1969, Special Collections and Archives Research Center). Approximately .3 percent of students on OSU’s campus at the time were Black. It’s not hard to imagine this campus demographic considering that in Spring 2017 the Black student population at OSU made up only 1.32 percent of the 29,375 enrolled students (*Enrollment Summary-Spring Term 2017*). This statistic will later serve as an example to understand how the demands of the BSU have still not been met.

The first documented meeting between the BSU and administration was listed in the *Oregon Stater* ‘Chronology’ as Jan 10th, 1969. According to this record, the “BSU asked President Jensen to consider some questions related to infringement of human rights in areas of housing, academics, and athletics. The group asked for a committee to be appointed to assist in seeking relief in these areas. President Jensen asked for time to consider the [initial] proposal” (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*). On February 11th, the Black Student Union submitted a document titled “The Basic Philosophy of a Black Studies Program” which provided an outline for the reasons to implement a Black Studies Program and what its structure would look like (President’s Records). Although there aren’t meeting minutes available for all of the conversations that took place between the BSU and President Jensen, it is clear that there were concerted efforts from the BSU to work with the university on issues pertaining to Black students.

On February 24th, 1969, the BSU formally submitted an ‘Administrative Proposal’ to make demands of the university administration to increase its efforts to support Black student retention, success, and recruitment. The proposal outlined several initiatives that the BSU determined were a priority for the administration stating that the current “efforts made by the institution of higher learning toward aiding black students in their attempts to reach their full potential have failed” (Jensen and Young I: General Subject and Correspondent Files: Black Student Union, 1968-1969). The Administrative Proposal was not created exclusively in light of the facial hair incident, but it certainly reiterated the need for the implementation of the Administrative Proposal.

¹⁷ <http://sli.oregonstate.edu/orgs/findanorg>

The proposal included recommendations regarding a provisional program, a remedial program, a tutoring program, a special advisor-counselor, recruitment of black students, athletic program considerations, housing issues, and the creation of a joint committee that includes faculty and BSU representatives in order to address the recommendations. It was emphasized that these items be “actuated as soon as possible, and that this University should be made aware that the Black Student Union will not be placated with an academic snow-job” (Jensen and Young I: General Subject and Correspondent Files: Black Student Union, 1968-1969).

This proposal became a topic of great attention at OSU and was highlighted in *The Daily Barometer*, *The Scab Sheet*, President’s statements, Faculty Senate, ASOSU, and OSU Federation of Teachers. The ‘Administrative Proposal’ was only one component of the BSU’s tactic to fight the administration for their human rights. The boycott was formally announced on February 24th. The BSU publically initiated their movement on by taking over the beginning of the first OSU Centennial Lecture on February 25th to announce their intentions of boycotting classes in light of the discrimination of Fred Milton.

Black Student Union Walk-Out

On March 6th 1969, after months of meetings, disputes, disagreements, proposals, and student organizing—most of which we know nothing about—the BSU President Mike Smith led 47 Black students on a symbolic “Walk-Out” after the BSU decided to leave the university after the administration neglected to address campus racism. The Walk-Out was the final action taken by the BSU after twelve days of boycotting classes and hosting rallies for students and faculty attend in their efforts of demanding change at OSU. The BSU Walk-Out marked an incredibly important moment in OSU’s history in which students organized together to combat racism on campus. It was also the first known time that the university administration was faced with addressing campus racism on an institutional level. To most people on campus in 1969, the events that preceded this historic moment on the surface seemed simple: on February 22nd, 1969, OSU’s football coach Dee Andros demanded that linebacker Fred Milton, one of the 18 Black athletes at OSU, shave off his beard during the off season in compliance with the Athletic policies. Fred Milton refused to do so and was subsequently suspended from the team. Black students and their allies then organized, rallied, and boycotted in response to the decision made by the football coach. This is how the public perceived the events that took place in winter term of 1969. In the eyes of the predominantly White student, faculty, and administrative population at OSU, Fred Milton was simply a defiant Black student athlete who didn’t conform to the rules of the team in order for the BSU to “use football as a political springboard to publicize its demands” (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Sports Illustrated: Shave Off That Thing!*).

In one attempt to address this simplistic and incomplete view that the rest of campus held about the Fred Milton incident, the BSU and their allies organized an anonymous underground newspaper called *The Scab Sheet*. The first edition was released on March 4th, 1969 after students realized *The Daily Barometer* was not providing accurate coverage of the events that were taking place. *The Scab Sheet* comments on the Dee Andros situation saying that:

Football coach Dee Andros has given the word to Milton: 'Shave the beard or you are off the team.' To Dee Andros it's that simple. But to Negro students, including the Black athletes, it's not that simple. To the Negro, everything in America is White-oriented or White-controlled and it has been from the beginning (The Scab Sheet Vol. 1 No. 1).

Fred Milton's appearance and beard didn't fit the "rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed, blond-headed, All-American image of White American" that Karl Helms, the BSU advisor, referred to (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*). For Fred Milton and his community, the beard was a symbol of pride, a symbol of culture and Black identity that many people in the university and Corvallis community did not understand.

The evidence suggests that the reason many Black students at OSU decided to leave the campus entirely was strongly influenced by a hostile, unwelcoming, unsupportive environment. George Carr, member of the BSU, reported that "Blacks felt invisible as human being, but visible as threats in the community" (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*). Even when students created a platform for students of color to anonymously voice their experiences and concerns through *The Scab Sheet*, the majority found a way to threaten the integrity of the underground publication. According to *The Scab Sheet*, the editor of *The Daily Barometer* intimidated the writers of *The Scab Sheet* by labeling the publication as "libelous", and further stated that "We're going to sue. I've taken a course in libel law and I know what I am talking about..." (*The Scab Sheet Vol. 1 No. 4*). *The Daily Barometer* apparently also failed to uphold their agreement to allow the BSU to approve any publications before they were sent to print. According to *The Scab Sheet*:

"Entire stories which were sympathetic to the BSU in any aspect never saw print. Large sections of other stories were dropped, resulting in distortion. Direct quotations, even from influential and respected faculty members and administrators were deleted from stories if they resulted in a sympathetic tone to the BSU. A decision was made to represent only the administration and Athletic Department view in a sympathetic light, while no attempt was made to get the other side of the story". (The Scab Sheet Vol.1 No. 3)

The mistreatment of Black people and other people of color is not a phenomenon that only plagues OSU. Every institution that was established with White supremacy at its very core suffers from a lifelong disease of institutional racism. The BSU recognized this and decided to act. There had been numerous rallies held for the twelve days prior to the 'Walk-Out'. The final rally held by the BSU before the 'Walk-Out', BSU President Mike Smith commented that:

After watching in amazement, the final finagling which has been demonstrated on this campus for the past week, we have no desire to remain here. Therefore, we condemn this institution for its corrupt practices and leave Oregon State University as a standing memorial to the 'plantation logic' of the administrators

and the hallowed institution of racism”. (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*)

Response from Administration and the OSU Community

Although the BSU was gaining attention and support for their movement, the counter-support in favor of Dee Andros was arguably stronger. The OSU community, especially the Athletic Department, didn't seem to understand that the BSU was not simply boycotting on behalf of a beard policy. They rejected, sometimes violently, the sentiments of the boycott. The *Oregon Stater* article titled “Confrontation!” mentioned that the walk-in of the OSU Centennial Lecture was “considered by many, including Jensen, to be a rude and inappropriate method of gaining public attention” (*Oregon Stater* 1969). One audience member at the Centennial Lecture even yelled “Go home, you god damn n*****” (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*).

Dee Andros was also gaining major public attention and support from the community during the time of the boycott. Andros even received a phone call from Oregon Governor Tom McCall in support of his decision (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*). Dee Andros released public statements and was quoted in several media outlets. In one of those statements, Dee Andros made all of Black football players, not just Fred Milton, seem guilty by framing them as resistant to authority and to some extent, criminal. Dee Andros was quoted in the *Oregon Stater* saying that “I saw some evidence of a ‘don’t give a dam’ attitude among the players—not toward me—but some of the players just had a ‘don’t give a damn’ attitude around practice” (Student Unrest—Andros, Dee; Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Oregon Stater*). The *Oregon Stater* didn't further expand on the ‘evidence’ that Dee Andros mentioned, but Dee Andros was clearly trying frame the situation as acts of defiance and unruly behavior, not one related to racism or culture.

In a personal two-page statement from Dee Andros¹⁸, he explains his reasons for suspending Fred Milton of behalf of his unshaven beard. He boastfully mentions that he is “happy and proud to state that of the more than 4000 communications received in the past 10 days, all but a small handful have overwhelmingly endorsed these concepts of training and team discipline and have congratulated the University on the standards we have established and sought to maintain in our athletic programs”¹⁹. It's impossible to verify the 4000 communications that he spoke of, but there are several petitions in the President's archive collection that had a little over 400 signatures of support for Dee Andros from community members including graduate students and wives, OSU athletes, and athletes of Corvallis High School²⁰. In addition to petitions, there were also statements of support from other local organizations and community members.

¹⁸ The statement was found in the archives with a title and a date, but it was unclear whether it was published in some manner or who it was sent to.

¹⁹ Jensen and Young I: General Subject and Correspondent Files: Black Student Union, 1968-1969. Statement of Dee Andros.

²⁰ Jensen and Young I: General Subject and Correspondent Files: Black Student Union, 1968-1969. Petitions in Support of Dee Andros.

Dee Andros responded to the BSU's concerns of discrimination and human rights by stating that those accusations "are based on a complete misconception of the purpose and objectives of team discipline indoctrination"²¹. Dee Andros was also quoted in *The Daily Barometer* as saying "there never has been nor will there ever be racism in my department" ("Coaches, Athletes Reaffirm Position"). It is unclear whether the 'Statement of Dee Andros, 4 March 1969' was ever released to the general public or any other outlet of communication. What is clear is that there was a huge misunderstanding from the OSU community about the reasons why this incident, among many others, was indeed about race and institutional racism. One of the statements released by the 'Athletes of Oregon State' explains that "the issue that lies before us, the very essence of this movement, is a question of administrative authority and prerogative—it is not racial, it is not black against White—it involves the testing of a rule which has stood firm and been respected by all whom it affected at this institution for many years"²².

Amidst the countless petitions and letters of support for Dee Andros from the OSU and Corvallis community, there were also a group of faculty who seemed to be deeply concerned about the departure of the Black students. Without proper context, it cannot be assumed that the Black students truly felt supported by academic faculty. However, there was a letter to the editor submitted to *The Daily Barometer* by Dr. Peter C. List, an instructor of philosophy, that was signed by approximately 100 other members of the OSU faculty in support of the Black students. The letter was published in both *The Daily Barometer* and *The Scab Sheet*. The letter expressed sentiments that the university needed to take appropriate action regarding the interests of the Black students and their human rights. Dr. List writes that the departure of the Black students:

"questions the legitimacy of the assumption that OSU is a public institution sensitive to the diverse cultural values found in our society and world, and it makes a mockery of the commitment this university has to inquire into the nature of such values". ("Faculty Asks OSU Blacks to Remain").

The letter closed by encouraging Black students who have left or were planning to leave to come back, stating that "we urgently need your help in making Oregon State a true and viable university" ("Faculty Asks OSU Blacks to Remain"). Statements of similar sentiment were also highlighted in *The Daily Barometer*. The Oregon Council for New Politics submitted a statement that read:

"The issue at Oregon State University between the Black Student Union and the Athletic Department is not the hair on Fred Miltons' face. It is the right of every individual to express himself within the context of his own cultural heritage. The Oregon Council for New Politics supports the position of the Black Student Union at Oregon State and hopes that a solution can be peacefully achieved which guarantees Mr. Milton's rights and does not jeopardize his enrollment at Oregon State University". ("Politics Group Supports BSU")

²¹ Jensen and Young I: General Subject and Correspondent Files: Black Student Union, 1968-1969. Statement of Dee Andros.

²² Jensen and Young I: General Subject and Correspondent Files: Black Student Union, 1968-1969. Statement from OSU Athletes

During the twelve days of boycotting the BSU was actively trying to garner support of their boycott from faculty and other student organizations throughout the duration of their boycott. By March 4th, two days before their Walk-Out, they had 67 professors who were also boycotting their classes and 12 student organizations who supported the boycott. Some of these organizations included the ASOSU Student Senate, the Student Action Committee, Foreign Student Association, American Federation of Teachers, Students for a Democratic Society, President's Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs, and 2 sororities. The BSU even gained support from the student body presidents of OSU, University of Washington, University of Oregon, Portland State University, and Western Oregon State College (O.C.E) (*The Scab Sheet Vol. 1 No. 1*). Mike Smith, President of the BSU, stated at the final rally on the day of the Walk-Out that:

“to accept the administrative tokenism we have been offered would be denying our own worth as human beings, thus viewing our lives as conspicuously unimportant to the world in which we live. This, in itself, would be an act of self-defamation. It would be impossible to accept this position and maintain our dignity as Black people”. (*The Scab Sheet, Vol. 1, No. 3*)

The failure of the administration to fully adopt the Administrative Proposal prior to the beard incident and meet the needs of Black students was indeed an irreparable mistake considering that OSU lost over half of its Black student population because of it. Perhaps the debacle with Dee Andros was just a distraction that redirected the attention of the public from the real issues of Black students. Even so, the perceived neglect from the administration and hostility from the greater community that the BSU faced was enough to warrant what *The Scab Sheet* labeled as the ‘Black Exodus’ (*The Scab Sheet, Vol. 1 No. 3*). The BSU released a statement that was published in *The Daily Barometer* that commented on the alternate proposal that President Jensen had offered them. They warned the community of their departure and stated that “we hope that those in this institution who are allowing these acts to be perpetuated are willing to accept the consequences. This was truly a dangerous decision on the part of the puppet of this institution. WE WILL STAY OUT!” (“Faculty Senate Postpones Action”).

If one were to trace the events of the BSU boycott using only *The Daily Barometer*²³, they would find that discussions related to the BSU or the boycott were far and few in between, especially after the walk-out. The first article to appear related to the BSU after the ‘walk-out’ was on April 8th, 1969 titled “BSU to Continue Here”. It introduces George Carr as the newly elected President of the BSU. Carr mentions that there are “17 Black students presently in the organization and to the whereabouts of the ones that left, some are in California and others are in the Portland area” (“BSU to Continue Here at OSU”). There was one additional article discussing the response of the administration to the BSU Walk-Out and it was titled “BSU President Carr named to

²³ The aftermath of the BSU Walk-Out is challenging to follow and research due to a lack of *The Daily Barometer* coverage and few administrative files that discussed the boycott. It's difficult to comment in detail the efforts of the administration post-boycott without proper documentation, but there are *The Daily Barometer* articles and administrative records that provide some context.

President's Commission". The article discussed the President's Commission on Human Rights and Responsibilities and how it was currently conducting a thorough investigation of the controversial Fred Milton case. The Commission was charged during the controversy to hear appeals involving human rights and responsibilities and report their findings to the President ("BSU President Carr Named to President's Commission"). Months after the submission of his appeal, Fred Milton was officially dismissed from the football team after his appeal was rejected.

On June 24th, 1969, Karl Helms, the Director of the Office of Minority Affairs, told *The Daily Barometer* that "there is pressure being applied by members of the community on the powers that be in the administration to keep any minority students, preferably Black, off this campus. There is one hell of a lot of racism behind this" ("Karl Helms Scores OSU Racism"). In the same article, Helms described his frustration with the lack of administrative response to the necessity of recruiting minority students, especially since so many Black students had left the university during the Walk-Out.

As a result of the Walk-Out and the increased pressure to do something to retain Black students, the university announced on July 10, 1969 that they would be creating an "Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs and Special Services". This committee would be comprised of faculty and administrators from around campus and two members of the BSU were invited to be on the committee.

However, when asked about the future of the "Three Percent Program", the Dean of Faculty was quoted in *The Daily Barometer* saying that "I suspect we will continue some sort of program similar to what we have had" ("Minority Advisory Committee to be Named"). The "Three Percent Program" was a program that allowed economically disadvantaged students to be admitted even though their academic achievement during high school didn't satisfy university requirements. The "Three Percent" was the percent at which this program was capped and could no longer accept new students ("Minority Support Plan").

A new office was eventually created as a recommendation of the Advisory Committee to support minority students that combined the former 'Office of Minority Affairs' and the 'Office of Special Service Programs' into one office called the 'Office of Minority and Special Services' which was staffed by six people. The Assistant Director, J. R. Fernandez stated that "children of minority groups are being pushed into the Anglo-Saxon mold and are forced to reject their heritage in order to succeed. Many can't and, consequently, never make it in today's society. We must begin to fill in the gaps" ("Minority Students Get Assistance").

The Daily Barometer published an article on July 24th, 1969 regarding the advisory committee stated that "Oregon State is at a very crucial point in its dealings with minority students, disadvantaged students, and those who are otherwise in need of advocates, special assistance, and guidance". This is a clear indication that although OSU was not equipped with the proper tools and methods to address campus racism or unrest, this was a pivotal moment for attempting to do something about it. With no mention of the word race, this article discussed a report from the new committee which talked about the need to pay more attention to "minority students". The report also stated that:

"students from minority groups have been debased, deprived, and generally mishandled. Though we may not like their resentments, though we may not

understand their actions, their problems and their desires, we must live up the responsibility and provide for them program and atmosphere designed to give them every opportunity for finding a new place in society, we must employ the services of people who will accomplish this task for us” (“Crucial Point in Minority Affairs”)

Months later, the university was beginning to make some strides towards assisting minority students at OSU by allocating \$1000 to the Office of Minority Affairs and Special Programs. According to *The Daily Barometer* at that time, “The topic of minority affairs has been buried under countless other Oregon State University priorities at until just recently” (“Minority Students Get Assistance”). Change was clearly not advancing very quickly considering that many Black students at OSU left the university in March of 1969. Articles that appeared after the October 24th mentioned that the Office of Minority and Special Programs was beginning to receive some additional funding from various donations, including Panhellenic, Interfraternity Council, and the Athletic Department. The office needed funding quickly while the administration determined a budget for the office. The needs of the students were urgent, but the administration was slow to respond to those needs so the office was forced to seek alternative sources of funding.

Analysis of 1969

The BSU Walk-Out of 1969 was the first time in OSU’s history that Black students shook the administration to the core and forced the entire institution to reconsider its minority efforts. Although OSU has grown and changed in a variety of ways since 1969, I will argue that the themes identified previously are relevant for 1969 and thereafter which suggest that things haven’t changed much in regards to race relations. There are many approaches to understanding the events that transpired during the time of the BSU Walk-Out of 1969, but the frameworks of CDA, CRM, and CBRI can illuminate aspects of the event that are critical to understanding the progress, or lack thereof in the years following the events.

Because race and racism are socially constructed ideologies that pervade multiple levels of society, these ideologies can shift on the individual level throughout time. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, many people began to understand race differently because according to law, race could no longer be a factor to discriminate others in the workforce, education, and other public entities. Therefore, in 1969 when Dee Andros kicked Fred Milton off the football team because he broke a rule that applied to everyone on the team, it was inconceivable to the majority White students, faculty, and Corvallis community members that Fred Milton was a victim of racial discrimination.

However, considering the ways in which race and power are replicated through speech and communication, the variety of responses from the OSU and Corvallis community suggest numerous ways in which Black students were further marginalized during these events. The widespread acceptance of CBRI, the polarization of support for Dee Andros versus support for the Black student, and the neglect from the OSU administration are ways that Black students were isolated and misrepresented by the media during the time of the BSU Walk-Out. This type of misrepresentation was

occurring on a national level with Black men being portrayed as militant, violent, and uncontrollable and occurs even today.

One of the most prominent features of how the OSU, Corvallis, and Oregon community responded to the events that occurred during the time of the BSU Walk-Out was the denial of racism as a factor for Fred Milton being kicked off the football team. Dee Andros denied racism on multiple occasions, but his position was most clearly stated when he was quoted in *The Daily Barometer* saying “there never has been nor will there ever be racism in my department” (“Coaches, Athletes Reaffirm Position”). According to van Dijk, this type of denial of racism is used for a ‘positive Self-presentation’. Dee Andros claims the entire football department as his own and by denying racism in ‘his’ department he is reinforcing the idea that he is in control and has ownership over the team. By denying racism, it is a positive reinforcement for his own image.

A CDA framework understands his position as one of asserting and maintaining his dominance over the team. Dee Andros response to the claims of discrimination as “complete misconceptions of the purpose of team discipline indoctrination” (Statement from 1969). Here, he is suggesting that it is other people who don’t understand coaching or team building. Even using the word ‘indoctrination’ to describe his philosophy of coaching reveals that he is actively trying to maintain a position of power over the members of his team. This is important to consider because Dee Andros was a White football coach attempting to indoctrinate a Black football player during a time when Black communities around the nation were trying to form their own identity that had been taken from them for so long.

Furthermore, the punishment for Fred Milton’s disobedience was considered by Dee Andros and his supporters to be a matter of fairness. According to their philosophy, it didn’t matter was his race was because the rules were imposed for every team member. However, this type of color-blind philosophy is completely dismissive of the overall situation that the Black students were trying bring to light. The injustices spanned far beyond the situation of Fred Milton. This connects back the theme of campus climate. In 1969, the campus climate was racially insensitive, unsupportive of the Black students making demands, and in many ways hostile towards the Black students. The widely accepted CBRI during this time

The way that the administration chose to respond to the demands of the “Administrative Proposal” which outlined various actions that the university needed to take to better support Black and other minority students, was not conducive to meeting the needs of those students. The BSU made their demands very clear and was meeting with the administration to work with them. After the Fred Milton situation happened, it seemed to become a distraction for administration and they were not prepared to effectively address the initial proposal that were brought to the spotlight. Perhaps this is because Football was and is often the face of the university so anything that threatens the image of football threatens the image of the university.

Once the football case had passed over, the administration decided to redirect their attention to minority affairs with the creation of a new office and a new committee. By that time, it was already too late because over half of the Black students had already left campus permanently during the BSU Walk-Out. Responding to the demands with the creation of a committee ties to the theme of administrative response and approach. A signature characteristic of this response and approach theme is the slow response rate. It

wasn't until June 1969 when the administration formally created the Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs and Special Services even though the BSU Walk-Out occurred in March of 1969. The President's Commission on Human Rights and Responsibilities also didn't finalize investigation of Fred Milton's appeal to the university until the middle of May 1969 in which his appeal was rejected and he was officially dismissed from the football team.

The untimely and minimal response of the university suggest that "minority issues" were not placed at the highest priority on the administrative agenda. *The Daily Barometer* even stated that "the topic of minorities affairs has been buried under countless other priorities at Oregon State University until just recently" ("Minority Students Get Assistance"). When the first report was released by the Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs and Special Services, the language in the report still maintained a high level of authoritarianism that CDA would challenge. The report states: "Though we may not like their resentments, though we may not understand their actions, their problems and their desires, we must live up to the responsibility and provide for them program and atmosphere designed to give them every opportunity for finding a new place in society" ("Crucial Point in Minority Affairs"). Even though the latter portion of the statement indicates a willingness to work towards improving the campus environment for minority students, most of the statement suggests an "us vs. them" mentality through the use of the word 'we' and 'they' without acknowledging the role that the institution has played in the foundation of the issues.

After the BSU Walk-Out, the 'Administrative Proposal' was never mentioned again in *The Daily Barometer*. The only notable involvement between students and the administration were the two seats that were made for members of the BSU on the Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs and Special Services. This is not to say that students weren't further involved with the administration, but once the academic year ended and the committee work went into the summer it can be assumed that students were not heavily involved. The lack of student involvement and ownership relates closely to the theme of student-administration relationship. Students make demands and the university attempts to address them without involving the students in the process even though the demands provided the university with direction.

The events surrounding the BSU Walk-Out, Fred Milton, the Athletic Department, and OSU Administration are extremely important in contextualizing the next two events that are examined in this research. The BSU Walk-Out can be considered a foundational moment for OSU in which minority affairs no longer remained an afterthought. In order to evaluate and understand the present state of minority affairs or "diversity and inclusion" to determine whether progress has been made, the BSU Walk-Out can be used as a starting point to draw connections to each subsequent event and identify areas of growth, regression, or stagnancy.

All OSU Boycott 1996

Setting the Stage: Affirmative Action and Celebrating Diversity

The 1990's was an era in which the United States was faced the difficult task of moving forward in an ever-growing multicultural society with a legacy of slavery, segregation laws, racism, and colonialism. Although this still holds true in our current society, it's nonetheless important to contextualize the 1990's in order to understand how and why OSU approached matters of 'diversity' and the role that the 1996 All OSU Boycott played in shaping the university during the age of affirmative action²⁴, celebrating cultural diversity, and the increased use of the term political correctness²⁵.

On June 14th, 1997, President Clinton asked the American people to join him in a "great national effort to perfect the promise of America for this new time as we seek to build our more perfect union...that is the unfinished work of our time, to lift the burden of race and redeem the promise of America" (Clinton, 1997). Affirmative action and "One America in the 21st Century", an initiative on race, were significant markers of the Clinton Administration. Affirmative action policies were largely intended to increase the number of minorities that participated in various institutions, such as universities and businesses. During this time, affirmative action policies became a highly contested and controversial topic as many argued that affirmative action policies had adverse implications for White people.

Though segregation had been abolished for 20 years, many issues still permeated in communities of color, such as police brutality, extreme poverty, increased health problems, and mass incarceration. However, people were not silent about these issues. The 1992 Los Angeles riots, a response to violent police brutality against Rodney King was a significant event that brought awareness to issues of police brutality against people of color and resulted in one of the largest riots in American history. During the 90's was also the beginning of the widespread use of the term "political correctness" which was deemed by conservatives as a form of censorship and infringement of free speech rights, a topic of debate that continues today. Some believe you should be able to say whatever you desire while others believe that language plays a significant role in shaping culture and society. This is important to remember in the context of the All OSU Boycott because many of the racial incidents that occurred were related to hate speech.

While these things were happening on a national level, in 1996 students rose to the occasion at OSU when a series of racial incidents occurred on campus within the span of a few weeks.

²⁴ Anderson, Terry H. *The pursuit of fairness: A history of affirmative action*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

²⁵ A term used to describe the avoidance of language that can be seen as marginalizing, exclusive, or offensive to groups of people who are traditionally discriminated upon.

Campus Climate

In the years leading up to the 1996 All OSU Boycott, the administration attempted to create more open lines of communication between students and administrators to discuss student needs and concerns by having President Byrne meet with the students at the Cultural Centers once a term. These meetings occurred for several years until the year that John Byrne left OSU in 1996. These meetings were not public, but they did seem to provide a platform for students of color to “lobby” the administration regarding issues pertaining to students and the Cultural Centers.

While there may have been a more direct line of communication with students, it cannot be assumed that this was an indicator of a strong, reciprocal relationship between students and administration. In the document titled “Summary of topics discussed at President Byrne’s meetings with students at the cultural centers Fall ’93, Spring ’94, and Fall ’94” was a list of suggestions, concerns, and questions that students from the cultural centers directed towards the administration (M). This summary outline issues related to academic affairs, faculty, instruction, Ethnic Studies proposal, and various facility needs of the cultural centers. There seemed to be strong emphasis on increasing support for students of color, increasing recruitment efforts of faculty of color, addressing educational efforts for faculty to increase their cultural sensitivity and awareness, and creating an Ethnic Studies department. The summary indicated that “student attrition is caused more by a lack of support and hostile environment than by academic problems” and “many faculty need to be sensitized to special issues affecting the success of students of color” (Meetings with President Byrne 1993-1994). The response from the administration was to create a ‘Diversity Workgroup’ that would work to resolve the concerns of the students or fill any gaps in institutional knowledge that the students may not be aware of. Phyllis Lee, the Director of Multicultural Affairs, wrote email to her colleagues in administration on May 10th, 1995 stating that:

Although many of the concerns addressed to Student Affairs have been answered over a period of time, having the direct comments from you in a comprehensive report will likely help reduce that perception some students continue to hold that ‘nothing happens’ and instead, reinforce the fact that ‘administration does care’”. (Meetings with President Byrne 1993-1994)

It can be assumed that these issues were still relevant to students in 1996 even though these meetings took place in 1993-1994. This context helps understand the campus climate leading up to the All OSU Boycott that happened on March 13th, 1996. In addition to these meetings, there was a statement from a community member in Corvallis that was sent to President Risser a few months prior to the Boycott that illuminates the overt racial insensitivity and ignorance from some members of the community. The statement was referring to the creation of the new Minority Education Office that President Risser recently created. The Corvallis community member, Mrs. Miller, stated that “as a taxpayer of this state, a parent who is paying for their child’s OSU education without any government help, and a state employee who has not had a cost of living raise in a couple of years, I am very upset to think we are creating more departments at OSU for specialized groups” (Minority Students—Boycott 1995-1997).

In the weeks leading up to the All OSU Boycott there were a series of racist and racially charged events that occurred that stirred up the campus and Corvallis community. These incidents included the defacing of an ASOSU candidate's poster with racist comments, a public fraternity ritual in which members dressed in white robes and walked around campus, and students in the dorms attempting to urinate and spit on a Black student while calling him racial slurs. There were other racial incidents that were occurring, but these incidents were not necessarily reported on to the public (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). These incidents reflect a "chilly" campus climate that eventually motivated, in particular, Black students, to organize a one-day boycott of classes that would include a march across campus, a public speak-out, and a round table discussion at the end of the day. These students were frustrated with the administrative efforts and response to these events and may not have felt that the administration cared. However, as the records indicate, the university was attempting to address campus racism and inclusivity prior to the Boycott. The following section highlights some of these efforts from the university, including the response to a proposal from student activists in the early 90's.

OSU's Efforts Towards Inclusivity

In late 1990, a proposal was sent anonymously from "Concern Student Leaders" to John V. Byrne, the OSU President at the time, titled "Proposal to Confront Campus-Wide Discrimination" (Meetings with President Byrne 1993-1994). This was obviously not the first time since the BSU Walk-Out that OSU student leaders felt compelled to bring issues to the forefront of the university, especially issues related to race and discrimination. This proposal charged the university to adopt a "Zero Tolerance" policy that would hold others accountable for racial and other discriminatory harassment through disciplinary actions or expulsion, develop relevant courses about diversity and culture, implement an educational program for all faculty and staff, and conduct an external review of the Office of Affirmative Action. They concluded with a sense of urgency stating that "your immediate attention and timely response is appropriate. This is a serious matter; lives literally depend on it" (Meetings with President Byrne 1993-1994).

The administration didn't take this lightly and throughout the following several years, there were significant changes made to address the concerns of students of color. In 1991, OSU adopted a new policy on discriminatory harassment which also included recommendations for how to respond to such cases. Additionally, in 1991 OSU established the Office of Multicultural Affairs which would "provide counsel and assistance to students, and service to educate the entire community about issues of diversity and cultural awareness" (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). In 1992, the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Program (DPD) was established as an educational program to help faculty incorporate topics of discriminations issues and systems of oppression in to their curriculum, a program that currently still stands with some modifications including a Baccalaureate Core requirement for all students at OSU. In 1994, OSU created the President's Commission on Hate Crimes and Hate-Related Activities to create an avenue for the OSU community to report incidents and respond accordingly. Additionally, after a long struggle to garner support and funding for the 'Department of Ethnic Studies', it was finally implemented in 1995 and began offering

courses in the Fall of 1996 (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). One impediment to the creation of the office was from the Department of History which wrote a letter stating that:

“The faculty of the Department of History does not support the creation of an Ethnic Studies Department at Oregon State University. We nevertheless strongly support the goal of diversifying the faculty and diversifying the student body, increasing the presence of minority groups on campus, and expanding the offers at OSU on minority cultures and perspectives. We, however, don’t believe that this proposal adequately meets those goals”. (Ethnic Studies Department Proposal for Establishment 1993-1994)

This resistance suggests that there was a campus climate even amongst faculty that was not conducive to advancing the necessary diversity goals of the university. Even though Ethnic Studies eventually became an established department in 1996, by 2015 it had been downgraded to the Ethnic Studies Program due to the continuous struggle to maintain sources of funding. This should lead one to believe that the campus climate continues to be detrimental to the development of Ethnic Studies.

With Phyllis Lee leading the Office of Multicultural Affairs and guiding OSU in matters of diversity, there were many changes in progress to improve campus climate and work towards making OSU a place for all students to thrive. However, these changes took time didn’t necessarily protect students of color from experiencing various forms of aggression or discrimination. Administration transitioned when Paul G. Risser took over as President in January of 1996²⁶. Little did he know that he would be quickly faced with student unrest as a result of racial discrimination and harassment.

Unlike 1969, the OSU administration was more equipped to deal with sensitive matters related to identity and student activism. Amidst these years of coordinated administrative effort to address campus racism, on Wednesday, March 13, 1996, about 27 years since the BSU Boycott of 1969, the Black Students of OSU organized an “All OSU Boycott” in response to the racial incidents that had been occurring that term.

²⁶ <http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/omeka/exhibits/show/presidents/risser/risser/>

All OSU Boycott Presented by the Black Students at OSU

The video²⁷ created by the student members of Lionel B. Harris Black Cultural Center provides insight into who organized the boycott, why they organized, how they organized, and what they hoped to accomplish from the event. The video opens with slides that say "...in response to recent racial harassments committed within the university community...with the objective to promote the student activism and timely response by the O.S.U administration need to end such abuses" (1996 OSU Student Boycott and March). April Waddy, a 1996 Black Cultural Center Leader, introduces the video by stating:

"Black students on campus were very frustrated at the racial injustices that seemed to be going on in a continuous pattern in a three-week period... the university was not handling the situation well in a timely manner or anything so the students were outraged, and the boycott was planned as a way to blow off steam, a way to show our outrage through some type of concerted, coordinated effort". (1996 OSU Student Boycott and March)

The All OSU Boycott was planned well over a week in advance with emails and posters sent all over the campus on March 6th, 1996. Their marketing materials clearly listed the incidents that occurred and the demands that they were making. Their demands were concisely stated as:

- 1) A safe and comfortable environment at Oregon State University for all Black students, staff, and faculty.*
 - 2) Overall improvement of the climate at Oregon State University through increased recruitment and retention of Black students, staff, and faculty.*
 - 3) Fair, just, and respectful treatment of all Black students, staff, and faculty".*
- (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996)

In addition to their specific demands, one of the flyers promoting the All OSU Boycott described the purpose of the boycott as a way to "reduce racial tensions and to create a more conducive atmosphere for Black students to excel academically in higher education; increase the physical and emotional safety of Black students, staff, and faculty; and an increase in awareness and consciousness about the Black community" (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). The racial incidents that occurred on campus that term instigated a strong response from the Black students and other community members at OSU. The primary incidents that were listed in the promotional materials for the boycott included the following:

²⁷ 2-hr video that was put together by the "student membership of the Lionel B. Harris Black Cultural Center" (1996 OSU Student Boycott and March). This record highlighted many parts of the boycott and has several student organizers speaking about their reasons for initiating the boycott. The video helps to fill the void of student voices that are missing from 1969, therefore, helping to understand the situation from their perspective.

"1) Defacing posters of both a Black candidate for student government and Anita Hill. 2) Verbal and physical abuse of Black students in the residence halls. 3) Numerous racist incidents taking place at off campus living groups". (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996)

The incident that was highlighted the most by both *The Daily Barometer* and April Waddy, Student Coordinator at the Black Cultural Center, was the attack of a Black freshman student who was "called 'nigger' several times by two suspects as he walked between Poling and Cauthorn Halls. The suspects then attempted to spit and urinate on him, according to Oregon State police reports" (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). April Waddy read the personalized detailed statement from the student who was the victim of the attack which stated that:

"I noticed a couple of guys on top of the 5th floor balcony at Cauthorn. I didn't pay attention to them until one of them made a spitting sound and I figured they were drunk. It surprised me when the spit landed a couple of feet to my right. So, I said 'what's up?'. One of them said 'hey nigger, why don't you speak proper English?'. By this time, I was completely underneath the little balconies and was trying to open the door to the first floor with my key... 'what?', I called back, not believing my ears. 'Go back to Africa nigger' he said, along with many other racial slurs. I was trying to open the door while I caught up arguing with him, basically telling him that he was only brave enough to say anything when five floors and a locked door separated us. Then I heard, 'I'm going to piss on you nigger' and a steady stream of liquid hit the ground five feet in front of me. Following that were dozens of cigarette butts along with what looked like putrid tobacco spit. The thought that this could have hit me made me sick". (1996 OSU Student Boycott and March)

During the speak out portion of the boycott, a guest speaker from MEChA²⁸ by the name of Francisco Ponce emphasized that racism happens to every minority on this campus. He then gave an example of racism that he and his brother encountered by the police in Corvallis. He was arrested for not having any identification, other than his student I.D. Following Francisco was another student who recently ran for student body whose spoke about racist incidents of his posters being defaced by the word 'nigger'.

Additional incidents of hate, racism, and bigotry were emphasized at the speak out that further expose the campus climate during 1996. For example, a poem was read during this time by a student named Shia S. Barnett titled "Freedom on My Mind" that alluded to some of her experiences living in Corvallis as a Black woman. She spoke that:

"White women clutch their purses and men clench their fists...Intimidated by my skin, my life, my shackle-bruised wrists...Freedom on my mind... Bookstores watch my movements...Advisors question my academic strides. My existence here summer up to quotas and free rides. Freedom on my mind...". (1996 OSU Student Boycott and March)

²⁸ <http://www.chicanxdeaztlan.org/>

The last portion of the All OSU Boycott included a public roundtable discussion that was intended to debrief the day and talk about what steps to take next. One of the student organizers reiterated the need to continue to push the administration to take action saying:

“do not be comfortable with what has happened today. We have not received any information from administration. They have not promised to meet any of our demands. So, we cannot rejoice just yet... For one, I don't know why President Risser didn't cancel his trip... I encourage you all, next time you run into administration, ask them 'have you met those demands that the Black students have asked you to meet?' because they will not make it a point to meet those demands if they do not feel a strong force from students”. (1996 OSU Student Boycott and March).

Although the student organizer encouraged students to increase pressure on the administration, *The Oregonian* mentioned that “Waddy said students weren't seeking to target or blame the administration” followed by a direct quote from April Waddy saying that “we are targeting the racial climate on campus...however, the university should deal more swiftly” (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996).

Response from Administration and the OSU Community

The All OSU Boycott of 1996 was reported to have between 1500-2000 students who actively participated in a march across campus ending at the Memorial Union²⁹. It captured the attention of a large student population, faculty, staff, *The Oregonian*, *The Gazette Times of Corvallis*, *The Daily Barometer*, CNN, local news stations, and the local community. Even the Benton County Sheriff's Office released a public statement abhorring the racial incidents that took place on campus and calling for the community to come together to prevent incidents like that from happening again (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). The majority of publications that were released to the public shared similar sentiments as the Benton County Sheriff's Office, however, there were several *The Daily Barometer* articles that were released that were highly dismissive and even opposed to the Boycott. *The Daily Barometer* decided to publish articles that were both in support of the Boycott and also those that rejected the Boycott.

The Boycott, similar to the 1969 Walk-Out, stimulated a great controversy with many divided opinions. Contrary to the Walk-Out, it seemed that the majority of people expressed their support for the Boycott with only a few articles in *The Daily Barometer* that suggested otherwise. Most of the articles in support of the boycott or in response to the racial incidents that occurred throughout the term called for unity, peace, better understanding, speaking out against bigotry and racism, and so forth.

One student believed that the media attention that the Boycott gained was going to “discourage students of color from attending this school” and that “our school has been labeled a racist university because a few morons decided to voice their warped opinions” (Krzeminski, 3/14/1996). This person also stated that they “don't believe we have a

²⁹ <http://mu.oregonstate.edu/muhome>

problem here at our campus that is worth missing classes over”. Some other students co-authored a letter titled “Boycott ineffective” that included 5 co-signers discussing their reasons for why they believed that the Boycott didn’t actually address racism and was “pointless”. They focused in on the idea that “we are focusing too much on diversity and not enough on unity”. The letter doesn’t mention if these students attended the event or not, but they seemed to be concerned that the event was only about Black students stating that “Black students are not the only group which have been the recipients of hateful activity. There have been several other unpublicized hate related incidents within the past few weeks in which a variety of students from other ethnic backgrounds, gender, religious views, and sexual orientation have been affected” (Webster et al., 3/14/1996). Seemingly unbeknownst to these students, there were in fact students at the Boycott who spoke about how racism isn’t only an issue that Black people face.

According to both the supporters and non-supporters of the Boycott, they report that most students aren’t racist and discuss some form of sympathy to those impacted by racial injustice. Others were more open about their racist ideologies. One student even wrote that they believed “the rally did not focus on all racial prejudice, and it focused on some incidents that I don’t believe were racially based” (Richter, 3/15/1996). They then related their experiences, as a White person, to the experiences that the Black students spoke about during the Boycott such as being called “White trash” and “White piece of shit” or being denied entrance to a party. This student also decided to express that they have decided which types of racism are more acceptable and which aren’t. They wrote that:

“All races have to aware of racial prejudice, but we all have to be aware of our hypersensitive reactions to the ways that we are treated. Being excluded from a private party, being treated rudely in a store, or seeing a bunch of fraternity members perform a harmless ritual in hooded robes do not pose a racial threat. One the other hand, racial slurs written on campus posters, and telling a fellow American citizen to “go back to Africa” is unacceptable”. (Richter, 3/15/1996)

A few months after the Boycott, a letter to the editor was published titled “Refocus education”. The student wrote that they were “tired of hearing about OSU’s Cultural Diversity programs” and then proceeded to comment on the “Cultural Diversity issue”. They said that “we as a school shouldn’t lower our standards just so racial minorities have a better chance to attend college, especially when they only have a 32.5 to 44 percent rate of reaching graduation”. They also spoke about the Boycott and expressed hateful sentiments towards it and questioning its overall purpose stating:

“Think about the ‘All OSU Ban’ that the African American Cultural center put on. If these so called ‘students’ were really interested in education they wouldn’t have boycotted classes for an entire day. And those black T-shirts that they wore, with ‘Black Power’ scrawled across them...hhmmmm. Can you just imagine the scandal, and the expulsions that would follow if White males were to SKIP class and walk across campus wearing White T-shirts with ‘White Pride’ written across them?! I think this institution needs to reevaluate what they support”. (Bastian, 6/7/1996)

The Daily Barometer supposedly represents the larger student body and attempts to report from “both sides” of controversies. There is no such outlet for the administration and therefore it was challenging to find documents in the archives that specifically reported on the exact response of the administration. The most immediate public response from the administration was during the Press Release portion of the Boycott from the Executive Vice President and Provost, Roy Arnold. The press asked Roy what the response of the university is and he responded by saying:

“All of the events in the month of February that brought about the feeling of the leadership of this activity that there needed to be a clear and strong statement about the inappropriateness of the sorts of behavior that have been well publicized. We certainly support the right of the students and the need for them to make this kind of a statement and have encouraged that although we are not canceling any classes, we are encouraging faculty to be sensitive to the students’ needs...I certainly strongly encourage and support this sort of an expression of a concern b. let’s move forward from here and use all of these events as a teachable moment for all of us to learn and grow in our understanding of each other”.
(1996 OSU Student Boycott and March)

Following Provost Arnold’s statement, there were unseen members of the crowd who were chanting “Where’s Risser?” several times before the Provost answered follow up questions. That was the only immediate response to the public from the administration that was found in my archival research. Immediately following the racial incidents that occurred in February, the administration published a statement in *The Daily Barometer* titled “Diverse by Choice” that was signed by the leadership of the administration, including President Risser. The statement outlined OSU’s principle of diversity and included several expectations that university had for its community members. The primary statement read:

“Oregon State University, like all other social institutions, determines its values. In this regard, we assertively expressed the valuing of diversity as a cherished institutional characteristic. Some organizations achieve diversity as the result of a chance occurrence. We are diverse by choice. Since we have chosen to be diverse we also choose to work actively and consistently to nurture and support the full range of human diversity in our midst” (Arnold et al., 2/28/1996).

In addition to the initial statement, the College of Science Department Chairs, Program Directors, and Dean’s Office published a statement in congruence to the initial one that listed 27 faculty within the College of Science who supported the “Diverse by Choice” initiative. Neither of these statements mentioned the racial incidents that occurred or anything about racism.

Months after the Boycott, one email was found addressed to “Black students at Oregon State University” from President Risser. It is unclear whether the administration had been meeting regularly with students after the Boycott. The email served as a way to reassure students that administration was not ignoring their demands. Risser writes that

“although some time has passed since the All School Boycott sponsored by the Black Student of Oregon State University, I want to assure you that the history behind that activity and the demands that you made are not being overlooked or neglected” (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). President Risser continued the email by discussing some of the initiatives that were being planned such as:

“improved recruitment of student, faculty and staff of color; improved retention of student, faculty, and staff of color, Faculty Senate forums on diversity, the African American, Asian American, and Hispanic American Education Offices to open in the Fall of 1997 as well as initiatives yet to be identified, training and development programs for students, faculty, and staff. Clearly, a campus-wide strategy will ensure that we have a comprehensive plan”. (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996)

President Risser concludes the email by stating that administration would “welcome your advice, participation, and involvement” (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). There is no evidence of a follow up email from students. Without additional student perspective, it cannot be determined how they actually responded to his. This letter is the only response from administration to students who were stakeholders of the All-OSU Boycott that was identified. This response is significant, however, because it outlines the specific actions taken by the university on behalf the demands made by students.

The All-OSU Boycott happened right in the middle of many programmatic and institutional changes and may have influenced the university to do approach their diversity work differently. The Boycott brought the issues to the forefront of the OSU community that were previously unrecognized by anyone who wasn’t directly involved in the diversity work. Many people were shocked to hear that racism was prevalent at OSU and the Boycott forced people on campus to be more conscious of race and identity. The Boycott was intended to bring about racial awareness and place additional pressure on the administration in their efforts towards inclusivity and diversity—it did just that. Larry D. Roper, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs during 1996, wrote a response to the question “March 1996 students rallied against hate at OSU, but has anything really changed since then?” that *The Chronicle, A Publication of the University Honors College* posed to him. As an administrator, his response can be considered a gauge of the “administrative climate” at the time. He writes that:

“while we might not have seen major changes in the structure and functioning of the campus in the past year, I do believe there is significant change in the force and direction of energy being exerted. I strongly believe that this energy is a sign of hope. There is significant effort being poured into restructuring and constructing positive relationship networks, work is being done to foster stronger community on campus, and energy focused on improving our connections to external diverse communities. In addition, significant effort is focused on bringing visibility, audibility, and centrality to those who have been made to feel faceless, nameless, voiceless, and marginal”. (Petersen, 6/4/1997).

Other administrators and faculty answered the same question sharing similar sentiments to Larry Roper regarding the Boycott. One administrator, Stephanie Sanford, mentioned that they “hope [the Boycott] becomes a continual reminder to students of the power they have to create a vision for OSU and our society” (Petersen, 6/4/1997). The Boycott gave momentum to increase the forces that Larry Roper mentioned and those students who organized and participated in the All OSU Boycott would leave a legacy at OSU. In June of 1998, President Risser and Phyllis Lee wrote a letter responding to demands made by the Oregon Students of Color Coalition related to hiring faculty of color. The letter discussed the many programs and initiatives that were being worked on at the time. It also mentioned that “since July 1997, we have hired 71 faculty of color”. Some of those programs included Education After High School, Exploring the Opportunities, OSU Connect, OSU Odyssey, Diversity in Faculty Hiring Committee, and a new comprehensive diversity plan (Minority Education Offices 1996-1999). The letter also stated that “while there is always room for improvement, I believe Oregon State University has made significant progress in its commitment to diversity”. Throughout my research, I was unable to locate the specific diversity plan that was referred to in this letter.

Analysis of 1996

The All OSU Boycott of 1996 was one of the most heavily attended boycotts to ever occur on the campus and it brought about a great response from the OSU and Corvallis community to abhor the overt racist incidents that had been occurring that winter. Unlike 1969, the OSU administration had actively been working with the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Affirmative Action Office to increase recruitment, retention, and develop programs to support the diverse student population prior to the actual event as a response to the student demands made in 1990 and also because there was a national pressure to increase numbers of students of color in higher education. However, the Boycott, similar to the 1969 Walk-Out, forced the university to reconsider its efforts to support marginalized students on campus. This time, the racial incidents that became a catalyst for Black students to organize were not about athletes. It was about Black students who were racially harassed after minding their own business doing activities that all students should be able to do without being disturbed on account of their race.

The 1996 All OSU Boycott was almost thirty years after the BSU Walk-Out. The Walk-Out had initiated a whole new series of offices, committees, and programming focused on assisting minority students that continued to develop well into the 90's. One would think that the campus climate would have improved from the time of the Walk-Out, but as the students indicated during the 1996 Boycott, the campus climate was still creating an unsafe environment for Black students. The faculty advisor to the Black Cultural Center in 1996, LaVerne Woods, attested to this campus climate at the roundtable discussion after the Boycott by saying “this is 27 years here...we're still doing the same things. We've got to keep fighting, keep on pushing” (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996. *The Oregonian* Article). Woods held up the newspaper clippings from 1969 and reiterated that conditions on campus has not improved much

since then. How is it that with all of these efforts, the campus climate was still the same for Black students?

It is important to bring up the theme of administrative response and approach here. President Risser indicated the variety of diversity initiatives that were currently in place prior to the Boycott, including the DPD program and the creation of the Ethnic Studies program—which received pushback from other departments on campus before and after they were implemented. The immediate response to the Boycott included a verbal statement from administration that was broadcasted on a variety of news outlets, a follow up email to the Black students at OSU, creating new committees, attempts to create a successful bias reporting system, and hiring new faculty to focus on diversity related projects such as recruitment of faculty of color. Although these responses to student activism may carry different titles, they are very similar to the responses from the 1996 administration which should lead one to question the effectiveness of those methods.

In addition to the similar responses, the theme of unchanging student demands can be highlighted here. The Black students who organized the entire Boycott also presented their demands to the university after they didn't feel like the university wasn't doing enough in a timely manner to address the racial incidents that had been occurring. Those demands are strikingly similar to the demands from the 1969 Administrative Proposal presented by the BSU³⁰. 27 years later, students were still demanding that there are increased numbers of Black students³¹, faculty, and staff at OSU, a safe environment for Black students to be in at OSU, and equitable treatment of Black students. The demands from the Boycott in 1996 were much less detailed than the Administrative Proposal that was submitted in 1969, but the overarching ideas remain unchanged. This should have been highly alarming to administrators and faculty who carried institutional memory at the time. These themes that are appearing between 1969 and 1996 suggest that the efforts of OSU, while may have had positive and compassionate intent, may not have been working. Could they have been doing more on an administrative level to address the campus climate?

Of the many responses from students, faculty, and Corvallis community members, most were in support of the Boycott, at least the ones that were published in *The Daily Barometer* and other media outlets. Many were shocked to hear of such atrocities occurring at OSU. Some were ashamed and were worried about OSU's reputation. On the other hand, there were a handful of people who wrote letters to the editor of *The Daily Barometer* that were in disbelief that racism was occurring on campus or that the Boycott was ineffective and a waste of time. CBRI was prominent within the responses from both non-supporters and supporters of the Boycott. One statement from students reinforced the color-evasion domain of CBRI by emphasizing that “we are focusing too much on diversity and not enough on unity” (Krzeminski et al., 3/14/1996). By focusing on the sameness of others and choosing to ignore race, they are perpetuating the CBRI that is detrimental to campus climate because students who hold CBRI are more likely to commit acts that are racially insensitive or prejudiced towards another race.

³⁰ Refer to section of BSU Walk-Out of 1969, p.27

³¹ In Fall of 1996, there were 174 (1.23% of the total student population) Black Students (*Enrollment Summary 1997*).

Another student demonstrated the power-evasion sect of CBRI by questioning why it was acceptable for Black students to wear shirts that said “Black Power”, but it wouldn’t be if White students wore shirts around campus that said “White Pride”. This ideology has also been referred to as reverse racism³². CBRI would suggest that this is problematic because it can lead to increase racial intolerance, lower cultural empathy and multicultural competencies—all of which are not conducive to a positive campus climate for students of color (Neville et al., 2013).

When the administration and faculty published the “Diverse by Choice” statement³³ in *The Daily Barometer*, this was also reinforcing CBRI because instead of making a statement that abhorred the racist incidents that had been occurring, they emphasized ideas of unity and sameness by agreeing upon the same set of values. CDA might also argue that the institution was bolstering its position of power by claiming ownership of diversity. Making it seem as though diversity must be artificially created by something of authority rather than occurring naturally.

Although it is not very clear the extent and details of the administrative response to the All OSU Boycott, the communication from President Risser to the Board of Higher Education prior to the Boycott can be analyzed using CDA to understand how the institution approached these racial matters. President Risser wrote that “our active participation with students has helped make the current condition one of cooperation and students believe that we genuinely care about their welfare and success” (Student Boycott in Response to Racial Incident 1996). President Risser was referring to the meetings with students from “minority groups” and cultural events that he attended since he had taken office. His statement is interesting because the tone of the statement suggests to the Board that everything is under control and students aren’t suffering. Using the word ‘cooperation’ rather than say ‘collaboration’, for example, makes it seem like the students are acting in accordance with how the university wants them to rather than working together or even against the administration. This connects to the theme of student-administration relationship as demonstrates that there is a major disconnection from the work that administration does and the involvement of students.

The statement also conveys a false reality that students are content with the efforts from the university which was clearly not that case at the time. Without creating a sense of urgency, it is unlikely that the Board or OSU was able to advance their efforts towards diversity and inclusion in a timely or effective manner which is a key component of the theme of administrative response and approach. Because student voice is only captured through the video that was created about the Boycott itself, it’s impossible to determine the way students felt about the administrative response. However, students did make it clear that they were already unsatisfied with the slow response from the administration following the specific racial incidents.

Based on the comments earlier described by Dr. Larry Roper, the students who organized the Boycott likely never saw much change during their time at OSU. This is even more probable considering that in 2015, students of color organized the Students of Color Speak out to demand that the university, once again, improve its efforts towards

³² <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/08/myth-of-reverse-racism/535689/>

³³ Refer to 1996 All OSU Boycott: Response from Administration and the OSU Community, p.45

making the university an environment that was safe, inclusive, and culturally and racially sensitive to the needs of students of color.

Students of Color Speak Out 2015

After an extensive contextual review of the student activist events in 1969 and 1996, the Students of Color Speak Out in 2015 brings us to the present. In order to examine the institution in its current state, it's essential to have historical context to draw from, to make connections, to understand the complex layers of institutionalized racism that is rampant at OSU, along with all the other predominantly White institutions. Although significant time has passed between 1969 and 1996, it is clear through this body of work that the situation on campus did not improve much for students of color at OSU. After decades of diversity initiatives, committees, commissions, new offices, and new positions, one might be surprised to find that once again, students of color are organizing and making demands of OSU on behalf of racism experienced interpersonally and institutionally.

21st Century: Racism in a "Post-Racial" Society

"It has become accepted dogma among Whites in the United States that race is no longer a central factor determining the life chances of Americans" (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich, 2011, p. 190)

The year 2015, almost twenty years after the All OSU Boycott of 1996, was in the midst of a new age of racism in the United States that commonly is referred to by conservative as "post-racial" America. With President Obama being the first Black man to be elected into federal office in 2008 and then winning a second election in 2012, White Americans began to promote through various forms of expression the idea that we live in a "post-racial" society where everyone has equal opportunities regardless of their skin color.

Meanwhile, movements like Black Lives Matter (BLM) were gaining momentum. BLM began as a response to police violence and brutality against Black people, specifically in response to the murder of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager, whose murderer was a police officer that was acquitted in 2012. However, some people began to respond to Black Lives Matter with a counter movement called "All Lives Matter". In this new era, the United States is often referred to as the most politically, socially, and culturally divided it's ever been. In the wake of this national climate, it has become challenging to make progress in the area of human rights.

In 2015, Donald Trump initiated his campaign for the Republican Party with the infamous quote: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. ... They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (The Washington Post, 2015). Throughout Donald Trump's campaign and his current administration, his rhetoric and hate speech has enabled White supremacists around the country to ignite and form coalitions against people of color.

2015 was also a year in which student activists around the nation began to respond to unhealthy campus climates that included daily micro and macro aggressions, buildings named after White supremacists, and feeling unwelcome on their campuses. Instead of dealing with strictly overt racist events, racism was now taking a toxic new form that only those who experienced it could understand.

Furthermore, in 2015, the University of Missouri reported incidents of racial bias and discrimination from White students towards students of color. Students at Missouri were unhappy with the lack of administrative response and decided to take serious action. This led to a series of protesting, a hunger strike, football player strike, and demands issued by students that ultimately resulted in the resignation of Tim Wolfe, the President of the Missouri University System (Izadi, 11/9/2015).

Students at OSU quickly caught wind of what was happening at Missouri and realized that they needed to act fast because they found OSU's campus climate to be eerily similar.

OSU's Efforts Towards Inclusivity

In 2011, OSU was in the process of addressing matters of diversity and inclusion through the completion of a comprehensive "Self Study", or internal review, that "would engage the Oregon State community in examining equity, inclusion, and diversity efforts university-wide" ("Oregon State Self-Study"). The second phase of the self-study was followed by an external review of the recommendations proposed by the self-study and assess the institutional capacity to enact those goals. According to the OSU Office of Institutional Diversity, which was created as a direct result of the Speak Out, this "Self-Study" was unlike any other diversity initiative at OSU before. It was the most comprehensive and engaging effort that had ever been taken on by the university leadership.³⁴ It is interesting to note that this wide-scale type of effort had never been completed even though there had been decades of related efforts taken on by OSU. It reveals that perhaps that OSU could have been doing more in the years prior or that the current administration wasn't aware of what had been attempted in previous administrations.

The results and action items to be taken were presented to Faculty Senate on March 14th, 2013, a year and a half before the Speak-Out would take place. The self-study team³⁵ ultimately identified specific goals pertaining to access and success, university

³⁴ <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/diversity/reports/oregon-state-self-study>

³⁵ Susan Capalbo, co-chair (Department Head, Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics), Angelo Gomez, co-chair (Interim Executive Director, Office of Equity and Inclusion), Brenda McComb (Dean, Graduate School), Brian Bay (Associate Professor, School of Mechanical, Industrial & Manufacturing Engineering), Elizabeth Thomas (Office Manager, Extended Campus), Janet Nishihara (Director, Educational Opportunities Program), John Edwards (Director and Associate Professor, School of Psychological Science), Larry Roper (Vice Provost, Student Affairs), M. Tonga Hopoi/Amelia Harris (ASOSU President), Michelle Bothwell (Associate Professor, School of Chemical, Biological & Environmental Engineering and Interim Director, Difference, Power and Discrimination Program), Tony Wilcox (Co-Director, School of Biological & Population Health Sciences)

climate, institutional and individual capacity, education, and outreach. The study was not specifically targeting racial inequities on campus, but rather focusing on types of marginalization for students, faculty, and staff at OSU. Another aspect of the Self-Study was to develop a long-term vision for the university in order to identify exactly what the university is striving for in regards to diversity and inclusion. The vision states that:

“Oregon State University aspires to be a collaborative, inclusive, and caring community that strives for equity and equal opportunity in everything we do; that creates a welcoming environment and enables success for people from all walks of life; and that shares common, fundamental values grounded in justice, civility, and respect while looking to diversity as a source of enrichment and strength”.
(“Vision and Principles”)

This vision is currently posted on the Office of Institutional Diversity website. Following the Self-Study, President Ray charged a new Leadership Council for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity in May 2013. The first major initiative of this Council was to implement and assess a “Campus Climate Survey” which was intended to “establish a baseline for future surveys so that [OSU] can assess progress in maintaining a respectful work environment that promotes success for all” (*Campus Climate Survey 2014 Results*). While there were most likely additional committees, workgroups, and departments that shared similar diversity goals and worked on related initiatives as this Leadership Council, the Campus Climate Survey implemented in 2014 seemed to be the focus at the time for administration.

In 2015, three student organizers were hired to be dialogue coordinators for the Social Change Leadership Program (SCLP) that was initiated by Student Leadership and Involvement (SLI) and Diversity and Cultural Engagement (DCE). This program, which no longer exists within DCE or SLI, offered social change related workshops, education, events, and outreach for students in order to provide transformative learning opportunities for students at OSU³⁶. These students were very involved in other programs and organizations on campus and motivated to create a more socially just society and campus. After hearing about racial incidents on other campuses, they realized that they needed to act before the campus environment became even more hostile than it already was for students of color at OSU. In this section, I will be largely drawing from the oral histories, conducted in 2017, of the three students who organized the speak out: Haniya Ferrell³⁷, Jesseanne Pope³⁸, and Jasmine Armas³⁹.

³⁶ http://sli.oregonstate.edu/sites/sli.oregonstate.edu/files/about/Hiring/sclp_student_staff_fy16.pdf

³⁷ Haniya Ferrell (she/her(s) pronouns) is a fourth-year OSU student who was born and raised in Antioch, California. She decided to attend OSU after her plans to attend a historical black college fell through because it gave her the opportunity to leave California while staying somewhat close. The first organization that she became involved with at OSU was the Black Student Union. At the beginning of her sophomore year, she started working for DCE at the Centro Cultural César Chávez (CCCC) which helped her become further involved at OSU. During her third year at OSU, she was hired with DCE/SLI as a dialogue coordinator for the SCLP which is the year she helped organize the Speak-Out. This led her to be involved with ASOSU as the Coordinator for Multicultural Affairs the following year.

³⁸ Jesseanne Pope (they/them/theirs pronouns) is a 2016 alumnus of OSU. They were born in Roseburg, OR, but grew up in Grants Pass, Oregon in a single parent home. They began working at OSU their freshman year as an office assistant in the School of Psychological Science. The next year they began

Campus Climate

The campus climate can be more thoroughly understood in 2015 through the lived experiences, feelings, and insights from the students who actually organized the Speak-Out. These students were connected to many aspects campus life, including student and faculty networks, that led them have an increased awareness of the campus climate at OSU. Additionally, Haniya and Jasmine, as women of color, understand the climate in regards to racism on a deeply personal level.

According to Haniya, students felt like the “campus climate at Mizzou⁴⁰ was really similar to Oregon State and all the stuff that was happening there was not too far from happening here” They asked themselves, “what do we need to do so that doesn’t go down here?” (Ferrell, 2017). All three organizers expressed that they felt like OSU administration was not doing enough to address the campus climate and many administrators seemed to be unaware of the severity of the campus climate for students of color. Haniya commented that after the Speak-Out, administrators were approaching her and saying “they had no idea that this was happening”, she reiterated that “this stuff happens on campus all the time and the fact that administrators were just like blind to all of this blows my mind so that’s why it’s important and why it continues to be important” (Ferrell, 2017).

For Jesseanne, they believed that “what was happening at Mizzou was really similar to what was happening at Oregon State and the experiences that folks were talking about at Mizzou are experiences that I have heard my friends and colleagues talk about at Oregon State...”. Furthermore, Jesseanne found it highly concerning and frustrating that when they approached administrators to discuss the events at Mizzou and the possibility of a Speak-Out, they felt like they were being listened to more than students of color by administration. They commented that students of color had been saying the exact same things repeatedly to the same administrators and not receiving the same acknowledgement that they did in just a couple meetings. They said in their Oral History that “the fact that it makes a difference when I say it speaks to the whole issue of why we had to have it to begin with” (Pope, 2017). They continued that: “I may have started these conversations, but I just need people to understand that I literally utilized White privilege to make it heard...if the same words are coming out of my mouth, why

working as a Community Relations Facilitator for UHDS and had the opportunity to attend the Examining White Identity social justice retreat through DCE. The following year they worked at the Women’s Center as a Student Success Peer Facilitator. These experiences led them to being involved with DCE as a SCLP dialogue coordinator and the Speak Out. Jesseanne has now began their career outside of OSU with Rogue Community College as an academic advisor.

³⁹ Jasmine Armas is a fourth-year OSU student studying zoology. She was born and raised in Los Angeles County. She considers Maywood, California her hometown though she currently lives in Lakewood, California. Maywood is a predominantly Latinx community and she grew up surrounded by a lot of family members. She chose to come to OSU because of their food menu, the zoology program, and because she was recruited by the LSAMP program at OSU. She then started OSU in 2013 as a participant in the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP), a program for underrepresented students at in STEM fields. She joined the Kappa Delta Chi Sorority Inc., a Latinx sorority, and eventually became involved with the Unified Greek Council. She eventually became involved with DCE through Racial Aikido, a social justice retreat, and began working with the CCCC for two years. In 2015, she was hired as a dialogue coordinator for the SCLP. She currently works for SLI as a peer advisor.

⁴⁰ See page 53 for more information.

does that matter more than when they are coming from students of color who have been saying these same things?” (Pope, 2017).

Jesseanne also spoke about the campus climate while admitting that they cannot speak on behalf of students of color because they are not one. They mentioned that they once observed a “professor ask a student of color in that class who, on a visual scan, was probably the only black person in the class...the professor looked at them and asked them if they would be willing to share their opinion and experience when we talked about the civil war”

Jasmine spoke on behalf of the campus climate, stating that there was a “recurring campus climate of apathy...ignoring students of color concerns...”. She felt like the primary method taken by administration to address campus racism was to simply send in a bias report and to her, this just wasn’t enough (Armas, 2017).

Students of Color Speak Out

On November 11th, 2015, Haniya Ferrell sent emails to the Administrative Leadership Cabinet, Associate Vice President and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of the Graduate School, Associate Vice Provost and Dean of Student Life, Director of Diversity and Cultural Engagement with a subject header titled “Demand for Administrative Presence—Please Read”. Haniya opened her letter to the administration by stating that “This letter is in response to the recent acts of racial violence at the University of Missouri. These events have served as a catalyst for conversations about campus environment and the safety of students of color on campuses across the nation” (Ferrell, 2015). She went on to discuss the vision that OSU created as a result of the Self Study and commented that:

“we do not feel that the administration has taken the steps necessary to make this vision a reality for students of color. Many of color have experienced acts of racial violence on our campus that have gone unacknowledged and unaddressed. Furthermore, students of color are not experiencing the sense of security or the space to have their voice be heard on campus that they are entitled to”. (Ferrell, 2015)

The last part of the email was demanding the presence of administration at the event that would later be called the Students of Color Speak-Out on November 16th, 2015. She wrote that she wanted students of color to be heard and the campus climate at OSU to be acknowledged by the administration. She concluded the letter by stating “We hope to move forward from this in a partnership to address injustice in a strategic and foundational manner” (Ferrell, 2015). Although it can be assumed that administrators responded to the emails, there was only one response available in the records from Sastry G. Pantula, Dean of the College of Science. He sympathized with the students, thanked them for creating a space for students of color to talk about their painful experiences and reiterated that OSU is “dedicated to bring a positive change for our students and be an inclusive, welcoming and safe place” (Pantula, 11/17/2015). Due to its urgency, the primary method of marketing about the Speak Out was an email sent to the OSU community by President Ed Ray on November 12th, 2015. Students received an email

from the All Student Listserv titled “Presidential Communication to send to all Oregon State Students”. President Ray introduced the email by addressing the larger national conversation about racial inequality and inclusivity on college campuses. He then reiterated OSU’s commitment to be a part of these conversations, and to even be a leader in expanding inclusivity and safety at OSU. He then goes on to say that he was:

“contacted by several Oregon State University students, who expressed their heartfelt concerns about the university’s actions to fully foster inclusivity. They also shared their observations that an appropriate civility and inclusivity for all at Oregon State is lacking. These students requested that I attend a meeting with other university leaders, faculty, and students to discuss these essential matters. In response, I have cancelled my participating as a board member in the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Sunday through Tuesday in Indianapolis to be available for this meeting to be held at 7 p.m. in Gill Coliseum on Nov. 16” (Ray, 11/12/2015).

All three organizers reported that administration was not initially supportive of the Speak-Out. When their supervisors found out that they were planning it, they put pressure on them to ensure they separated their roles as student activists and employees of the university. This created tension between the students and their departments as the students began to question the dedication of DCE and SLI to advancing social justice and diversity work. Haniya mentioned that Diversity and Cultural Engagement “didn’t want to be involved with it and didn’t want their name tied to it until it benefitted them” (Ferrell, 2017). After several meetings with administrators, Jesseanne commented that they felt belittled and didn’t feel like they could trust administrators anymore, especially after being told that the Speak-Out may not be the best way to navigate the system and that “they needed to be smart about it” (Pope, 2017).

Without strong support for organizing the Speak-Out from Diversity and Cultural Engagement or Student Leadership and Involvement, the students had to seek alternative avenues since they didn’t have all of the resources necessary to fulfill their goals of the Speak-Out. Jasmine said it was refreshing when other departments stepped up to support their event. Rachi Wortham, the Director of Player Personnel at the time, was able to reserve Gill Coliseum for the students at no cost and Susie Brubaker-Cole, the VP of Student Affairs, was able to use funds from the Office of Student Life to cover the expenses of the livestream that was made available for the event. This helped the student organizers in their efforts to host a successful event.

With only a week to plan the event, the student organizers spread the word about the event through a Facebook event and by word of mouth. The organizers weren’t sure how many people were going to show up or even how well the event was going to go, but they were committed to making it happen. Jasmine noted that she just wanted the Speak-Out to “[give] students of color a voice and [shake] up the administration”, she continues, “I’m not a fan of institutions. The Speak-Out threatened OSU’s marketability and I wanted to see them actually do something about student’s concerns on campus [and] act as a catalyst for Oregon State to actually act on what it speaks it does” (Armas, 2017). The perception by students is that the institution makes statements and creates visions

that, on the surface level, seem affirming but ultimately their actions are not supporting their words.

On November 17th, 2015 at 7pm, students of color spoke up while approximately 500 students, faculty, staff, and administrators listened. For many in the audience, it might have the first time that they became aware of the deeply engrained racism that plagues OSU. Haniya, Jesseanne, and Jasmine all gave brief introductory comments before opening the floor to all students of color. Haniya gave the first introductory statement stating the reasons that the event was happening. She told the audience that they “started this conversation because we feel that the campus at large is unaware of acts of racial violence on campus and that the administration has neglected to respond to such incidents” (Ferrell, Pope, Armas, 2015). Jasmine followed Haniya’s comments by encouraging students “who are able and courageous enough to speak out, just think about that impact that it can have for those of us who aren’t”. She carried on to acknowledge that racism is not the only form of oppression that exists and stated that:

“We recognize that people experience hate crimes and forms of oppression on a daily basis, however this space is intentionally being created to give a specific community a voice in response to the lack of acknowledgement of racial violence on our campus. We are not seeking to erase other experiences, and are not ignorant of the reality of intersectionality in forms of oppression but rather are responding to specific racially-based violence in the silencing of students of colors’ voices on our campus”. (Haniya Ferrell, Pope, Armas, 2015)

The Daily Barometer doesn’t necessarily capture every detail or perspective of the Speak Out, but it does provide a glimpse into an incredibly historic moment. It also provides insight into how the campus at-large responded to such events. *The Corvallis Gazette-Times* also reported on the Speak Out by summarizing the event and quoting a few students and President Ray. They reported that “more than 20 students at the event spoke; most were women. Some identified themselves as Black, others as Latina, and some Asian, but many did not self-identify at all, they merely spoke of their experiences” (Rimel, 11/16/2015).

The Daily Barometer published an article about the Speak Out the next day and highlighted some of the experiences that were shared by students at the event such as “being questioned about their identity, instructors teaching information that is insensitive to minorities, appropriation or shaming of their culture, and even students that felt like their lives are endangered just by being on campus” (Trinidad, 11/17/2015). There was mention of a White man who decided to go up to the mic during the Speak-Out and state that “everyone is a person of color”. This inflammatory and insensitive statement was not taken lightly by the organizers and was addressed accordingly by the organizers by reiterating the fact that this space was intended for students of color.

One student mentioned was quoted saying that they “stopped helping the administration; I stopped getting involved; I left all those things...I stopped because I got tired of fighting for nothing” (Trinidad 11/17/2015). The student was talking about their experience fighting for more inclusivity of students of color. Another student, Anesat León-Guerrero, whose name was misspelled as ‘Anseta Leon-Guerrero’, in *The Daily Barometer* talked about her experience in the classroom with an instructor who

“diminished her culture and the culture of others by posing a question that seemed to defend Cortez conquering and colonizing an entire ethnic population” (Trinidad, 11/17/2015). The experience was emotionally and physically disturbing for Anesat who felt powerless in the situation to say anything to challenge the professor.

The breadth and quantity of racist experiences felt by students at OSU cannot be accurately represented by a student newspaper or a few oral histories. In fact, it is impossible to identify all of the experiences felt by students and community members because they often go unreported or internalized and when they are reported to the university, it becomes confidential information that is not available to the public.

After almost two hours of student testimony, the Speak-Out organizers offered their demands for OSU to enact. The organizers were unable to locate the actual list of demands that they made for the purpose of research, but *The Daily Barometer* did summarize those demands as:

- “1) OSU should implement mandatory training for staff to focus on identity development and social justice*
- 2) OSU should expand readily available campus safety information and to include and highlight research and statistics about racial violence and resources for those affected*
- 3) OSU administrators should name and address the systemic issues preventing the application rate, acceptance rate, and graduation rate of students of color”.* (Trinidad 11/17/2015)

The final few minutes of the event included a statement from President Ed Ray, sympathizing with the students and acknowledged previous efforts towards inclusivity as failed attempts. He stated that he is personally “dedicated to make sure that we summarize the things that were said tonight—to have a conversation on how to implement these changes” (Trinidad 11/17/2015).

Response from Administration and the OSU Community

It wasn't long after the event when President Ed Ray sent an email to all OSU students titled “Monday Night's Speak-Out: Next Steps” (Ray, 11/17/2015). The email initiated a continuing conversation about how the university was going to address the issues that were brought up the night before. The email discussed the importance of the Speak Out and reflected on the 2011 institutional vision of ‘diversity and inclusion’. It also reiterated the demands that the students made and assured to involve students in creating solutions and being a part of discussions related to OSU's diversity efforts. President Ray listed the four demands that were made by the student organizers:

“all Oregon State faculty and staff engage in required identity and social justice training; that all entering Oregon State students be required to complete on-line education and other courses in race, social justice, and equity; that Oregon State improve campus safety for students of color; regularly assess and report information related to the university's racial climate; and provide all community members the ability to report racial issues and concerns; and that Oregon State

make systemic and institutional changes to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff and grow the number of students of color attending the university”. (Ray, 11/17/2015)

President Ray promised to follow up with the OSU community by the end of fall term about what the next steps were to be and he did just that. This response was timely, compassionate, and seemed to place immense value on involving students to be a part of the future diversity initiatives. President Ray wasn't the only person on campus to express support of the Speak Out through a public platform. On November, 18, 2015, *The Daily Barometer* published several articles and letters to the editor that revealed a campus polarization regarding the Speak Out event.

The first student editorial from *The Daily Barometer* discussing the event posed a very poignant question to the OSU community: “How do these events keep happening. How is that even a university such as OSU, which prides itself on diversity and inclusion, that we still have students of color being so heavily mistreated on a public level?” (*The Daily Barometer* editors, 11/18/2015). This excellent question exposes a hard truth about OSU and is relevant to all institutions of higher education. A question that cannot be easily answered, but is central to the purpose of this current research project.

Following the student editorial were lengthy letters of support from faculty of the Ethnic Studies Program and the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. These faculty sympathized with the students and honored them for their courage, but they also directed demands to the administration in congruence with the demands proposed by the students the night before. The Ethnic Studies program urged “the administration to engage with antiracism and social justice, not just as siloed or isolated practices, but as integral to everything we do, from curriculum and teaching, to research, to administration and student services”, further commenting that “the education all students receive at OSU needs to challenge the beliefs and/or ideologies that justify, legitimate, and normalize the interests and/or experiences of a dominant group over those of others” (Ethnic Studies Faculty and Staff, 11/18/2015). The Ethnic Studies faculty also encouraged the administration to “rethink what diversity means and how it can be achieved in the context of structural inequities and social injustice. A true commitment to diversity, as students described last night, needs to include provisions to expand the presence of students, staff, and faculty of color throughout the campus” (Ethnic Studies Faculty and Staff, 11/18/2015). It should be noted that these suggestions are not much different from the demands made by students in 1969 and in 1996 and although coming from faculty, rather than students, it's equally important to address the inequities that exist for all people of color on college campuses regardless of their institutional role.

Alongside the letters of support were two letters to the editor from students who who took a political stance on the Speak Out with concerns about how the event impacted White people. Rather than paraphrase, I decided to include each student letter in its entirety. The first letter was titled “True face of social justice”.

“Predictably, the Social Justice Warriors are on the rampage again. In an effort to appease them, a forum was held this Monday where they could vent their misguided anger. What followed next was a pathetic display of racism, hypocrisy, and vile, baseless accusations. The first speaker to break the silence with a

message of unity and peace, once the floor was opened to the public, was, shockingly, told that he had no right to speak at the event based on the color of his skin. Later, another advocate of 'inclusivity' defended the right of black students to exclude Whites from their spaces in the name of 'community healing.' Another student claimed that mean comments posted on "Things Overheard at OSU", somehow constituted evidence that OSU is actively encouraging students to be racist. I guess she thought that a few internet trolls were somehow representative of the students as a whole. In one particularly Orwellian moment, a speaker actually called a student's display of their support for Donald Trump, an expression of their political views, as an example of hate speech. I didn't stay long enough to hear their demands. Although someone did mention funding for Ethnic Studies department, nudge nudge, wink wink. This is because I was harassed for recording video in a "safe space". Yes, I felt it was my duty as a citizen journalist to cover a public forum on policy issues that affect us all. However, after being ordered to delete my files, I decided it was safer to leave than risk someone trying to confiscate my phone. I don't expect an apology for myself, but I demand one for those silenced for the "crime" of being White. Bigots come in all colors. Let's not let them sully our college's reputation further". (Degeneffe, 11/18/2015)

The only other student letter to the editor in this issue paralleled many of the same ideas that the first letter proposed. The letter titled "Speak Out OSU" not open enough" was written by a Senior in Political Science and Education and the President of OSU College Republicans. It's interesting that the Speak Out was regarded as a matter of politics for both these student contributors rather than as an issue about race and identity. With seemingly little sympathy, this contributor wrote that students at the event "opened up to the Corvallis community about their grievances relating to the victim mentality that has been promoted by President Obama and his liberal friends. Things got heated when a White person tried to speak out at this event", and continues by furthermore stating that "the event organizers quickly suppressed his First Amendment Rights and claimed that only people of color would be allowed to speak" (Kasamoto, 11/18/2015). The student finishes their letter by offering their opinion about the effectiveness of the event in catering to the 'White majority'. They believed that the movement would likely not gain the "support of the majority White community who may view their grievances as over dramatic and whinny... Speak Out OSU should've represented students under the color of Orange and Black, not just on race" (Kasamoto, 11/18/2015).

These viewpoints were later challenged by student letters that appeared in the Nov. 20th, 2015 edition of *The Daily Barometer*. Each student identified themselves as White students who were in strong support of the Speak Out, contrary to what the previous student letters suggested about the 'White majority' on campus. One student stated that they were disappointed by the student letters published in *The Daily Barometer* and didn't believe they represented the views of most OSU students (Liete, 11/20/2015). They further commented that the authors of the previous letters

"...dismissed the experiences of students of color, using words such as 'bigots', 'overdramatic', and 'whiny'. It is not for them to decide whether other people's

suffering is legitimate. Students of color do not need 'White validation'. They need collective action to stop racial injustice on campus and beyond” (Liete, 11/20/2015).

Furthermore, Jesseanne brought up a point that they were quoted several times in the first article published by *The Daily Barometer*, but none of the other students were. Although this was likely unintentional, the consequences of this action reinforce White privilege and once again de-center the voices of students of color, both of which Jesseanne commented on during their Oral History. Jesseanne also wrote a letter to *The Daily Barometer* that addressed this concern, they stated that:

“I would just like to point out that I, as the only White student involved in organizing the Students of Color Speak Out, was quoted several times in the Barometer article covering the event. My co-organizers, both students of color, were not quoted. But White privilege isn’t real, it must be that I have more to say about the experiences of students of color than students of color themselves (sarcasm)” (Pope, 11/20/2015).

In fact, during the months following the Speak Out, *The Daily Barometer* published several articles related to the administrative response to the Speak Out and most of the articles were focused on Ed Ray or the administration rather than on students. These articles tracked the “next steps” that President Ray spoke of in his initial email to the OSU community. The Speak Out greatly captured the attention of university administration and Ed Ray even stated in one email months after the Speak-Out that from now on “we will not just talk about Oregon State’s aspiration to be a fully inclusive, civil, safe, and just community for all. We will act...please join me in this full commitment for social justice” (Ray, 1/19/2016). In the following weeks, months, and years of the Speak Out, the OSU administration carried out a variety of responses including the creation of an Office of Institutional Diversity (OID), creation of the position Chief Diversity Officer for the OID, implementing quarterly town halls for updates and concerns about diversity matters, creating social justice modules for incoming students, implementing a new series of optional trainings for staff and faculty to attend, and the development of a new strategic plan towards “diversity and inclusion”⁴¹

⁴¹ Timeline of Administrative Response:

- **11/11/2015:** Haniya Ferrell, Jesseanne Pope, and Jasmine Armas-Gonzalez contact university administrators to demand their presence at the Speak Out
- **11/12/2015:** President Ray sends an email to the OSU community inviting them to “attend a meeting on social injustice”
- **11/16/2015:** Student of Color Speak Out held in Gill Coliseum
- **11/17/2015:** “Monday Night’s Speak-Out: Next Steps”, All OSU email sent by President Ed Ray offering a commitment to fostering a community of greater inclusivity, racial justice, and safety
- **11/23/2015:** President Ray and university leaders met with the student organizers of the Speak Out
- **12/7/2015:** “OSU to Hire Chief Diversity Officer, Intensify Focus on Equal Opportunity”, All OSU email sent by President Ray
- **1/19/2016:** “Leadership Changes, Program Initiatives to Support a More Inclusive Community”, All OSU email sent by President Ray
- **2/29/2016:** OSU’s First Campus Town Hall on Equity, Inclusion, Civil, and Social Justice

Student Perspective: Two Years Later

Since the Speak Out, OSU has been continuously working on projects related to diversity and inclusion. Although “progress” is subjective and often difficult to ascertain, there are qualitative methods such as individual accounts and storytelling that can illustrate a more humanistic measurement of “progress”. The oral histories of the student organizers of the Speak Out provide a personalized account of their experience as a student activist during the weeks, months, and years following the Speak Out. Using CRM, these stories can be used to build a counter-narrative against the majoritarian narrative and draw upon their personal experiences to provide further context and insight about the Speak Out. The following section is intended to give voice to the student organizers of the Speak Out and provide an in-depth personalized report of their experiences on campus following the event.

CRM considers counter-story telling a legitimate form of data collection to draw upon the knowledge of people of color who are generally excluded within academia. Their stories can put students of color at the center of the research to make sense of their experiences rather than rely on the narratives that exist from those who don’t experience racism (i.e. *The Daily Barometer*). During each student’s oral history, each student organizer answered several questions regarding the speak out and their experiences at OSU. Because of the value of their personal insights, I didn’t break down their quotes in an effort to highlight as much of their experiences as possible. These quotes will be further analyzed in the analysis section of 2015.

Student Responses to Administrative Efforts

When asked about the immediate response from the university, all three student organizers spoke of being approached by university faculty and administrators to thank them for organizing the Speak Out or inviting them to participate in a discussion related to the Speak Out.

Haniya:

“I think that administration was scrambling to do something. They created some committees that they wanted us to be on...to be honest, I don’t really remember what they were called or the purpose of them. They were talking about online

- **3/10/2016:** “Winter 2016 Campus Town Hall Follow Up Message”, All OSU email sent by Dr. Angela E. Batista, Interim Chief Diversity Officer
- **5/4/2016:** OSU Corvallis Campus Spring Term Town Hall held on campus
- **5/10/2016:** “Spring Town Hall Follow Up Information”, All OSU email sent by Dr. Angela E. Batista, Interim Chief Diversity Officer
- **6/9/2016:** “First 100 Days Report” released by the Office of Institutional Diversity
- **10/6/2016:** “Fall Term Community Update”, All OSU email sent by Dr. Angela E. Batista, Interim Chief Diversity Office
- **10/13/2016:** Fall Term Town Hall Meeting
- **4/1/2017:** “Charlene Alexander appointed Oregon State University Chief Diversity Officer”, All OSU email sent by President Ray

training modules which didn't end up happening. Immediately after the speak out, people were looking to Jasmine, Jesseanne and me for guidance. Yes, we did create the space for other students of color to speak but we are not the only three students [impacted].. I feel like in that situation, administration didn't really know what to do so they did what they thought we wanted them to do. (Ferrell, 2017)

Jesseanne:

Jesseanne commented that after the Speak Out some mentors on campus checked in with all of them, but they felt on edge after not receiving support in the planning stages of the event. They also explained how they were told “they would not be hired at OSU because they are too radical” after the Speak Out by employees of OSU. They further expanded that

“The culture that is among staff members here is that you have to assimilate. As student employees, we see staff members who we know from personal work or on a more human basis and we see them assimilate and not be themselves to survive in the work environment and that is what we wanted to fight against and work against...we see that staff members need these things too”. (Pope, 2017)

Jasmine:

“A lot of people were coming up to us that we have never seen before in our life thanking us for the students of color speak out and it was a lot of administrators and faculty. The department that we worked for that had wanted nothing to do with us when we actually organized the speak out, but then hosted a department sponsored debrief about the speak out”. (Armas, 2017)

I. Immediate Response from Campus Community:

The following section include comments from the organizers about the response they received from the campus community. These comments suggest that there while there was support from administrators and faculty, there was a still a campus climate of hostility and polarization regarding the Speak out.

Haniya:

“What always happens when we have protests or any types of demonstrations on campus, there's people who are just like “I don't understand what this is about”. There was that livestream that people were trolling the whole entire time. Somebody made a video talking about how we were being racist and recording us at the speak out and trying to expose us for being racist... there was definitely a lot of negative responses which we anticipated because we are in Oregon, so like of course”. (Ferrell, 2017)

Jesseanne:

“There were some White students who wanted to meet with me to tell me how extremely racist I was and then tell me about all the times that they experienced racism as a White person and then there were another group of students who wanted to know what can I do”. (Pope, 2017)

II. Meeting with President Ed Ray and Administrators:

Each organizer reflected on the meeting that they were invited to on 11/23/2015 and commented on their perspectives of what it felt like being in the meeting and what was communicated to them. Although the meeting was intended to gain feedback from the students, the students commented that it may not have been the most conducive meeting for that purpose.

Haniya:

“There were a lot of people at the table and I don’t know who they are. The meeting was a lot of Ed Ray talking and he seemed very distraught that these were the things that were happening at OSU to students of color. He acknowledged his privilege he fact that OSU was failing as a university to their duty to students of color. He sounded really convincing... most of the meeting was Ed Ray talking... They wanted feedback from us and let us know what they were planning. We definitely did get the chance to speak our piece but yeah like I said it was mostly Ed Ray talking”. (Ferrell, 2017)

Jesseanne:

“OSU’s response was in the letter format, they really do like their published letters. [we] were asked to come into spaces and be involved on committees. We did meet with President Ed Ray and other staff members who I don’t know exactly who they were. What it felt like to me was that the point of being invited into those spaces was to make us feel like they were serious about what they were saying they were going to do. When we asked questions of ‘when is this going to happen?’ or ‘what is this going to look like?’, we got answers like ‘well, we are still unsure, we are still figuring it out’”. (Pope, 2017)

Jasmine:

“We were invited to a conversation with President Ed Ray and there were the three of us as students and then a whole conference table of other people whose names I will never remember...I was very positive and hopeful that this would enact some change and so I was really hopeful about us being invited to the table, but when we got there I felt like it was a lot of complaining...like, my immediate things that I remember from the conversation were President Ray being like

**slams her fist on the chair* ‘we cannot continue business as usual’ and just saying that over and over again”. (Armas, 2017)*

III. Dinner and Meeting with the Board of Trustees:

Following the Speak Out, all three student organizers were invited to a dinner with the OSU Board of Trustees and also a special meeting prior to their actual public meeting. Jasmine was the only student who brought these events up, but her description of the meetings expose a culture amongst university officials that lacks awareness of institutional racism and inclusivity.

Jasmine:

“They said it was something about getting to know [the Board members] more and I thought it would be us conversing and strategizing how to bring students of color into these conversations to make this campus better, but that’s not what we got at all... it just further widened the gap for me at least. They were 15 mins late to the dinner, getting tipsy during the dinner, and then just having conversations about their properties, the buildings they want to build at OSU, and all the money that I’m listening to them talk about that I felt they were wasting instead of talking about how to address SOC experiences of racism and White supremacy on campus”. (Armas 2017)

Jasmine further described her experience about the meeting with the Board of Trustees that took place the next. When Jasmine had opportunity to talk about the Speak Out and issues of racism on campus, she recalled “someone [on the Board] talking about using more delicate language around the issues we are speaking about”. She mentioned that Jesseanne had addressed that comment during the meeting by saying “we are talking about racism, that’s what we are talking about here”. (Armas, 2017)

IV. Is it enough?

During the student’s oral histories, the students were asked about their feelings regarding what is currently being done at the administrative level to address campus racism. Although their oral histories were individually recorded, they each believed that the university was not doing enough and provided their sentiments about why they believed that.

Haniya:

“They did create a whole new office with new positions, I don’t really know what that office is doing or what the people are doing. I don’t know what’s going on... I didn’t really have huge expectations going into it...being realistic, we are at OSU. I just don’t think that administration has the capacity to follow through with the things that we were wanting and the things that we were needing. To be honest, it

really sucks. I hate to say that it is what it is...like I said, I'm not really surprised but it's not acceptable at the same time". (Ferrell, 2017)

Jesseanne:

"The leadership council for diversity...their statements are very vague... 'we want to work to create better systems, we want to encourage faculty to be more inclusive and more diverse'. There are no numbers there are no dates there are no specifics. That's how everything was addressed and is still being addressed... The speak out did allow the folks who work in social justice to feel a little bit more empowered and connected and also it was a big learning process for a lot of us". (Pope, 2017)

Jasmine:

"I'm hearing a lot about plans still and its almost been two years...I'm wondering what has been enacted outside of making the Office of Institutional Diversity. Having three people work on systematic and institutionalized racism, it's gonna be hard for them. It's not enough people working on this...I don't think they are doing enough". (Armas, 2017)

Analysis of 2015

The 2015 Students of Color Speak Out is an incredibly important event to examine because it reflects the present. After an extensive historical review of the BSU Walk Out of 1969, the All OSU Boycott of 1996, and the 2015 Students of Color Speak Out, these three events can now be understood through thematic connection and theoretical analysis to understand why and in what ways the conditions at OSU have not changed for students of color in almost 50 years.

Drawing from the theme of campus climate, it can be understood that the campus climate did not change very much for students of color at OSU. It simply took a new form, a form that could not be easily identified by others, especially by those who do not experience racism. Instead of a more overt racism like students being spit on and called racial slurs, students were now experiencing daily microaggressions, instructors distorting their history, a questioning of their academic performance, etc. Between the accounts of racist experiences described by students at the Speak Out, *The Daily Barometer* articles that didn't support the Speak Out, and oral histories from the student organizers, it is clear that the campus climate was just as unwelcoming, unsupportive, and insensitive as the years before. For each event, the responses and reactions from various students, faculty, and Corvallis community members, were generally heavily polarized with one group of people in full support of the event and the other group of people in complete opposition. They likely become politicized due to the greater sociopolitical context and pressures that exist outside of the university. They become topics of controversy rather than topics of humanity and justice.

Just as in 1969 and 1996, CBRI was identified within the student letters to the editor about the Speak Out. Statements from students such as "bigots come in all colors"

and “Speak Out OSU should’ve represented students under the color of Black and Orange, not just on race” are congruent with CBRI. These statements represent both power-evasion and color-evasion domains of CBRI by suggesting that White people can experience racism and the latter suggesting that there should be a focus on sameness rather than difference. Jesseanne also referenced students who demonstrated CBRI after the Speak Out⁴² These types of expressions exemplify a lack of cultural empathy and understanding that students were describing in the Speak Out and continue to be harmful to students of color. It is clear that there is a need for a system in place to challenge these ideologies that were likely formed at an early age.

One of the most significant markers that thematically connect each event are the unchanging demands from students. In all three events, the students consistently demand that there is an increase in the number of faculty and students of color, in addition to improving campus climate and safety for students of color. In 1996 and 2015, students likely didn’t have previous knowledge of the student demands made before them. This means that students are organically coming to these realizations after being a student at OSU for some time and understanding that the diversity and inclusiveness that was depicted on the website, the pamphlets, and the campus tour ambassadors is not actually a reality at OSU.

In addition to the unchanging demands from students and the unchanging campus climate, the theme of student-administrative relationship is also prevalent during the time of the Speak Out and afterwards. Due to the extensive details from the oral histories, there is far more context regarding the relationship that exists between students and administrators that for the other events, but nonetheless connections can still be made. Students arguably play the most important role at a university because they are the consumer, they are the reason that the university continues to function because without students, there would be no university. With such a vital role in the university, one would think that the relationship between students and university officials would be egalitarian, collaborative, and mutually beneficial. However, this is not the case and can be validated through the evidence acquired for 1969, 1996, and 2015. The reason that students feel compelled to be involved in activism on college campuses is often because all other efforts of reasoning and tactfully communicating with the university have failed. Students know that if they create noise on campus that the university will react in order to preserve the image of the institution.

In 1969, the BSU submitted the Administrative Proposal and met civilly with the administrators and their requests were not listened to so they organized the Walk-Out. In 1996, students wanted the university to do more in response to the racist incidents that were occurring on campus, but the university acted too slowly so the students organized the Boycott. In 2015, students of color had been expressing to administrators and faculty their concerns about the campus climate far before the situation at Mizzou happened, as Jesseanne indicated in their oral history, but students felt they weren’t do enough so they organized the Speak Out. There is a cyclical pattern that can be observed here that should be taken seriously by current and future administrators. The oral histories give light to an unfortunate reality that students and faculty are facing at the institution when it comes to matters of diversity and inclusion: they must learn the navigate the system in order to

⁴² Refer to I. Immediate Response from the OSU Community, p. 62.

bring about necessary change. This also reflects a campus climate that is not conducive for students or faculty to express their valuable views and insights about how to address institutional racism and other race-related concerns.

It should be brought up how power dynamics between students and administrators were maintained before and after the 2015 Speak Out. The oral histories from the students reveal that it was challenging to organize the Speak Out without the support from DCE and SLI. They were told that student activism could not conflict with their paid positions within DCE even though the program they worked within was titled the “Social Change Leadership Program”. After the Speak Out, the student organizers describe their experiences with the Board of Trustees and the first meeting with President Ray and administrators. Haniya mentioned that “we definitely did get the chance to speak our piece, but...it was mostly Ed Ray talking” (Ferrell, 2017). Jasmine described that President Ray slammed his fist on the table and repeated that “we cannot continue business as usual” (Armas, 2017). Using a CDA approach, these communicative events can be seen as intimidating and redirecting the focus of the conversation to Ed Ray. Although this may not have been his intention, it nonetheless created a dynamic of authority that was not productive to understanding the student’s concerns or providing a platform for them to contribute their insight.

Jasmine spoke about the Board of Trustees meeting that they were all invited to, which she thought was going to be about strategizing how to involve students of color in the conversations about making campus a more inclusive place, but instead ended up being a conversation focused entirely on the members of the Board and their properties or buildings they wanted to build at OSU. By discussing matters of wealth and status with students who already felt marginalized by the university only reinforces what students were trying to bring to light through the Speak Out. The meeting exemplified that these issues were not of utmost concern to the people who are at the top making the university’s most important decisions.

The last theme that connects 2015 to 1996 and 1969 is administrative response and approach. For students, faculty, and administrators who do not hold the institutional memory of 1969 and 1996, the response to 2015 may seem like the most transformation “make-over” of diversity and inclusion efforts that the university has ever seen. Compared to 1969 and 1996, OSU certainly had a more active and transparent response to the Speak Out than the previous administrations did which is likely due to the campus wide emails and the creation of a new website for the Office of Institutional Diversity. While the increased transparency is an improvement from the previous events, I would argue that the responses themselves are not that markedly different from 1996 and 1969.

In 1969, the administration responded to the Walk-Out with the creation of a new committee and a new combined office with new positions to work on issues of recruitment of minority students and programs to academically support underserved students. In 1996, they responded to the Boycott with new initiatives that included

“recruitment of students, faculty and staff of color; improved retention of students, faculty, and staff of color; Faculty Senate forums on diversity, the African American, Asian American, and Hispanic American Education Office to open in the fall of 1997 as well as initiatives yet to be identified, training and

development programs for students, faculty, and staff". (Student Boycott Response to Racial Incident, 1996)

Finally, the administrative response to the 2015 Speak Out, although slightly more detailed, was almost exactly the same as the previous two responses. President Ray sent an email with outlines for future plans that included quarterly town halls, the creation of the Office of Institutional Diversity with new positions, online diversity training for incoming students, asking the Faculty Senate to consider diversity training for all faculty and staff, making diversity central to the university's hiring practices, providing an online bias reporting system, and increasing transparency of those efforts (Ray, 1/19/16).

On the website for the Office of Institutional Diversity, it states that its mission is to

"design, plan, lead and implement, in collaboration with university partners, institutional change actions, initiatives and communications to advance diversity, equity and inclusion throughout all facets of Oregon State University. The work of the office advances more rapid progress toward Oregon State's highest aspirations for social justice within the university community". ("Office of Institutional Diversity Homepage")

This statement is broad, but seems promising. However, given the historical context of what has been done before in diversity work, how can OSU live up to this mission if the same approaches proved to be unsuccessful before? Student activism has proven that those previous efforts were unsuccessful.

As students, administrators, faculty, and staff cycle through the university year after year, the stories and history of their predecessors are often forgotten only to be accidentally discovered and left in the hands of chance. This research clearly demonstrates that students of color at OSU are suffering as a result of an institution and a society that is sick from institutionalized racism. This is a public health disparity with numerous consequences that are negatively impacting the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and environmental health of students of color at Oregon State. Until students from all racial identities can thrive in a university setting while feeling safe and included without facing the multitude of barriers that are currently in place, OSU should consider this a public health crisis with an urgency as great as any other public health emergency.

If this health crisis isn't addressed effectively or in a timely manner, it can be predicted that students in the coming years will organize an event that will demonstrate once again how unhealthy OSU is.

Discussion and Future Direction

Diversity-related work in higher education, particularly OSU, is continually evolving as the campus population changes, as the state of Oregon changes, and as the nation's policies, rhetoric, and priorities change. OSU does not exist in a vacuum and will always be impacted by society at large. As OSU advances its goals to fulfill its institutional vision towards diversity, equity, social justice, and inclusion⁴³, it's important for OSU to understand it's rich, complex history of race relations and even the history of racism in Oregon in order to effectively work on improving the current state of affairs. Racism at OSU, or any university, does not end with the creation of a new office, new committees, new positions, compassionate emails from administrators, and tokenizing students of color.

This research has demonstrated that there is a real need to not only improve the campus climate at OSU, but also improve the relationship that students—especially student leaders and activists—have with the administration. As the theme of student-administrator relationship has suggested, the power dynamic between students and administrators hinders the ability to involve students in the process. If OSU really cares about the advancement of these grand visions, it is imperative that students can be involved in the process in meaningful ways that do not tokenize students of color or students of marginalized identities. Students want to be a part of these transformations and their experiences and insights can provide valuable and legitimate knowledge. Without students, OSU doesn't exist. Therefore, students deserve to play a significant role in these processes.

In addition to student-administration relationship, the three other themes that were identified through this research, including unchanging student demands, campus climate, and administrative response and approach, demonstrate that many aspects of race relations have not changed at OSU over the past 50 years. This is not to say that the administration doesn't care or isn't currently doing any meaningful work. This research is intended to serve as a platform for the people who are invested in improving the conditions on campus for students of color to move forward in this work while understanding the historical context that has inevitably shaped OSU, Oregon, and this country to be what it is today. OSU, along with other institutions in Oregon, should be making concerted efforts to further explore the institutional and state history, make connections, identify themes, and use this information to guide diversity work, not just in the Office of Institutional Diversity, but in every department and unit that is a part of OSU's infrastructure.

Using theoretical frameworks like CDA, we can begin to unpack the ways that OSU, like many other institutions, have remained complicit in the ways that power is upheld, specifically in regards to race. Race is a social construct that is used to maintain power by reinforcing whiteness and white supremacy in various aspects of society. Although it may not always be overtly intentional on the part of university officials, there is a major deficit in the institutional memory of race relations at OSU which is one way that power works to maintain the status quo. The concepts of power, whiteness, and white

⁴³ <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/diversity/diversity-osu/vision-and-principles>

supremacy were not deeply explored in this research, but it's nonetheless crucial to identify this as a source of further investigation for future work.

The fact that I was in position to challenge the very institution that I am a part of in this way gives light to significant issues of power and race relations that needs to be addressed. Students and faculty of color have been discussing these issues for decades in a variety of ways, but as this research indicates, those voices and narratives remain excluded from the dominant narrative that exists at OSU and significant change has yet to be seen. Why hasn't OSU's history been unpacked in this way before? This is an important question that should be reflected upon. Students make demands and then the university responds in such a way that is able to "control" the student unrest. Those student activists who initially made demands during their time at OSU eventually leave the never-ending cycle upon graduating and are no longer a source of threat to the power that OSU maintains. If the institution doesn't respond to the demands of students then it risks damaging its reputation, image, sources of income, and ultimately their authority as an institution. OSU is just as much a business as it is a place for education. If it continues to be run like a business, can these issues of power and race be meaningfully resolved? It is essential that these ideas are considered in future research because if power isn't understood at OSU then race relations cannot be fully understood either.

As the institution transitions and transforms its efforts or hires new university officials, it is crucial that they are made aware of this history. For example, the new Chief Diversity Officer, Charlene Alexander⁴⁴, should further understand the context of the OID and OSU to determine where and how OSU needs to be directed to improve the campus climate in this time of national political uncertainty and increasing hate crimes. It is important that race is always positioned at the center of this work because without naming institutional racism, it is easy for other oppressions to become mixed into the same conversation. An intersectional identity approach to this work must be considered. All forms of oppression take different forms and therefore the efforts towards inclusivity cannot always be categorized under the same "diversity" blanket that they often are. The Speak Out, the Boycott, and the Walk-Out were about racism and therefore should be addressed accordingly.

Charging a single office, the OID, to address all matters of institutional racism isn't feasible. OSU should also begin to identify institutional racism as an issue as it moves forward. Why is it that the words "institutional racism" aren't found anywhere on the Office of Institutional Diversity's website? As ironic as that seems, it's important to bring up here because if we don't name the real issue then how can it ever been understood?

As mentioned previously, tackling institutional racism shouldn't be the responsibility of only the OID. In particular, the Division of Student Affairs, the Board of Trustees, President Ed Ray, Orange Media Network⁴⁵, the College Student Services Administration graduate program, and incoming administrators and decision makers should involve this research in their work since they all directly serve students in some capacity. It takes the effort from all units on campus in order to effectively improve the

⁴⁴ <http://oregonstate.edu/ua/ncs/archives/2017/apr/charlene-alexander-named-vice-president-and-chief-diversity-officer-oregon-state>

⁴⁵ <http://www.orangemedianetwork.com/>

campus climate and combat the institutional racism that exists at OSU. Considering that this specific type of research has never been conducted at OSU before, other institutions of higher education in Oregon should expand on this research to similarly examine their own institution's history to understand the extensiveness of racism in Oregon's educational system.

Furthermore, since the city of Corvallis and its citizens have clearly played a significant role in environment that students of color engage with while at OSU, the city including the mayor and the City Council of Corvallis, should initiate an investigation, perhaps in congruence with OSU, to more deeply understand the history outside the walls of campus. An important question for OSU and Corvallis to consider is: how can the city and OSU work together to address the climate in Corvallis that negatively impacts people of color, both inside and outside of the walls of campus. What kind of responsibility does the university have for ensuring that actions are being taken to confront racism in Corvallis in meaningful way?

Since the Students of Color Speak Out in 2015, the conditions on campus for students of color have remained unchanged and have become increasingly worse in many ways. This follows national climate in which incidents of hate and biased-related crimes are beginning to increase⁴⁶ since the 2016 elections as a result of political leaders empowering hate groups and people to promote White supremacy and other forms of power. In the last two years at OSU, there have been countless incidents of racism, many of which have gone undocumented. Some current examples include a variety of racist, islamophobic, and xenophobic sidewalk chalking that have occurred all over campus and Corvallis⁴⁷, anti-affirmative action bake sales from alt-right groups on campus⁴⁸, the defacing of the OSU Ethnic Studies Program posters⁴⁹ with racist flyers and stickers, and White nationalist materials that have been distributed on campus a number of times. While these are considered more overt forms of racism and exclusion, it is important to acknowledge the underreported forms of racial microaggressions that occur even more frequently than these events.

OSU is indeed recognizing these incidents and responding to them in the ways that I have examined through this thesis. Generally, when a racist event occurs on campus an email is sent to all students and staff to proclaim the event as deplorable, reassures everyone that there will be an investigation, and provides additional resources. These are reactionary methods to a problem that is inevitable. If we consider these issues as a public health crisis, how can OSU develop more preventative strategies to address the sickness of racism on our campus? How can OSU develop its diversity programs, initiatives, and services without repeating the cycle that currently exists?

My recommendations for breaking the cycle that has been identified through this research would be to first thoroughly examine the history of what has been done in the last several decades to improve the campus climate and support students of color. It

⁴⁶ https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/intelligence_report_162.pdf

⁴⁷ http://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/city-removes-racist-chalk-messages/article_c46cd4cf-2e8a-5f75-9cb5-71a7e5c2f584.html

⁴⁸ http://www.orangemedianetwork.com/daily_barometer/conservative-students-hold-controversial-bake-sale/article_621032d6-fc90-11e6-b7a0-33075e0e6e4b.html

⁴⁹ http://www.orangemedianetwork.com/daily_barometer/corvallis-groups-respond-to-public-expressions-of-racism/article_d3355c1c-812d-11e7-a76c-cbd7cb516029.html

would only seem logical to begin by identify the ways in which these issues have been approached previously in order to come up with new ideas and methods. Before creating new offices or committees, OSU should consider the ways it can support the programs that already exist. For example, OSU should be requiring more Difference, Power, and Discrimination⁵⁰ courses for its students, requiring search advocates⁵¹ on every hiring committee, fiscally supporting units that already work on this topic, such as the Ethnic Studies program, so they can expand, identifying the ways that OSU marketing and other departments tokenize students of color so they can put an end to it, holding faculty accountable in more serious ways to be supportive and understanding of the needs of students of color, and even holding student organizations accountable for the same things. These are just a handful of simple ideas that I, as a student, came up with. If the vision of “diversity and inclusion” is something that OSU truly aspires to then we should be thinking of all the possibilities to work towards this vision in timely manner because students lives depend on it. It should be just as much of a priority as Athletics, new buildings, new campuses, expanding e-campus, or creating a new institutional logo⁵².

It should be acknowledged that there are smaller institutions that exist within the larger institution of OSU that were largely created by the efforts of students in order to serve students. In particular, the Educational Opportunities Program, the cultural centers, and even the Ethnic Studies program. These units support students of color in meaningful ways and their purposes have remained largely unchanged over the past decades. However, those offices are not at the top of the hierarchy of administration. They are not necessarily in a position to enact institutional change even though they may have ideas to contribute. This type of relationship and positionality should also be explored further in future research.

There are many areas for this research to be further utilized and grow and should be seriously considered given the urgency of these issues. It would be of great value to continue to build this work through additional oral histories from the students, faculty, and administrators who were invested in these events. Their perspectives are valuable and would provide new insights and information. In addition to oral histories, a more extensive archival research process could be conducted using qualitative measures, such as coding documents for themes, to further understand the vast quantity of information that exists within archives. Quantitative methods of research, such as the most recent Inclusivity Survey⁵³, should also be assessed in conjunction with this archival research to more deeply evaluate the trends of OSU’s campus climate and experiences of students of color.

As OSU moves forward with the OID and its other diversity-related initiatives, additional research could be considered using theories of Whiteness and other critical race theories. OSU’s history could be understood more thoroughly by engaging with these theories. Finally, an important question that should be addressed is how can OSU, and other PWI, consider their rich historical context of race relations as they move

⁵⁰ <http://dpd.oregonstate.edu/>

⁵¹ <http://searchadvocate.oregonstate.edu/>

⁵² <http://communications.oregonstate.edu/brand-guide/visual-identity/logo>

⁵³ <http://oregonstate.edu/studentaffairs/campusinclusivitysurvey>

forward in their efforts towards diversity and inclusion? What more could be done to ensure that history at OSU is not repeating itself?

Racism is a never-ending story that we can expect to impact the future generations of our nation. It may take new forms and transform within cultural, social, and political structures but racism has been historically rooted in our society for hundreds of years and will presumably take even longer to undo. What shouldn't be a never-ending story is the challenges that students of color face in higher education. Students of color at OSU and around the nation shouldn't have to confront the university every year regarding matters of safety, tokenizing, symbols, racist building names, inclusivity, a lack of cultural sensitivity, and a hostile campus climate. How can OSU shift the conversations and take direct actions that will create lasting, impactful changes that can allow students of color to thrive, not just survive?

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