

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Michael E. Shingle for the degree of Master of Science in College Student Services Administration presented on April 4, 2012.

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Abstract approved:

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This qualitative study explored the experiences of self-identified White students currently enrolled at a predominantly White institution who were cross-racially involved for at least ten weeks in a multicultural association, club, or organization that had students of color as the racial majority. This study also examined students' consciousness of Whiteness and the development of students' White identities based on their cross-racial experiences. Utilizing a sample of 4 students in concert with a review of relevant literature, the principal findings of this research are that cross-racially involved students have heightened awareness of difference based on race, including their own White racial identity. Although racial tension exists between individuals' White identities and the collective organization's multicultural identity, White students who were more deeply involved in multicultural organizations indicated that they (a) had a higher sense of belonging with their peers of color, (b) became more conscious of their Whiteness both inside and outside of their multicultural organizations to a certain degree, and (c) desired to more completely understand their ethnic heritage. Findings from this study can contribute towards literature on the development of racial justice allies in college. In order to influence racial justice ally development at a predominantly White institution, findings from this research suggest that student affairs administrators should encourage

White students to engage in multicultural organizations so they can understand how their Whiteness “shows up” for others including the impact of privilege and oppression in a multicultural society.

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White College Students' Cross-Racial Involvement in Multicultural Organizations and
the Shaping of White Consciousness

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

Michael E. Shingle, Author

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Pre-College Trends in the United States.....	2
Increasing Diversity in College and the Role of White Students	4
Significance of Study.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature.....	10
White Identity Development.....	10
Helms’ model of white identity development.....	11
Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson white consciousness model.....	13
White identity development: An integrated approach	16
Elevating Consciousness as a Racial Justice Ally in College.....	19
The role of higher education administrators	21
Cycle of socialization.....	23
Race-based privilege.....	24
Race-based oppression.....	25
Dismantling the cycles of privilege and oppression	28
Student development.....	28
Cross-Racial Experiences for White Students in College.....	31
Benefits of cross-racial interactions.....	32
Chapter 3: Methods.....	35
Research Perspective	35

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Research Design.....	36
Participants.....	38
Participant Recruitment	40
Data Collection	43
Analysis.....	44
Limitations of Study	46
Personal disclosure: bias and worldview	48
Chapter 4: Results.....	50
Participants.....	50
Summary.....	55
Pre-college cross-racial experiences informing multicultural college experiences.....	56
External factors influencing exploration of bi-cultural boundaries	61
Whiteness as a factor (or non-factor) of marginalization	67
Increased consciousness of differences based on race.....	75
Personal commitment to the values, goals, and mission of the organization matters.....	79
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	84
General Conclusion.....	85
Anticipated Findings.....	87
Unanticipated Findings	88
Limitations of Study	90

Recommendations for Further Research.....	91
Implications for Practice and Concluding Thoughts	93
References.....	98
Appendices.....	105
Appendix A: Invitation Email, Interview Questions, & Informed Consent	105
Appendix B: Coding Examples	110

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

White students come to college with many assumed stereotypes and very little actual knowledge of students from other races or ethnicities; in fact, college may be the first time that White students interact with other students who are racially or ethnically different than themselves (Tatum, 2003). Involvement opportunities in college are extensive for students who desire to be active in associations, clubs, organizations, or work on-campus student jobs. Involvement opportunities in college that are multicultural in nature, however, are mostly taken advantage of by students of color where White students are overwhelmingly not involved (Sallee, Logan, Sims, & Harrington, 2005). Multicultural involvement in college is defined as a co-curricular student experience where a student plays an active role in a group that is racially, ethnically, or culturally diverse and has a mission that supports cultural activities, programs, or service (Pope, Mueller, Reynolds, 2004). White students who do choose to get involved in multicultural – or more specifically, cross-racial – associations, clubs, or organizations are few and far between. White students hesitate to form cross-racial connections in the form of organizational involvement; in the rare instance that it does happen, cross-cultural connections are oftentimes initiated by students of color (Tatum, 2003).

According to Sallee, Logan, Sims, and Harrington (2005), college educators face numerous challenges in their attempts to engage White students in multicultural programming. The challenges revolve around a sense of apathy from White students who do not see multicultural programs as beneficial for themselves (Forman, 2004). Sallee et

al. (2005) discuss challenges related to having White students attend events that promote multiculturalism, and infer that these same challenges occur when student affairs professionals attempt to engage White students as involved members of multicultural organizations on college campuses. White students do not involve themselves as active members of culturally-based organizations due to an overwhelming lack of racial identity development (Reason, 2005). Oftentimes, White people are socialized to see their race as neutral, normal, or non-existent (Harro, 2010; Kivel, 2002). White students at the beginning of their identity development often have an unconscious identification with White racial dominance (Helms, 1992; Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994). This is a challenge in terms of developing a healthy non-racist racial identity (Helms, 1992). In college, increased exposure to different racial and ethnic groups – and further cross-racial involvement – can facilitate awareness, knowledge, and skills around confronting racism, exploring White privilege, and continuing – or simply beginning – White identity development in a healthy manner (Sallee, Logan, Sims, & Harrington, 2005).

Pre-College Trends in the United States

Although many opportunities in college are available for White students to engage in cross-racial connections, many White students do not participate due to social “norms” experienced – and inherently taught – while matriculating through the K-12 system of the United States (Hu & Kuh, 2003). One of these norms in contemporary public schools is de facto segregation based on inequity with regard to educational access throughout the U.S. (Kaplin & Lee, 2007). De facto segregation can be understood as racial discrimination instead of de jure segregation which is racial separation forced by specific laws (Kaplin & Lee, 2007). In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling of *Brown v.*

Board of Education of Topeka Kansas established that laws racially segregating public schools were unconstitutional. This decision overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling from 1896 which allowed state-sponsored racial segregation in public schools. In 1956, the Supreme Court applied the same principle of equal access to higher education in *Hawkins v. Board of Control*. There were numerous movements of resistance to desegregation in both public schools and institutions of higher education. In the south, the opposition would rather close schools than desegregate them. Nevertheless, students of color began to enter predominantly White institutions (PWIs) of higher education all over the country in larger numbers beginning in 1960 (Thelin, 2004).

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark moment in regard to equality for students of color in higher education. As the civil rights movement gained momentum in the U.S., institutions of higher education experienced activities on campus related to equity for Black students, Chicano/Latino students, Native American students, and Asian/Pacific Islander students (Rudolph, 1990). Overall, the 1960s-1970s emerged as a significant time on college campuses for student activism and social change for racial justice. White students, to the dismay of administrators, began to support and increase activism around civil rights issues. In supporting their peers of color at protests, rallies, and in student groups for equality at PWIs, White students began to take action related to racial justice in higher education. Movements to enhance the campus racial climate were mainly student-driven. For many institutions of higher education, these actions were not supported by administration. There were several instances in Georgia where university faculty voiced their support for racial justice and had their employment terminated (Rudolph, 1990). Throughout this period, racial justice was not clearly defined within the

role of higher education administration and the emerging profession of student affairs and student services (Thelin, 2004). Throughout 1978-1990, enrollment of students of color increased by more than 60 percent (Rudolph, 1990). During this period, issues around racial justice were again not given support by higher education administrators. This time, however, racial justice issues were not given priority by administrators because of the perspective that racial issues were dealt with during the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s (Rudolph, 1990).

Even years after *Brown v. Board* (1954), the majority of U.S. higher education remains overwhelmingly segregated and mostly White (Hu & Kuh, 2003), however, racial demographics in K-12 are quickly changing. According to Orfield & Lee (2004), the White student population makes up only 60 percent of all children in K-12 public schools nationwide. Nearly 25 percent of all students attending public schools live in states where the majority is no longer White (Orfield & Lee, 2004). Although racial diversity has been increasing in the public school system since the 1960s in the U.S., White students who go through K-12 systems oftentimes remain segregated from students of color (Orfield & Lee, 2004). This is despite increases in levels of overall student ethnic and racial diversity. In lieu of changing demographics of the US K-12 system to a decreasing White racial majority, White students continue to enter college with minimal contact or experiences with students of color due to de facto segregation (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004).

Increasing Diversity in College and the Role of White Students

Since 1976, students of color began enrolling in colleges and universities in the US at an increasing rate. Between 1976 and 2010, the percentage of college students who

identified as Asian/Pacific Islander rose from 1.8% to 6.5%, Black students from 9% to 14.3%, and “Hispanic” [Latino, Chicano, Mexican-American] students from 3.5% to 12.5% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Increases in enrollment of students of color at PWIs contribute towards increases in structurally diverse campuses. Structural diversity – meaning larger quantities of students of color – does not mean that the campus is an engaged multicultural institution. White students must be significantly involved in culturally-based activities in order to have an engaged multicultural PWI (Tanaka, 1996). Sallee, Logan, Sims, and Harrington (2005) state that White students need to become invested in creating a multicultural campus and must recognize that they have just as much to contribute towards multiculturalism as students of racial and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, according to Tanaka (1996), multiculturally-engaged PWIs can maximize the value of multiculturalism for White students if they “adopt planned, coordinated strategies rather than piecemeal approaches and find ways to involve White students directly in multicultural experiences” (p. x). Though some White students do engage in multicultural activities, White identity development models frame an innate and unconscious resistance for White students to engage across cultures (Helms, 1992; Rowe, Bennett Atkinson, 1994; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991). White students who are involved in multicultural college experiences are a distinct and rare subpopulation within the general student body of a college or university (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004) and have unique experiences with regard to exploring racial identity development and developing racial justice attitudes (Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans, 2005).

Significance of Study

This study examined experiences of White students who were involved in significant cross-racial experiences within a predominantly White institution (PWI) and how these experiences led to students' consciousness of "Whiteness". The primary purpose of this research is to expand upon current literature focusing on cross-racial experiences for White students who are involved multicultural university associations, clubs, and organizations. The secondary purpose is to foster greater understanding in how cross-racial university experiences shape consciousness of Whiteness, and provide a deeper understanding of the importance of cross-racial involvement for White students in college. The third purpose, which is the most critical in driving the researcher's own professional work, is to provide further insight into how attitudes of racial justice and a healthy racial justice ally development (Reason, Roosa Millar, Scales, 2005) is formed through cross-racial experiences for White students in college.

This study takes the form of a qualitative study with a constructivist approach (Mahoney, 2004). Participants were recruited from over three hundred registered clubs and organizations at a large PWI using an email invitation that allowed students to self identify as White and as involved in a cross-racial or multicultural association, club, or organization. Five interviews were conducted with students to tell their story about the experience as a White person in a cross-racial organization and their consciousness of Whiteness. The data was then coded for common themes that emerged. Although the researcher utilized maximum variation sampling in an attempt to secure a diverse range of participants, it is crucial to recognize that the limited number of participants and use of

a qualitative methodology is not intended to generalize all White students in cross-racial or multicultural experiences.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, it is important to understand the meaning of a few key terms that are used in this research. Within the review of the literature, these terms are used in a variety of ways. The researcher has provided the definitions to support the reader in understanding how the specific terms the researcher used shape the context of this study.

- Ethnicity - “A social construct that artificially divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.” (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007, p. 88)
- Identity - “The process by which individuals define themselves with regard to racial classification in their social contexts” (Ortiz & Santos, 2009, p.361)
- Involvement – “[S]tudent involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. Thus, a highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students” (Astin, 1984)
- Race - “A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on certain characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color) ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification

... Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.” (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007, p. 88)

- Racism – “The systemic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians), by the members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (Whites). This subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society.” (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007, p. 88-89)
- Racial Justice Ally – A White person who actively works to eliminate racism. This person may be motivated by self-interest in ending racism, a sense of moral obligation, or a commitment to foster social justice as opposed to a patronizing agenda of wanting to help those “poor People of Color.” A White ally may engage in anti-racism work with other Whites and/or People of Color (Wijeysinghe & Jackson, 2001).
- White – A racial identity of an individual with a light skin phenotype indicating a degree of European ancestry socially constructed to have privileges in U.S. society (Adams, Bell, & Griffin; Helms, 2007).
- White Privilege - “The concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society which Whites receive, unconsciously and consciously, by virtue of their skin color in a racist society.” (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007, p. 97)
- Whiteness – A dynamic socially constructed understanding of what it means for an individual to be White in the United States (Reason, Roosa Millar, & Scales,

2005). Noel Ignatiev (1997) describes Whiteness as having “nothing to do with culture and everything to do with social position. It is nothing but a reflection of privilege, and exists for no reason other than to defend it. Without the privileges attached to it, the White race would not exist, and the White skin would have no more social significance than big feet” (p. 1)

Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature

In an increasingly diverse collegiate environment, students must understand their own racial identities in order to learn how to effectively work with peers from different racial backgrounds effectively (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004; Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans, 2005). For White students, college may be the first time that they think of themselves as people who have a race instead of seeing themselves having no (or a “neutral”) race.

White Student Identity Development

The dynamics related to social identity development for students in college are complex. A multiple identity development model designed by Jones and McEwen (2000) demonstrates the complexity of social identities for students in college. Within the Jones and McEwen model, race, culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual or affectional orientation, and age are examples of dimensions of identity that surround any student’s core identity. This model illustrates that a student’s most salient identity may vary depending on the changing context or environment. Consequently, students perceive their dimensions of identity as both internally defined and externally influenced. Given the complicated nature of identity as demonstrated by Jones and McEwen (2000), students are often readily aware of their targeted identities but may not as easily identify with their privileged identity. An example of this may be a White gay man who may see his sexual orientation as a target rather than acknowledging his privileges as a White man in certain situations.

Although White students may feel that a particular dimension of their core identity depends on the changing context, White students entering college are often at the

beginning of self-exploration with regard to racial identity development (Reason, Broido, et al., 2005). White students may enter college with an unconscious understanding of “Whiteness” – a dynamic socially constructed understanding of what it means for an individual to be White in the United States – and attitudes around racial justice and equity, but their Whiteness is often unexamined and unexplored (Reason, Roosa Millar, et al., 2005).

Helms’s model of white identity development. Helms’ (1992) model of White identity development was created to raise the awareness of White people about their role in creating and maintaining a racist society and the need for them to act responsibly by dismantling it (Helms, 1992). Helms (2008) contended that all people in the U.S. have a racial identity that is experienced within the social constructions of privilege and oppression. Helms’ model of White identity development (1992) occurs in two sequential phases with three statuses possible in each phase.

First phase: abandonment of racism. The first phase, *abandonment of racism*, describes the process of a White person moving from an oblivious or naïve conception of race to a White person acknowledging his or her complicity in maintaining a racist society (Helms, 1992). Within this phase there are three statuses. The first of these three statuses is *contact*. White people within this status of contact are oblivious to racism, have minimal experiences with people of color, and may state that they are color-blind and do not see race. Racial and cultural differences are considered unimportant to these individuals as they seldom perceive themselves as “dominant” group members, or having biases and prejudices. The second status, *Disintegration*, is present when White people become conflicted over irresolvable racial moral dilemmas, for example: White people in

this status may believe that they are nonracist, yet do not want their son or daughter to marry a person of color. *Reintegration*, the last status in the first phase, is characterized as a regression where the tendency is to idealize one's own socioracial group (White people) and to be intolerant of minority groups. Because of the tremendous influence that socialization exerts, resolving dissonance means turning more towards the dominant ideology associated with one's own racial group identity as a White person. Within this status, there is a firmer and more conscious belief in White racial superiority and any racial or ethnic minorities are blamed for their own problems (Helms, 1992).

Second phase: evolution of a nonracist identity. The second phase is called the *Evolution of a Nonracist Identity* and involves deeper reflection where attempts are made to interact with other racial group members (Helms, 1992). The first status within this phase is called *Pseudo-Independence*. In this status, a person begins to attempt to understand racial and cultural differences and may reach out to interact with people of color. The choice for these people, however, is based on how "similar" they are to them, and the primary mechanism used to understand racial issues is intellectual and conceptual. A person is likely to move into this phase due to a painful or insightful encounter or event, which jars the person from Reintegration status. The fifth status is called *Immersion/Emersion*. If individuals continue personal explorations of themselves around racial identity, the individual's questions become focused on what it means to be White. Helms states that the person searches for an understanding of the personal meaning of racism and the ways by which one benefits from White privilege. Moving through this status means that there is an increasing willingness to truly confront biases, to redefine Whiteness, and to become an activist in directly combating racism and

oppression. This stage is marked with increasing experiential and affective understanding that were lacking in the previous status. The last status in the second phase, *Autonomy*, describes an increasing awareness of one's own Whiteness, reduced feelings of guilt, acceptance of one's own role in perpetuating racism, and a renewed determination to abandon White entitlement. The person is knowledgeable about racial, ethnic and cultural differences, values the diversity, and is no longer fearful, intimidated, or uncomfortable with the experiential reality of race.

Limitations of the Helms's model. The Helms (1992) model is limited, however according to Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994). Rowe, et al. were concerned because they felt that identity does not only occur in constellation with other White people, but can have different vehicles depending on the group and individual's construct of his or her identity. Second, the concept of a linear progression of identity can be problematic for individuals as identity can be recursive, circular, and cyclic depending on context. Third, Helms' theory was, according to Rowe, et. al., misnamed because the focus was on racial awareness and not identity development. Finally, Helm's theoretical basis was limited to the worldviews of White people and Black people – different racial identities were not originally considered.

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's White racial consciousness model. Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) focus on understanding Whiteness and its resulting implications on other racial groups. Rowe et al. defined White racial consciousness as one's awareness of being White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White racial group membership. The White racial consciousness model was formulated in response to the four key concerns with White racial identity models,

including that of Helms (1992). The authors argue that this lens of White consciousness improves assessment related to the understanding of Whiteness.

White racial consciousness involves “one’s awareness of being White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership” (Rowe, et al., 1994, pp. 133-134). Rowe et al. assumed that White racial consciousness and racial awareness are related. For White people, conflict in racial attitudes and the manner in which the conflict is resolved is the primary cause for positive change in racial attitudes. Two categories, unachieved and achieved racial consciousness, allow exploration of various attitudes in order to increase understanding of development processes of White students. Unachieved racial consciousness consists of three attitude types: (a) the avoidant type that dismisses race, (b) the dependent type that relies on others to formulate racial opinions, and (c) the dissonant type is in a state of confusion about race. Achieved White racial consciousness consists of four attitude types: (a) the dominative that manifests racial superiority, (b) the conflictive that objects outright racism but opposes any action used to minimize acts of discrimination, (c) the reactive type that acknowledges that other groups have been the recipients of injustice in society and responds to these inequities, and (d) the integrative type which approaches empathy by giving individuals the benefit of the doubt with regard to the intricacies of racial issues while fostering practical social change. Rowe et al. emphasize mobility between attitude types with respect to dissonance and resolving issues in White racial consciousness. They also claim the model is not linear but an ongoing process occurring experience-by-experience never reaching self-actualization.

Table 1 shows the two categories of the Rowe, et. al. (1994) White Consciousness Model – unachieved and achieved racial consciousness – and the various attitude types in each category involved in understanding the developmental processes of White students.

Table 1

Unachieved White Racial Consciousness	
Avoidant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not consciously thought about race of self or others - Dismisses, ignores, or avoids race
Dependent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Superficial understanding about race - No ownership of understanding race - Depend on others to define attitudes about race
Dissonant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant uncertainty regarding race - Open to receiving information and alternative perspectives - Confusion between previous understanding of race and new knowledge
Achieved White Racial Consciousness	
Dominative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believe White is superior - Rely on negative stereotypical images of people of color
<i>(a) Passive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid interaction with people of color - Will not admit racist attitudes to self - Does not recognize contradictions between beliefs and actions
<i>(b) Active</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overt expression using racial slurs, violence, and discrimination
Conflictive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Espousal of justice and equality, but disagree with measures to achieve these goals - Believe people of color have equal opportunity; responsible for own problems
Reactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize inequities and injustices - Understands White people are afforded unearned privileges - Connect with people of color
<i>(a) Passive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intellectualize issues - Have keen awareness and concern - Thinking, no acting
<i>(b) Active</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paternalistic in concern for people of color - Use White framework - Tension between reacting connections with people of color and challenging White dominance and status quo - Emotions: guilt, anger about inequalities

Integrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See reality of living in a White-dominant society - Understand complexities associated with race - Come to terms with being White - Know own identity - Committed to social change - Genuine interactions with people of color - Social activism
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White identity development: An integrated approach. Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky (1991) took an integrated approach to understanding White identity development by matching pieces of models developed by Hardiman (1982), Helms (1992), and Ponterotto (1988). Table 2 shows a visual representation of how these several White identity development models fit together (Ponterotto & Pederson, 1993).

Table 2

Racist Inclinations Associated with Identity Stages	Helms (1992)		Hardiman (1982)	Ponterotto (1988)	Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky (1991)
Racially unaware, exhibiting subtle racism	Abandonment of Racism	Contact	Lack of social consciousness	Pre-Exposure	Pre-Exposure/ Pre-Contact
Confused state, exhibiting subtle racism		Disintegration		Exposure	Conflict
Racially sensitive, exhibiting racism		Evolution of a Non-Racist Identity	Reintegration	Acceptance	Zealot/Defensive
Racist Identity	Pseudo-Independence		Resistance	Pro-Minority/ Antiracism	
Non-Racist Identity	Immersion/Emersion		Redefinition		Retreat Into White Culture
		Autonomy	Internalization	Integration	Redefinition and Integration

Sabnanti et al. (1991), in the right-most column in Table 2, provides a conceptual understanding of how Whites are initially unaware of differences based on race and oblivious to roles as White people in an oppressive society to eventually moving towards redefining what it means to be White in contemporary society and developing a White racial identity that is nonracist, balanced, and healthy. In their model, Sabnani et al. discussed five critical “stages” of White identity development: (a) Pre-Exposure/Pre-Contact, (b) Conflict, (c) Pro-Minority/Antiracism, (d) Retreat Into White Culture, and (e) Redefinition and Integration. Each of these stages can be ubiquitous with “statuses” because White people can move between these stages depending on context, environment, or social group.

Pre-Exposure/Pre-Contact. Whites who are in this “stage” are not generally aware of roles and social expectations related to race and are mostly oblivious to any racial or cultural issues in their lives (Sabnani et al., 1991). Exploration of what it means to be White has not yet begun, nor have they given thought to what their role as a White person is in today’s oppressive society. White people at this point in their lives have a seemingly unconscious identification with Whiteness and accept stereotypes about people of color without question.

Conflict. This next stage focuses on an idea of conflict for Whites who are developing a more in-depth knowledge of race as compared to previous knowledge based on stereotypes and assumptions (Sabnani et al., 1991). Here, knowledge relating to racial matters is expanded. This knowledge is gained by Whites through either interaction with people of color or by information gathered elsewhere through reading, discussion, or forms of popular culture and media. Information that is collected by Whites challenge

their previous assumptions held and they begin to acknowledge their own Whiteness and cultural values. This stage centers on conflict between wanting to conform to majority norms – such as peer pressure from White acquaintances – and wishing to uphold humanistic, nonracist values. Impacts or emotions that may result from this stage are confusion, guilt, anger, and depression.

Pro-minority/Antiracism. As a result from the conflict in the previous stage, *Conflict*, White people often have one of two reactions (Sabnani et al., 1991). The first reaction is described as taking a strong pro-minority stance. In this stage, Whites experience some self-focused anger and guilt over their previous conformity to White socialization. Horizontal hostility – meaning resentment towards another White person – is a key trait of this stage because Whites tend to have significant emotions, such as anger, directed outward toward White culture in general.

Retreat into White culture. This is the second of two reactions to *Conflict* where Whites retreat from situations or environments that would stimulate disagreement, conflict, or difference (Sabnani et al., 1991). *Retreat Into White Culture* is characterized by a no longer having thoughts, behaviors, or attitudes that have a pro-minority stance and deliberately moving away from cross-racial/interracial contact back into the comfort, security, and familiarity of same-race contacts. White people in *Conflict* are often challenged by White peers on their pro-minority views. Other Whites may convey that they feel a racial disloyalty or betrayal. Whites may also be confronted by people of color who question a White's newfound supportive attitudes in favor of racial minority groups. As a result of peer pressure and minority group rejection, some White people feel life would just be easier and less complicated if they retreated into the "White world." Stage

4, therefore, is characterized by an over-identification with Whiteness and by defensiveness about White culture.

Redefinition and integration. The final stage *Redefinition and Integration* is where Sabnani, et al. (1991) found a common status in Hardiman's (1982), Helms' (1992), and Ponterotto's (1988) models of White identity development. This is a point where White people find that they have transitioned to a healthier and balanced White racial identity and have begun to redefine what it means to be White in today's society. Whites understand that they maintain racism due to their White privilege, but also acknowledge that they have a responsibility for dismantling it. They see the good and the bad in their own racial group just as they do in other any other social group. Whites have an identity that is non-racist and they devote energy to fight all forms of oppression. Flexibility and openness is present with Whites in this stage because they appreciate cultural learning activities from both their own racial group and other social groups.

The description of the final stage in White identity development models helps to begin to define what it means to be a "racial justice ally" (Reason, et al., 2005). White racial justice allies have a healthy understanding of Whiteness, acknowledge that they inherently maintain racism due to their White group membership, but most importantly, also understand their responsibility for dismantling racism – and all forms of oppression – within the work that they do.

Elevating Consciousness as a Racial Justice Ally in College

Raising social consciousness about issues relating to racism begins with "personal work" – or identity development – as described by White identity development models (Helms, 1992; Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky,

1991). For White people to do the work of aspiring racial justice allies, they must have a full and complete understanding of their own identity and privileges in their socially dominant identity as a White person. White racial consciousness promotes actions aligned with commitment to both an internal and external ongoing process of racial and ethnic awareness (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994). Alexander Astin (2004) talks about cultivating the ability to raise one's consciousness as an important aspect of the student experience in college:

One of the most remarkable things about the human consciousness is that in addition to experiencing thoughts and feelings, each of us can also observe our thoughts and feelings as they arise in our consciousness. Why shouldn't cultivating this ability to observe your own mind in action—becoming more self-aware or simply more "conscious"—be one of the central purposes of education?

For White students in college, integrating existing awareness, knowledge, and experiences into an identity where they accept themselves, appreciate contributions of other racial groups and group members, and balance one's own racial and ethnic identity with other aspects of their identity is key to elevating one's consciousness and working as a White racial justice ally (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans, 2005).

Atkinson, Morton, and Sue (2003) indicate that White students have traits that are more closely aligned with racial justice when they are comfortable functioning in two settings: (a) as part of the racial group in the majority, and (b) as part of the racial group in the minority. It is clear that race shapes opportunities and experiences for people in U.S. society, a reality that is also evident among students in higher education. White students enrolled at PWIs who can effectively function as part of the majority racial group and the minority racial group can contribute towards racially equitable and

inclusive college environments with respect to campus climate (Atkinson, Morton, & Sue, 2003; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004). Multicultural environments that include contributions from faculty, staff, students, and administrators will help to build attitudes more closely aligned with racial justice on the college campus (Tanaka, 1996).

Racial justice allies actively work to translate antiracist attitudes into action if the status quo is to change (Reason, et. al, 2005). In order to disrupt the status quo of racial inequity at a PWI, White students must actively work against perpetuations of the dominant culture and its ideologies that maintain racial inequality (Bergerson, 2003; Goodman, 2001). Within curricular and co-curricular experiences in a PWI, White students can take an active role to work to disrupt the racially unjust ideations of the dominant culture. Reason, Roosa Millar, Scales (2005) emerging model of racial justice ally development suggests that there are specific experiences in college that begin to shape White students into racial justice allies. As part of the emerging racial justice ally identity, Reason et al. suggest that exploration and reconstruction of Whiteness is important for students to develop consciousness around aligning oneself as a racial justice ally.

The role of higher education administrators. In order for White students to aspire to be racial justice allies at a PWI, there must be enough support from student affairs professionals and higher education administrators who are further along in their journey of multicultural competence (Pope, Reynolds, Mueller, 2004). Multicultural competence is the continual acquisition of aware, knowledge, and skills that allows student affairs professionals to work effectively with culturally diverse individuals (Adams, Bell, Griffin, 2007). The challenge with multicultural competence at a PWI lies

in the current organizational state of PWIs in the U.S. Currently, there is a lack of racial diversity within college student services administration at PWIs (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004; Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans, 2005). Milem (2003) reviewed research that clearly indicated that organizational diversity is a necessary foundation on which multicultural skills and racial justice ally attitudes are developed. This is a challenge when student affairs professionals address individualized needs of all students at a PWI. Forman (2004) described that ideologies which do not acknowledge race in student affairs tends ignore the systemic nature of race, excuse accountability for racial injustices, and promote covert acts of racism. Forman argues that lack of knowledge and awareness creates apathy, which is ultimately tied to placing power and privilege with the dominant group.

To promote racial justice ally development at PWIs, higher education administration can overcome challenges related to building multicultural skills by first focusing on hiring more staff and faculty of color (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). It is within racially diverse environments that racial justice ally attitudes are most directly tested and turned into actions (Reason, Broido, et al, 2005). With more faculty of color at a PWI, an organizationally diverse lens can be used to take a proactive approach to racial justice: working with students from dominant and privileged social identities to combat negative oppressive behaviors (Reason, Broido, et al., 2005).

A PWI has a racial majority of White students and most often has a racial majority of White staff and faculty of color (Forman, 2004). Often, student affairs professionals, especially those who are White, have the best of intentions but lack resources to effectively work with students around issues of multiculturalism, diversity,

privilege, and oppression (Mueller & Pope, 2001). For White faculty who work with students of color, race is often dismissed and not acknowledged. Forman (2004) described that ideologies which do not acknowledge race in student affairs tends ignore the systemic nature of race, excuse accountability for racial injustices, and promote apathetic, covert acts of racism. Forman argues that a lack of knowledge and awareness creates apathy, which is ultimately tied to placing power and privilege with the dominant social group: White people.

Multicultural skills are tested and refined through racially diverse environments; it is within racially diverse environments that racial justice ally attitudes are most directly tested and turned into actions (Reason, et al, 2005). Student affairs professionals and higher education administrators must understand why cross-racial experiences are important for White students within their development as a student in college (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). Understanding White identity development as a support resource at a PWI can provide framework for White faculty to be cultural ambassadors with respect to the students that they serve (Pope, Reynolds, Mueller, 2004). With an anti-apathetic, action-oriented approach, university administrators could see the increasing importance of cross-racial interactions on student development (Chang, Astin, Kim, 2004). It may even inspire administrators to begin to explore more of their own cross-racial experiences alongside that of their students so administrators themselves can move beyond merely tolerating cultural differences at a PWI.

Cycle of socialization. When White students step onto campus, they have an established set of norms, values, beliefs, and worldviews. The process that shapes students' norms, values, beliefs, and worldviews is called socialization (Harro, 2010).

Students see their world through lenses created by means of socialization. As people are each born into a specific set of social identities, including race and skin color, people are predisposed to unequal roles in the dynamic systems of oppression that exist in the world. According to Bobbie Harro (2010), the cycle of socialization can be seen as “pervasive (coming from all sides and sources), consistent (patterned and predictable), circular (self-supporting), self-perpetuating (intradependent), and invisible (unconscious and unnamed)” (p. 45). Within contemporary colleges and universities that are predominantly White, the cycle of socialization reflects dissonance around issues regarding racial equity. At the forefront of racial inequity are privilege and oppression.

Race-based privilege. According to Peggy McIntosh (1988), race-based privilege comes in two types. The first type is based on unearned entitlements which are things that all people should have, but do not. Examples of this in higher education include students feeling safe when in a public place such as a college campus or feeling that what a person has to say in the classroom or at a student club meeting is valued. When any unearned entitlement is restricted to only certain groups, it is a certain type of privilege that McIntosh calls unearned advantage. Unearned advantages give dominant groups a competitive edge that members within this group are reluctant to even acknowledge, much less give up (Johnson, 1997). This type of privilege gives credibility or competence without merit. The second type of privilege is what McIntosh (1988) names conferred dominance and exists when one group has power over another.

Conferred dominance in higher education includes patterns of cultural assumptions that exist on a college campus, especially predominantly White public universities (McIntosh, 1988). Some common examples include seeing mostly White

students in leadership positions within student groups and organizations, and the existence of the majority of buildings named after White men on any given college campus. White privilege is described by Peggy McIntosh (1988) as conferred dominance and unearned entitlements that give White people an unfounded advantage in society solely based on the (lack of) color of their White skin. Conferred dominance is a cultural assumption that “White racial dominance that can override any class advantage a person of color might have” (Johnson, 1997, p. 27). These unearned advantages for White people are accrued through social constructions of dominance and privilege. White privilege also reinforces disadvantages that people of color experience.

As McIntosh (1988) illustrated, any privileges that are unearned advantages (since they are unearned) are easily overlooked as a form of privilege (Reason, Broido, et al., 2005). According to Johnson (1997), ignoring privilege keeps people “within a state of reality, by promoting the illusion that difference by itself is the problem” (p. 16). Unacknowledged privilege related to being a White in the United States is a significant barrier for racial justice allies because becoming an ally first requires an understanding of how oppression and the role of oppressors in society (Bishop, 2002; Reason et al., 2005).

Race-based oppression. Oppression maintains advantage and disadvantage based on social group memberships and operates, intentionally and unintentionally, on individual, institutional, and cultural levels (Johnson, 1997). Oppression is deeply institutionalized in the culture and society of the United States, and because of this target groups and subordinated group members often believe the messages and internalize the oppression. Often, members of oppressed groups consciously or subconsciously submit themselves to the elements of oppression constructed and perpetuated by the dominant

culture through socialization (Bishop, 2002). When any target group or subordinated group members accept stereotypes constructed by society, internalized oppression begins to take shape that reinforces prejudice around the stereotypes themselves.

Race-based oppression coming from concepts within the cycle of socialization (Harro, 2010) often inhibits positive change and growth within student development (Pope, Reynolds, Mueller, 2004). At a PWI, this means that racial inequity is reinforced – whether overtly or unconsciously – through environments that exist as the status quo by means of the dominant paradigm of a White majority (Johnson, 1997). Environments and systems that are racially unjust often exist within a space that has been created or maintained by people in higher positional power who identify as being White or Caucasian and were born within United States (Helms, 2008).

According to Schmidt (1994), the Cycle of Oppression is one way to explain how oppression is perpetuated in our society. Momentum within the cycle keeps the cycle going. Schmidt describes the cycle that has five different pieces: stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and internalized oppression. Although internalized oppression is shown as the last piece of the cycle, Schmidt posits the internalized oppression can be present within all pieces of the cycle.

The first piece – *stereotype* – is a preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences (Schmidt, 1994). While often negative, stereotypes may also be complimentary. Even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact however, simply because they are broad generalizations. The stereotypes that White people often hold, whether consciously or unconsciously, form the basis for racial prejudice. *Prejudice*, the second piece of

Schmidt's model, is a conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members. When White people hold prejudice and use the power to deny opportunities, resources, or access to a person of color because of their racial or ethnic group membership, discrimination effectively happens. The third piece, *discrimination*, is prejudice plus the power held by dominant group members such as White people in the U.S. Schmidt illustrates that discrimination can take many forms including racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism. With respect to racism, White people have historic and systemic racial advantages written into policies, procedures, and legislature. Furthermore, it is important to also note that both overt and covert acts of discrimination exist as a result of the systemic issues on an interpersonal level with respect to cross-racial interactions between White people and people of color. Schmidt describes that many acts of discrimination build up over time, perpetuated by a more powerful social group, such as White people, to a discriminated group, such as Latinos or Black people in the U.S. This chronological build up leads to a group of people being in a state of oppression. *Oppression* is the systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group of people with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.

Because oppression is institutionalized in our society, target group members often believe the messages and internalize the oppression (Schmidt, 1997). *Internalized Oppression* is when oppressed groups "buy into" the elements of oppression by the dominant group. Schmidt states when target group members believe the stereotypes they are taught about themselves, they tend to act them out and thus perpetuate the stereotypes which reinforce the prejudice and keep the cycle going.

Dismantling the cycles of privilege and oppression. According to Reason, Broido, et al. (2005), accurate information is necessary to dismantle the self-perpetuating cycle of oppression that feeds on each successive generation. Simply accepting the norms and cultural understandings of the previous generation is not adequate. Because many White people accept societal norms and often experience internalized dominance, Paul Kivel (2002) states that most Whites have given very little thought about how they are personally hurt and impacted negatively by racism. For a White person to make the first step to develop a racial justice attitude, he or she must acknowledge White privilege and expand an understanding of how oppression works (Bishop, 2002; Reason et al., 2005). Furthermore, having a clear sense of self-interest will help racial justice activists maintain a high level of commitment to work against racism and create more just and inclusive multicultural communities (Kivel, 2002). In alignment with Kivel's work describing the need for self-interest for White people in matters of dealing with racism, much of Robert Reason's work addresses developing social justice allies in higher education (Reason, Broido, David, & Evans, 2005; Reason, Roosa Miller, & Scales, 2005). It is through this lens of student affairs work in higher education that the work of racial justice allies must become salient. For White students, this means gaining a sense of knowledge and awareness about how racism affects them on individual, group, and institutional levels within their experiences at PWIs in the U.S.

Student development. Cognitive development for students is one factor in developing racial justice allies. Theories of cognitive development (Magolda, 1992; King and Kitchener, 1994; Perry, 1968) explain that students see a progressive shift in their worldview from being concrete to being abstract. This aligns with the theory that

cognitive development moves from “simple to complex, external authority to internal agency, and clear-cut certainties to comfort with doubt, uncertainty, and independent inquiry” (Adams, Bell, and Griffin, 1997, p. 41). According to Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans (2005), individuals who are in the first stages, perspectives, or ways of knowing in each of the theories “insist on clear answers, look to teachers as authorities, and are intolerant of ambiguity associated with the complexities of intercultural understanding” (p. 10). Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997) see progression in these stages as “indicators of conceptual limits for a students’ readiness to listen, respond to, and learn from each other’s divergent experiences and viewpoints” (p. 41). Broido (2000) suggests that there is high value within high levels cognitive growth within students towards the development of racial justice allies. Students who have a higher level of reasoning may be able to more acutely develop awareness and knowledge around dissonance in a PWI with respect to equity for White students and students of color.

The intersection of cognitive development and racial identity development for White students plays a role in racial justice ally development (Reason, Broido, David, Evans, 2005). White students must focus on and reflect on their own identity as a White person if a racially just identity is to emerge within them. Oftentimes, White students immediately turn to their oppressed identities when attempting to provide empathy for people of color (Jones & McEwen, 2000). This is both a vehicle for opportunity and for misunderstanding. White students can begin to see the concept of oppression through their own experiences as someone of an oppressed identity; for example, a White student from a lower social class could begin to identify oppression through the lens of being economically disadvantaged in the United States. Someone who identifies as having a

female or transgender identity can see oppression in the United States as a patriarchal society. Someone who identifies as lesbian or gay sees oppression due to the social construction of heterosexuality as the norm in the United States. Even though there are opportunities for empathy existing through these worldviews, someone who identifies or presents as White to others will never be able to live through the lens of a person of color and will not be able to fully understand race-based oppression created through the cycle of socialization within a Eurocentric society in the United States (Harro, 2010).

Dissonance around issues regarding racial equity exists on many levels at PWIs. Reason, et al. (2005) identified that White students can work against racial inequity through actions aligned with racial justice. According to Reason, et al., White students who have had a significant amount of “minority” experiences and high quality interracial relationships are able to “cognitively make meaning from these experiences” and show a “higher level of racial justice actions such as leading campus groups” (Reason, Broido, David, Evans, 2005, p. 543). Furthermore, for self-identified White students to get involved in racial justice in college, privileges related to Whiteness must be acknowledged, described, owned, and translated into actions that upset the dominant ideology and culture maintaining racial inequity (Bergeson, 2003; Broido, 2000).

While this is a great foundation to explore White identity development through the lens of White racial justice allies on college campuses, more research needs to be done on White students who are deeply connected and committed to their roles within a club, organization, or other cross-racial university experience. Self-awareness, discovery, and consciousness of what their White identity means within their college experiences

will allow White students to gain a deeper understanding of their pathway to become racial justice allies on a college campus (Mueller & Pope, 2001).

Cross-Racial Experiences for White Students in College

White students involving themselves in cross-racial experiences in college have unique experiences that are unmatched when examining student development with respect to White identity (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004). Current literature explores the experiences of cross-racial membership in fraternities and sororities. While Tanaka (1996) posited that the impact of multiculturalism on White students is less for those in a fraternity or sorority, he failed to account for White students in culturally-based Greek organizations. Hughley (2007) and Kimbrough (2003) explore the experiences of White students in historically Black Greek-lettered organizations, including both White men and women. White students in culturally-based Greek letter organizations are a rare subpopulation according to Hughley (2007), Kimbrough (2003), and Bankhead (2003). Typically, White students in culturally-based Greek organizations had both feelings of pride in their organization and confusion of group identity due to their Whiteness. While students felt that they had a sense of belonging in their organization, they also indicated that they struggled with identifying completely with group norms in some contexts, such as when interacting with family members of their peers of color or with other culturally-based Greek organizations that did not have White students present. Moving through racial barriers in a student group setting can often be a difficult path to navigate for a White student in college. Those students who are willing to cross racial bridges and build relationships with their peers of color show specific benefits with regard to student

development (Antonio, 2001b; Astin, 1993; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006).

Benefits of cross-racial interactions. Involvement, as defined by Astin (1984), occurs for students only when they devote psychological or physical energy towards an activity such as a student organization or when students interact with other students. In a study on cross-racial interaction among undergraduate students done by Chang, Astin, and Kim (2004), they uncover the White student experience in terms of what White students gain from cross-racial interaction. It is unclear, however, if *interaction* can also be used interchangeable with *involvement* based on the parameters for their research. Chang, et al. use longitudinal data to assess student attitudes and beliefs between the time of initial entry to college and four years later. According to the Chang, et al. (2004), White students experience the effects of racial diversity on cross-racial interaction positively for all forms of interaction. Furthermore, at each successively higher level of diversity, White students are increasingly likely to engage in cross-racial interaction regardless of the type of interaction. Aligning with further research in higher education, the findings on cross-racial involvement supports the work of student affairs practitioners' views on holistic college student development. More precisely, holistic development is further refined because of interpersonal interaction with other students, which is the most significant educational experience for students in college (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005).

Chang, Denson, Saenz, and Misa (2006) did research with Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) data and found that students who have higher levels of cross-racial interactions tend to report significantly larger gains made since

entering college due in part to their knowledge of and ability to accept different races and cultures. They also experienced growth in general knowledge, critical thinking ability, and problem-solving skills. Additionally, these students in cross-racial experiences showed higher levels of intellectual growth and social self-confidence than their peers who had lower levels of interaction. According to Chang et al., (2006) higher levels of skills and abilities “remain statistically significant and positive even after [they] control for differences in students’ background and in key institution and student body characteristics” (p. 435). Chang, et al. (2006) state that the results of their study confirm previous findings (Antonio, 2001b) that students who interact with someone of a different race during college have added educational benefits in terms of holistic student development in college.

This research reinforces the importance of cross-racial interaction and involvement for White students. Further studies have linked White students’ cross-racial involvement to greater cognitive development (Antonio, 2001a), more positive community and academic self-concept (Antonio, 2001b), higher graduation rates (Chang, 1999), growth in leadership skills, cultural awareness, and understanding (Antonio, 2001b), and overall satisfaction in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

According to Chang, Astin, and Kim (2004), racial diversity is a necessary condition for cross-racial interaction to occur. In support of this premise, Chang et al. showed that students who attend campuses that are more racially diverse report higher frequencies of cross-racial interaction. Racially diverse student populations at a PWI enhance the chances that students will socialize across racial groups; having this type of interaction can have a positive impact on students’ development (Adams, Bell, & Griffin,

2007; Chang, Astin, Kim, 2004). Chang et al. refer to interaction as a type of student involvement. In refocusing on the important piece of student learning – the cross racial interaction or involvement in itself – solely the presence of students of color within a diverse student body is not as important as facilitating more opportunities for cross-racial involvement (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004).

Identity development for students in college is complex. White identity development is often unexamined and unexplored but begins to take shape for students in college through experiences with peers from different racial and ethnic groups (Reason, et al., 2005). College is a place for students to continue to test and redefine themselves and their role within the larger context of society (Astin, 2004). Elevation of White racial consciousness and progressive White identity development are two methods for students understand how their Whiteness shows up when interacting with others (Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991). Through cross-racial involvement, White students can explore the impact of privilege and oppression of their White identity in a multicultural society (Chang, Astin, Kim, 2004).

Chapter 3: Methods

This study examined experiences of White students who were involved in a significant cross-racial experience at a predominantly White institution and how these experiences led to students' consciousness of Whiteness. The primary purpose of this research is to expand upon current literature focusing on cross-racial experiences for White students who are involved in multicultural student associations, groups, or organizations. A secondary purpose is to foster greater understanding in how cross-racial university experiences shape consciousness of Whiteness, and provide a deeper understanding of the importance of cross-racial involvement for White students in college. The third purpose, which is the most critical in driving the researcher's own professional work, is to provide further insight into how attitudes of racial justice are formed through cross-racial experiences and involvement by White students in college.

This research explored two questions: (1) What are the experiences of White students involved a cross-racial university association, group, or organization? (2) How do these experiences relate to the consciousness of Whiteness? This chapter will describe (a) the research perspective used in this study, (b) the overall design of this study, (c) methods by which participants were recruited, (d) methods by which the data was analyzed, and (e) limitations and other factors that may have affected the data collection and research.

Research Perspective

A constructivist approach was taken in this research (Mahoney, 2004). Constructivism holds that multiple truths may exist in the world because knowledge is created by individuals through the interaction of experiences and ideas that construct

reality. Constructivism posits that human beings actively work with their experiences, and based on their language and acquired beliefs, construct reality in concert with others (Mahoney, 2004). In terms of racial identity, it is congruent with an understanding of race as a socially constructed concept to which individuals ascribe their own meaning (Patton, McEwen, Rendón, Howard-Hamilton, 2007). In this study, the data that was collected were the thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences of self-identified White students related to their involvement within a significant cross-racial college experience in an association, group, or organization.

Research Design

This research takes the form of a qualitative study. A qualitative approach was selected because of the constructivist approach taken in understanding the experiences of White students in significant cross-racial university experiences. This particular research method was used because it was important to obtain individuals' perceptions of their own White identities in the context of their cross-racial involvement. This approach also allowed the researcher to probe and ask questions for clarification regarding the participants' thoughts, feelings, ideas, and experiences related to their White racial identity. Qualitative studies have a variety of goals which fit within the context of this research. The first goal of qualitative inquiry is "not to generalize a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2005, p. 203). The second goal of qualitative research is to foster a holistic approach which involves "reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges" (Creswell, 2009, p. 176). The two

primary questions for this study were complex; qualitative research provided the tools to take a multifaceted approach in addressing them.

This study incorporates elements of both phenomenological and ethnographic research. Ethnographically, the study attempts to understand a unique cultural group – White students in cross-racial experiences – and the “shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time” (Creswell, 2005, p. 53). Utilizing a phenomenological research method, the researcher sought to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of being a White student in a cross-racial organization and how students gain consciousness of Whiteness (Creswell, 2005; van Manen, 1990).

The researcher developed and utilized questions intended to explore the experiences of White students at a predominantly White institution who have been involved in a cross-racial university experience for at least ten weeks. Although the researcher identified that students may have a high level of consciousness for any number of their multiple social identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000), the focus of this research was through a racial lens that investigated how these experiences shaped the students’ consciousness of Whiteness during the course of their involvement. Initially, the researcher intended to utilize the Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) White Consciousness Model as the only racial lens from which to analyze the students’ narrative data. To be more inclusive with an analysis, the researcher chose to also incorporate an integrative approach towards White Identity Development models (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1992; Ponterotto, 1998; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991) since the goal of this research is to understand the experiences of White students and how White racial consciousness is shaped.

Participants. The researcher had initially established a goal to recruit a total of ten currently enrolled college student participants who self-identified as White or Caucasian at a large predominantly White, public university. The number of participants (10) had been determined by the researcher as an adequate number due to the small number of students in this student population. White students who participate in cross-racial college experiences are a distinct subpopulation of the general student body population because of their unique experiences with regard to racial identity development (Chang, Astin, and Kim, 2004; Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994). This research study employed a small number of subjects more extensively which allowed for a more in-depth approach to qualitatively understanding the experiences of students in cross-racial organizations and their consciousness of Whiteness.

Only White students engaged in cross-racial experiences at a large, predominantly White, public research university – referred to in this study as Public White University (PWU) – were invited to participate in this study. The reason that PWU was chosen as the site to gather data was threefold. The first reason that PWU was chosen is because the researcher had ready access to a wide variety of cross-racial and multicultural student associations, groups, and organizations that would provide for a number of quality participants. The second reason that PWU was chosen was because it is a predominantly White institution (PWI). For White students at a PWI, issues related to racial and ethnic diversity are often tested in the classroom, during educational programs, in friendship groups, and in student clubs and organizations (Pope, Reynolds, Mueller, 2004). The researcher is interested in how students' experiences in a multicultural student organization have shaped consciousness of Whiteness at a PWI. The third reason that

PWU was the only university chosen because surveying White students from only one institution helped to simplify the study by eliminating the introduction of variables that might be created from surveying White students from multiple predominantly White institutions. Eliminating variables from other institutions allowed for a more decisive analysis of the data to explore answers to the research questions without being encumbered by experiences resulting from variable differences between institutions. Prior to this research study, the researcher reviewed the literature to understand some of the variables that would exist even with all participants coming from the same university. Some of these variables among participants include students who: (a) have different motivations for joining a cross-racial experience, (b) participate for different lengths of time, (c) participate at different levels, (d) have been enrolled for varying lengths of time at PWU, (e) are participating in groups with different numbers of White student members and student members of color, (f) have different prior experiences with racially different groups of individuals, (g) have different levels of understanding of Whiteness (Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991) and White consciousness (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994), and (h) have different worldviews, statuses, and values in addition to their varying social identities (Jones & McEwen, 2000) inclusive of a student's racial identity as a White person. The researcher decided to explore a number of these variables within this research study.

The researcher chose ten students as the goal quantity for participants given the constraints of time to conduct interviews and complete data analysis within six months. The researcher also believed that utilizing ten participants would create a more rich qualitative study with a constructivist approach. It was anticipated that the participants

who identify as White or Caucasian would be of different genders and would range from sophomore to fifth-year senior standing.

Those who chose to participate in the study did not reflect the researcher's expectations. The number of self-identified White students who participated in this study was less than originally anticipated. The class standing distribution was also slightly skewed with only upper-division student participants. Additionally, the researcher obtained varying student group types and lengths of cross-racial student involvement. The interviews took place in the fall of 2011 at predominantly White, large, public university.

Participant Recruitment. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in August, 2011. After approval by IRB, an email briefly describing the study and outlining the expectations of student participants was sent to PWU listserves that could potentially reach students who fit the qualifications of this study. To qualify for this study, the self-identified White student must be involved in a group where students of color are the racial majority, meaning that at least 50% of the current student group's members must identify as students of color.

Due to the small population size and specific parameters for the student population, emails were sent to professional faculty and staff at the university who serve student populations that are racially and culturally diverse in order to reach student lists and identify and invite possible student participants. PWU faculty and staff sent invitation emails to individual students with whom they worked with in addition to sending emails over their own listserves as well. Student associations, clubs, groups, and organizations that – according to the student organization registration information – were

culturally-based, faith-based, or service-based were identified. Additionally, student activist groups, athletics, research labs, workplaces, and other areas where White students can have a significant cross-racial college experience were identified. Email messages were sent to the primary contacts of all of these student groups to distribute and solicit participation.

Initially, the researcher had identified that attending student group meetings and making an in-person invitation announcement would be another possible recruitment method. It was later discovered that this recruitment method might make any self-identified White students feel uncomfortable or “called out” within their multicultural organization. This would not be on par with keeping this research confidential as stated by IRB standards as well as not a good first step to hearing the story of White students involved in a significant cross-racial experience.

The initial invitational email (Appendix A) sent to the students explained the purpose of the study and provided an email address where participants could inquire about possible participation in the interview portion of the study. Those students who responded to the initial e-mail who indicated that they were interested in being part of the study were then sent a second email. The purpose of the second email was to obtain a time and location that fit into the students’ schedules for the interview, and provide them with an electronic copy of the Informed Consent document so that they had a chance to review it prior to the interview.

As outlined in the email, participants were required to meet specific criteria: (a) they must be at least 18 years of age, (b) they must self-identify as White or Caucasian, (c) they must be currently involved in a multicultural, cross-cultural, or cross-racial

student association, group, or organization that has students of color as the racial majority, and (d) they must have at least ten weeks experience within this group during their tenure at PWU.

For purposes of this study, a significant cross-racial college experience was defined as involvement for at least ten weeks in a student association, group, or organization that has students of color as the racial majority. A racial majority of students of color means that at least 50% of current student members identify as students of color. These criteria were chosen so that White students may have significant experiences with their peers of color that they may not otherwise have at a predominantly White institution. For purposes of this study, a student association, group, or organization was defined as a registered student organization at PWU, unregistered student group consisting of all students from PWU, on-campus job or work setting at PWU, or PWU-affiliated student group. To qualify for this study, the student had to be involved in one of these group types for at least one academic term which is equivalent to ten weeks at PWU.

The number of self-identified White students who participated in this study was five with a gender distribution of three females and two males. The class standing distribution was also slightly skewed with three juniors, one senior, and one graduate student as participants. The researcher obtained varying student group types and lengths of cross-racial student involvement. Group types included a community service and advocacy group, a cultural center, a culturally-based fraternity, and a culturally-based sorority. The interviews took place in the fall of 2011 at a predominantly White, large, public university.

Data Collection

Students were given the opportunity to racially self-identify as White without any further clarification needed. The requirement for students to be involved in their group for at least ten weeks was also confirmed by the students' self-identification as a member for at least that period of time. To confirm that the students' group was one which had a racial majority of students of color, each participant was asked an interview question to provide his or her interpretation of group's racial or ethnic make-up. Participants were not required to show proof of membership in the qualifying organization.

The five participants who were selected were contacted to participate in an interview that lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour. The interviews were semi-structured in nature with ten predetermined open ended questions (Appendix A). Interviews were transcribed in November and December of 2011. The goal of the interview was to obtain a more detailed perspective of the participants' experiences as a White person in a cross-racial group and his or her consciousness of Whiteness. The interviews were all conducted in a private one-on-one setting in order to maintain confidentiality and were recorded with a digital audio device. Hand written notes were also taken by the researcher during the interview to indicate key points for a follow-up question.

Prior to the start of each interview, each participant was asked to look over an IRB Informed Consent document (Appendix A) and asked if they had any remaining questions. If a student had a question, it was answered thoroughly by the researcher. Participants were informed that they had the opportunity of opting out prior to the interview or during the interview without penalty. All participants were assured that any

information provided would not be tied to their name or individual identity. All individually identifying information would remain confidential; participants were informed that they will be assigned a pseudonym after the interview and the name of the students' association, group, or organization was referred to only by its group type.

Interview questions were developed by the researcher based on the literature review (Appendix A). Throughout the interview, a few students had asked for clarification on the questions that were asked. Many of the students' answers to the questions provoked the researcher to ask follow-up questions that were related to the initial question to probe for a deeper understanding of the students' answers. Though given the opportunity to pass on any questions that participants did not feel comfortable answering, no student chose to decline a response to any of the questions during the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were asked if they had any additional comments or questions. Some students did have additional comments related to their previous answers to questions asked during the interview. These conversations were also recorded and additional relevant narrative data was used to supplement the previously answered questions. The participants were also asked if they could be contacted by the researcher if further clarification or additional information was needed.

Data Analysis

The researcher began the data analysis by preparing the data by organizing participant information and matching it with its respective interview transcript. Handwritten notes that were taken during individual interviews were typed up to match the electronically typed transcripts in Microsoft Word. Since the researcher made several handwritten notations during the individual interviews, each individual handwritten notation had to be matched up with its respective interview answer. Handwritten notations were recorded in Microsoft Word

utilizing the comment balloon tool. Next, the researcher read through the five interview transcripts in order to make sense of the data as a whole. While reading through the whole data set, the researcher reflected on the ideas, tone, depth, credibility, and use for the information (Creswell, 2009). During this process, the researcher typed comments and notations on the electronic transcripts to start to record general thoughts about the data reviewed thus far. These comments and notations were also done utilizing the comment balloon tool of Microsoft Word.

Next, detailed analysis was done with the creation of a coding process. To begin the coding process, the researcher read through the first interview and made a list of topics that emerged. The researcher continued to review each transcript and created a list of topics from each one. Next, all of the topic ideas were put in a list in a Microsoft Word document where similar topics were clustered together. The clustered topics were put together into columns based on the content of the topics evaluated. Each column was given a color code; the researcher utilized the highlighter tool in Microsoft Word to represent several different colored highlighters to organize the interview data into categories. Next, the researcher went back to the interview transcripts and notations and used the color coding scheme to make note of interview data that fit within the category. Some categories began to emerge naturally from the data due to the answers to the questions that were asked, for example, several of the participants began to reflect back on their pre-college experiences. Several recurring themes and differences between participants began to emerge during the process of coding (Creswell, 2009). From data collected through the five interviews, key points were extracted from the transcribed text and placed into five different theme areas (with one of the theme areas having three distinct subcategories) as seen in Appendix B. The researcher then identified the themes from the coded information that had common elements related to

the research questions. The codes were grouped into patterns and themes and presented in this thesis based on information from a review of the literature. To help further understand the patterns or themes holistically, White Identity Development and Consciousness models (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1992; Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994; Ponterotto, 1998; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991) were used to understand the experiences of White students and how White racial consciousness was shaped. The researcher found several themes which emerged from the data that related to topics in a review of the literature in this thesis. The researcher made notes of where the data had overlap with a review of the literature and made note of differences that existed. The goal of this research was not to generalize student experiences, so the results that were formed enabled the researcher to outline and report a general hypotheses and conclusions in the form of retelling a story of the participants in this study (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The students' stories are retold in this thesis through the lens of White Identity Development models (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1992; Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994; Ponterotto, 1998; Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991) so that the researcher could make conclusions on the thought and experiential patterns that could indicate how White racial consciousness was shaped for participants in this study.

Limitations of Study

This research is based on qualitatively assessing the experiences of White students through a constructivist approach. Multiple truths may exist in the world due to beautifully rich complexity of the worldviews and lenses of the individual life experience. One of the purposes of this research is to provide further insight into how attitudes of racial justice are formed through cross-racial experiences and involvement by

White students in college. The contribution of this research towards existing work addressing racial justice ally identity as a developmental model (Reason, 2005) cannot be done without honoring the attitudes, beliefs, ideas, and thoughts of students of color and their stories within multicultural or cross-racial organizations where White students are only a part of the group's whole.

Trustworthiness. Participants in this study were given an opportunity to review their narrative data from the audio interview after it was transcribed. In this form of member checking, students were sent an email during the month of December, and again in January in order to review the transcriptions.

Generalizability. Each student experience differs and therefore the researcher cannot generalize the cross-racial university experience of White students. This research is based on looking for thought and experiential patterns that can lead to insight into the experience of this distinct subpopulation of students. Additionally, one of the most significant variables affecting generalizability was the breadth, depth, and time for student involvement. Therefore the intent of the researcher is not to generalize, but to gather stories from participants in order to shed some light on issues regarding the shaping of White consciousness for students cross-racially involved. Some students were more deeply involved for a longer amount of time than others and thus had a different perspective on interview questions. While this research was only framed through a racial lens, information on students' different social identities was not acquired and did not play a specific role within the presentation of the findings.

Personal disclosure: bias and worldview. My own social identity plays a role within my way that I see the world, and thus plays a role within the research that I am

conducting (Pope, Reynolds, Mueller, 2004). Thus, the challenge comes into play where I must first know my own biases then name them within the socio-cultural realm on this research. Wilson and Neville (2009) discuss culturally safe research practices and posit that researchers should review the way in which research is constructed and developed by creating a culturally safe space for research to occur. According to Wilson and Neville (2009), “vulnerable populations are exposed to research that is driven by dominant epistemologies, research methodologies, and socio-cultural lenses that can exacerbate their vulnerability, negating their socio-cultural reality” (p. 69). As a researcher, my lens plays a role in this study, so I must disclose some of my own personal identities.

As a White person, I believe that I have a social responsibility to address privileges related to my own Whiteness in context of a White majority society. Much of my ethnic heritage is mixed German and Irish, but cultural connections to these roots have been lost. I identify my sex and my gender identity both as male and see the world through a privileged male lens. Furthermore, I identify as a heterosexual individual and have the privilege of living a hetero-normative life. Heteronormativity means that I do not face discrimination based on my gender identity, sexual or affectional identity. An important part of my identity is being a brother of Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, Inc., also known as ODPhi, which is a historically Latino multicultural Greek-lettered organization. As a White student, much of my own White consciousness was elevated due to my involvement throughout my undergraduate experiences and is a principle reason behind my intentions to conduct this study. Even though I am working with students from a racially dominant paradigm (White students), I must also acknowledge that they have

intersecting identities that come into play and can do so at any given moment or within any given experience (Jones & McEwen, 2000).

The danger of a single story. This research is a single story based on a distinct student subpopulation. Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie (2009) warns that hearing only one specific story about a group of people – in this research, the story of White students in cross-racial organizations – can lead to ignorance. Adichie states that the truth can only be revealed by many stories. This research only acknowledges White students who are involved in a cross-racial student association, group, or organization. This does not uncover racial attitudes from students of color in the racial majority within these cross-racial organizations. The work of Chang, Astin, and Kim (2004) on undergraduate students' cross-racial experiences shows a general pattern of findings that suggest cross-racial interaction has positive effects on students' intellectual, social, and civic development. Chang et al. caution, however, that positive effects only apply uniformly to White students. For students of color, the frequency of cross-racial interaction does not always follow an expected path of steady gains as a group of students becomes increasingly more diverse (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004).

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter includes details of the participants in this study and a comprehensive presentation of the findings based on the data collected. In this study, the primary questions are: (a) “what are the experiences of White students involved a cross-racial university organization?” and (b) “how do these experiences relate to the consciousness of their White identity?” The findings answering these two research questions are organized into five theme areas:

- pre-college experiences informing multicultural college experiences;
- external factors influencing exploration of bi-cultural boundaries;
- White phenotype as a factor (or non-factor) of marginalization, with three types of marginalization: (a) marginalization due to messages from members inside the organization, (b) marginalization due to messages from outside the organization, and (c) marginalization as a non-factor;
- increased consciousness of differences based on race; and
- personal commitment to the values, goals, and mission of the organization matters.

The themes will be examined and discussed using narrative data, quotes taken directly from the interviews, and information derived from participant responses.

Participants

Five students participated in this study. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the student participants, the cross-racial association, group, or organization is only referred to by its group type. Any individually identifying data or information that could disclose the identity of the individual based on unique traits – such as place of work

or location of a study abroad trip – have been changed and placed into brackets in students' narrative data. All students attended the same university, and for purposes of this study, that university is referred to by the pseudonym Public White University (PWU).

Each of the five participants in this study identified racially as White which was an expected qualification to participate in this study. Each student also phenotypically presented as White and responded that others identify and associate them as being racially White. Student participant ethnic identities included “English,” “French,” “German,” “Irish,” “Jewish,” “Mixed European,” “Mixed Irish,” “Polish,” “Scottish,” “Scandinavian,” and “Welsh.” All student participants indicated that they did not know their exact heritage or ancestry, but were taking an educated guess based on knowledge from parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. Some students indicated that this is an area that they are investigating their ethnic heritage further, a concept which will be explored in the analysis portion of this thesis.

Participants are organized in Table 1 by (a) the pseudonym assigned to them in this study, (b) their ethnicity, (c) class standing at PWU, (d) their age, (e) their group type, (f) the length and level of involvement in the group, (g) the total number of White students currently involved in the group, and (h) the total number of students of color currently involved in the group. Level of involvement is based on number of hours participated per week. Low involvement means that students participate in their groups less than 2 hours per week; high involvement indicates involvement of 10 to 20 hours a week, and very high involvement indicates 21 or more hours involved per week.

Table 1: Participants

Name	Ethnicity	Gender	Group Type	Total number of White students involved
	Age	Class Standing	Length of involvement (Level of involvement)	Total number of Students of Color currently involved
Ashley	Mixed European (Jewish, Polish, French)	Female	Advocacy Service (Low)	2
	21	Junior (3 rd year)	2 years	40-50+
Bernard*	Half German, part Irish, Welsh, & English	Male	Teaching Outreach (High)	Participant unsure
	25+	Graduate Student	16 weeks	Participant unsure
Crystal	German, Irish, Scandinavian	Female	Education Outreach (High)	1
	20	Junior (3 rd year)	2 years	8-10
Donovan	Irish, Scottish, German	Male	Culturally-based Fraternity (Very high)	2-3
	22	Senior (4 th year)	3 years	13-16
Evelyn	Irish, German, English	Female	Culturally-based Sorority (Very high)	2

	20	Junior (3 rd year)	2 years	8
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*This participant was removed from the comprehensive presentation of the results in the theme areas below because the participant’s group type did not qualify for this study.

Ashley is a 21 year old self-identified White female who identified her ethnicity as “mixed” which includes Jewish, Polish, and French. Ashley identified a particularly strong connection to her Jewish heritage more than any other part of her racial or ethnic identity. As a current junior in her third year at PWU, Ashley has been involved with an Advocacy/Service group for two years for less than 2 hours per week on average. She is one of two White students currently involved in the Advocacy/Service group which has 40-50 or more members who identify as students of color.

Bernard is a self-identified older than average White male student who identified his age as “older than 25”. Bernard’s identified his ethnicity as “half German, part Irish, Welsh, & English.” As a current graduate student, Bernard has been involved with a Teaching/Outreach group for 16 weeks for at least 15 hours per week during the school year. Based on the transcribed answers to the interview questions, the graduate student did not qualify for this study because he did not fit the requirement of having his group type’s current membership identify with having a racial majority of students of color. The graduate student stated that, “while currently there are really only a handful of people of color and mostly White people involved now, I think [group name removed] started with mostly people of color.” Additionally, Bernard stated that currently he is “one of two White guys who work with [group name removed] but no people of color actually work with us.” It was through this answer that it was discovered that the graduate student did

not meet the group type requirement. Bernard's narrative data was not utilized for the thematic analysis in the results portion of this thesis.

Crystal is a 20 year old self-identified White female who identified her ethnicity as German, Irish, and Scandinavian. As a current junior in her third year at PWU, Crystal has been involved with an Education/Outreach group for two years for 15 to 20 hours per week on average during the school year. She is the only self-identified White student currently involved in the Education/Outreach group which has 8-10 members who identify as students of color.

Donovan is a 22 year old self-identified White male who identified his ethnicity as "a mix of Irish, Scottish, and German." As a current senior in his fourth year at PWU, Donovan has been involved with a culturally-based fraternity for three years for at least thirty hours per week on average during both the school year and during the summer. He is one of only two White men currently involved as active members in his fraternity. According to Donovan, membership of the White students vary because the number of White men involved could be "two or three depending on if they are active members or not." Donovan identified that there are 13-16 members who identify as students of color who are currently involved.

Evelyn is a 20 year old self-identified White female who identified her ethnicity as Irish, German, and English. As a current junior in her third year at PWU, Evelyn has been involved with a culturally-based sorority for two years for 25 or more hours per week. She is one of two White women currently involved in the culturally-based sorority which has eight current members who identify as students of color.

Summary

A summary of the findings are organized below into five theme areas:

- pre-college experiences informing multicultural college experiences;
- external factors influencing exploration of bi-cultural boundaries;
- White phenotype as a factor (or non-factor) of marginalization, with three types of marginalization: (a) marginalization due to messages from members inside the organization, (b) marginalization due to messages from outside the organization, and (c) marginalization as a non-factor;
- increased consciousness of differences based on race; and
- personal commitment to the values, goals, and mission of the organization matters.

The quotes and information will be used to respond to the specific research questions as they relate to each of the theme areas. All themes were present in each of the participants' narratives, however, only the most salient examples were used to illustrate thematic relevance below. In several instances, the narrative data provided for one of the theme areas also relates to another theme area. For every occurrence of similarly themed information, the narrative data was only included in one section which the example more closely related to the theme area. The Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson (1994) White Consciousness Model and the Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky (1991) integrative model towards White Identity Development will be utilized as the racial lenses for which to analyze the students' narrative data and understand how White racial consciousness is shaped.

Pre-college cross-racial experiences informing multicultural college

experiences. Crystal, Donovan, and Evelyn indicated that they understand how pre-college experiences may have removed racial barriers which led them to more easily join multicultural college experiences. Experience with multicultural friendship groups in high school have given these three students skills in cross-cultural communication that may have created an entry point for the formation of positive attitudes and openness to groups of students of color. Ashley, on the other hand, did not discuss any significant pre-college multicultural experiences or friendship groups. Crystal and Donovan indicated a perception of deep and meaningful experiences with students of color prior to attending college at PWU. For example, Crystal indicated that she had many diverse friendship groups and experiences growing up because of the location of her high school:

I went to high school in [city name removed] where I was a minority as a White person. There were only 4% Whites in my school. Growing up, I was always the only White girl in my class. It has been normal for me to be around Blacks or Latinos. Actually, I have never really had a good group of White friends. PWU was a change for me, like a culture shock. When I came to PWU, it really smacked me in the face when I saw so many White people, it was impossible. I went back home to [city name removed], and my friend was uncomfortable hearing about all the White people when I told her about PWU when she was thinking about applying.

Crystal honed in on a specific statistic of students who identified as White in her high school. Due to the low percentage of White students from her high school, it is typical for Crystal to feel this culture shock at PWU as a predominantly White institution (PWI).

The lack of a group of White friends indicates that Crystal was more apt to join experiences at PWU with groups that closely resembled experiences that placed her – as a White person – in a group consisting of a racial majority of people of color. Crystal shared her experiences at PWU with a friend who was a peer of color in her hometown to

“warn” her of the significant culture shock that could be felt for students who did not have experiences at PWIs.

Donovan also had experiences with students of color throughout K-12 that he indicated differed from his White peers in high school:

I went to elementary and high school with a lot of people from different races. I think because of the neighborhood that I lived in. In high school I was not an extremely involved student. I was never involved with anything around diversity, or clubs that were diverse. I just had a lot of friends from different backgrounds, you know, races and ethnicities. Other than my friends and me, my high school seemed to be very segregated. I mean my friends and I played sports but we weren't really in any clubs. If I wasn't the White kid hanging out with my Asian, Black, or Latino friends then, as I think about it, I was just a White face in a sea of White faces mostly in high school. I could just blend in if I wanted to then, but never now that I'm involved in my fraternity. I always stand out.

Though not involved in a student organization in the course of his experiences in K-12, Donovan could relate to friendship groups that were racially diverse. Due to de facto segregation in his high school – or segregation happening due to reasons not associated with law – Donovan indicated that he often felt as if he stood out when spending time with his friends of color. Donovan displayed a significant characteristic of White privilege: the “capability” to retreat into Whiteness and White culture at a whim. In contrast, Donovan saw a difference with his cross-racial group membership as part of his culturally-based fraternity because he could not retreat into Whiteness, White culture, or a group of White peers in his group. When he is with his fraternity Donovan feels that he stands out because of his White racial identity and Whiteness that comes along with it.

Donovan talked about a specific event prior to attending college where experienced uneasiness due to a heightened awareness of his Whiteness. It occurred during a volunteer experience at an elementary school carnival where he was one of the only White people in attendance:

Other than hanging out with my friends in high school, there were a few times when I was like one of the only White guys in certain situations like when I volunteered once at a bilingual carnival. There were a lot of Spanish speakers – you know Mexicans and Hispanics – and I do remember being worried about it but I can't pinpoint why. It was a lot of fun now that I look back at it, but really the main reason I was there was because I was volunteering for my Spanish class. I didn't feel out of place because I remembered I was there for a specific reason for my class. It sort of helped the feeling of anxiousness and being out of place to subside.

Donovan was unaware why he was uneasy, but attributed this feeling to being completely submersed in a cross-racial and cross-cultural experience. As a volunteer for his Spanish class, Donovan seemingly knew he had to uphold his civic responsibility to serve the community by volunteering for this event, a significant attribute that shows up throughout his two years of fraternal experiences.

Like Donovan, Crystal also had experiences with friends from Hispanic and Latino culture, but more intentionally focused on how she perceived that she could relate to the hardships experienced by her friends from Hispanic and Latino culture. Crystal alluded to experiences that she shared with her friend that seemingly transcended race because she grew up with close friends who were students of color:

I lived with one of my Hispanic friends for three years. I was speaking Spanish in her house because I've never had a problem with differences. I have so many friends who go through what [students of color] go through every day; language barriers, discrimination, whatever. It is sad to say that those aren't new, but it isn't new to me. My life is based around this. It's a majority people of color where I come from. I'm not that different from them, I've grown up with them. I've seen what they had to go through.

In relating to the discrimination faced by people of color, Crystal points out that she has empathy for negative messages and experiences had by people of color, particularly if she has a personal connection with them. Throughout Crystal's narrative, there seems to be a frustration directed outward toward the oppressive nature of Whiteness.

Evelyn indicated that in high school she had intentionally tried to be involved with a number of different, diverse groups “regardless of identity.” She believed that multicultural experiences in high school would enrich her life. For example, Evelyn was involved in a club that did community service in high school. Although it served multicultural communities, Evelyn said that the group was mostly made up of White women. Evelyn stated that the city in which she grew up was a middle-to-upper class neighborhood with mostly White students.

Ashley, like Evelyn, stated that she came from a middle-upper class neighborhood and high school. It seems that Ashley also had an unexplored unconscious identification with Whiteness, yet did not have an understanding of what White identity entailed. This was part of her socialization in K-12 and in her early years in college. Ashley joined a historically White sorority during her freshmen year at PWU. Although she didn’t discuss any cross-racial pre-college experiences, it is unclear whether Ashley had any significant cross-racial friendship groups that informed her search for college cross-racial organizations.

Although they each had several uniquely different experiences, Crystal, Donovan, and Evelyn talked about how their pre-college experiences had given them an open door to search for multicultural college experiences where they could have more diverse experiences than in high school. Through the stories of Crystal, Donovan, and Evelyn, it is evident that racial boundaries had an impact on their pre-college experiences. The “in crowd” in high school, as discussed by Donovan in his experiences, was often a group that contained only some White students as well as a few tokenized students of color due

to high academic achievement or their involvement as a significant member of the high school sports team.

The groups that the students referred to from their pre-college experiences were not school clubs or organizations, but rather friendship groups or cliques as indicated by both Donovan and Crystal. In referencing her initial experience at PWU compared to her diverse pre-college experiences in her hometown, Crystal had a conversation with an African-American female friend about friendship group differences between high school and college. Due to the predominantly White institution and its environment, students of color were treated differently than how they were treated in their hometown, and because of this, Crystal felt a feeling of guilt since she shared White group membership with those White students on a predominantly White campus:

My friend came from [city name removed] also, and when she came to PWU, we talked about how guys wouldn't want to dance with her at parties and stuff. It was really sad for her because we both knew it was based on her looks. This really hit my Whiteness and I felt somewhat guilty and I don't know why. My friend came for a whole year but left PWU soon after.

In reference to her initial involvement in her Education/Outreach group, Crystal stated that it felt natural for her to find an environment which could closely resemble what it was like for her growing up:

I didn't have to choose to get involved with [group name removed], it was just really normal for me. I felt at home because I fit in really good with them. I know that race is socially constructed, but I definitely think that our skin is just like melatonin, we're all from the same place. I think a lot of White people are scared to get involved in a multicultural club, but I'm not because I grew up in a place with lots of people of color.

Crystal seemingly acknowledges that both White people and people of color share a same sense of humanity, however, her interpretation is that much of contemporary society's racial differences in humans have evolved through perpetuated cycles of socialization and

the social construction of race. Crystal rejects her role in perpetuating racism due to her White skin. Furthermore, Crystal points to her involvement with cross-racial groups – as opposed to other White people – because she grew up being around people of color as a norm.

Like Crystal, Donovan was on a search for a multicultural group at PWU that closely mirrored his K-12 experience with students of color, specifically, from Asian heritage:

Even in my first few experiences in college I felt as if I didn't fit well into the college environment. Most of all I just wanted to have a group of people that I could be with and hang out with. I wanted to meet people who liked the same stuff that I liked and I really liked Asian culture and stuff from it. I felt as if I wouldn't stay here at PWU if I didn't have people that I could depend on and hang out with and share interests.

Donovan felt marginalized as a college student most likely due in part to his identity as a first generation college student: Donovan was the first in his family to go to college. He desired belonging and discovered a vehicle for his involvement that could encompass meeting his belonging needs as well as fit into his appreciation for Asian culture. For Donovan, his involvement was also a tool for retention to the university.

The pre-college experiences of Crystal, Donovan, and Evelyn gave them the poise to search for a cross-racial or multicultural group in college that either resembled their environment or friendship groups that they were used to in high school, or resembled an environment or friendship group which they desired to be a part of in college. Students' needs for social belonging and retention to the university impacted their decision to join their cross-racial organization once they arrived to college.

External factors influencing exploration of bi-cultural boundaries. Each of the four participants began to question their White identity and explore the limits of a “bi-

cultural boundary” in varying degrees due in part to their involvement in their cross-racial organization. A bi-cultural boundary is described as a perceived limit by the student as to his or “acceptedness” in the group based on their White identity. Each of the participants had varying degrees of internal reflection on their own White identity as a direct cause of their involvement in the organization. Students experienced some dissonance between their White identity and the identity of their culturally-based organization.

As an example of a bi-cultural boundary, Donovan and Crystal both point to a concept of their White phenotype being challenged by the members of their cross-racial group. Both Donovan and Crystal indicated that they have close bonds with members who are students of color in their organizations; these bonds stretch beyond merely being members of an organization but can also be considered friendships due to spending significant time outside of the organization’s meetings and activities. For Crystal, due to her perceived close-knit friendship, the students of color in her organization often talk about a difference in her White identity versus what they identify with her characteristics:

The [group] members are all really cool. I get along with everybody and know one of them very closely. They are all very open to me because I’m White when they aren’t. They often joke and say “no, she’s not really White; she’s just light-skinned”.

Donovan also referenced the “tight brotherhood” that exists in his fraternity and his White phenotype being challenged by the students of color in the group.

I spend the majority of my time with them; I live with them. They would tell me that I had to be brown on the inside and White on the outside. They kept telling me that I couldn’t really be White because I was so cool; I was just a light-skinned brown person. That’s sort of when I knew I was part of the group. It was sort of like my rite of passage with them. Because we were all so tight-knit it felt really good to hear that. There was a sort of feeling with the group that makes me belong. Yeah, they kept telling me this, so I had to figure out what that meant and who I really was, or I guess how I appeared to others mostly.

Donovan and Crystal received messages from their peers of color that tested their perceptions of their racial identity. As a message that conveyed social belonging to the White students, peers of color used this message as a way to accept and include the White student members into the “in-group” of their organization instead of being marginalized by their racial identity. To others, they were perceived to not fit in with their group due to their White identity. Donovan believed that others assumed his fraternity was for students of color and he did not fit within that archetype. While a White identity was very salient for Donovan and Crystal, they questioned it in the context of their cross-racial group. It could be assumed that students of color could relate to being marginalized in college due to race and did not want White students to have these feelings in the group as they appreciated and accepted them as members.

Another example of a tested boundary is the tension between what the group is “supposed to be” – the group’s collective cultural identity (or stereotype) – versus what the members represent when perceived as individuals within a group. For example, Evelyn’s group is a culturally-based sorority perceived by others to be a group for women of color. Evelyn, a White woman, discussed how she thinks the perception of the group by others greatly influences how she is seen as a White member.

When it comes to collaboration on campus events, especially for students of color in other multicultural students groups who may not know me at first, I think they kind of get a little confused I’ve noticed. They’re like “[group name removed], wait, what? They’re a cultural group, right? What is she doing here?” At first, there’s this awkward tension about what my group is supposed to be versus who I am in my group. After a while it’s not a big deal because they realize that I’m committed to [group name removed].

Evelyn attempted to resolve this “identity crisis” between her own White identity and the identity of group by reinforcing her commitment to the group and its mission, values, and

goals. Evelyn also pointed to her approach to resolve tension between her own White racial identity versus the external expectation that others had for the racial identity of her sorority's group members:

My mentality is about getting things done, and I don't think that's an attribute of my cultural identity but rather that's just who I am. Otherwise, within our sorority once you establish yourself then you're good to go. Like, when I'm spending time at the [another culturally-based student space at PWU], initially, my Whiteness, it's like who are you, but eventually they get to know who you are so they can see past that.

Evelyn perceived that she had established herself as a member of the organization even though there was dissonance in the social expectations of her group's racial identity. This bi-cultural boundary was tested by her peers of color but resolved by Evelyn over time due to her ability to accept her White identity as a member of a multicultural organization.

Crystal also had a perception that there was an expectation of her organization to be all students of color. She indicated that the expectation of others is in conflict with her own White identity and that she must resolve what it means to be a White person in her organization. Crystal understands that she has a unique experience as a White member, yet has some naiveté towards how White privilege could play out within her organization. She does not know the attitudes of her peers of color and draws clues as to their perceptions based on her experience:

I think that they must think what am I doing here? Black students who hang out with [group name removed] never really say anything or make it seem like they're astonished that I am part of the group. They are more thankful for it.

Crystal believes that she is accepted in her group regardless of her White identity.

According to Crystal, her peers seem to be accepting of her involvement. Even though

there is a social expectation for Crystal's group to be all students of color, her perception is that she is still accepted by her peers of color.

Ashley's bi-cultural boundaries were tested through her involvement in her Advocacy/Service group because she began to think about her Whiteness in context of now being a minority in a group with students of color as the majority:

I thought about the fact that I was one of the only White people there, but it's not being White wouldn't have made me not join. I tend to think of myself as pretty open to other ethnicities, but others might not join if they knew it was a multiethnic group.

Due to her own pro-minority stance, Ashley did not convey that she had issues with her involvement as a White person. Indicating that she understood it was a multiethnic group, Ashley pointed out that she believes other White students may not be open to participating in a group that could be perceived as being meant for students of color because they would not belong or reap any rewards as White members.

Testing of bi-cultural boundaries for both Ashley and Evelyn were also present with their decision-making to study abroad. After one year of membership in their cross-racial organizations, both Ashley and Evelyn indicated that this had created a desire in them to study in another country outside of the United States. According to Evelyn, her desire to study abroad can be attributed to her personal curiosity to explore more cultures to enrich her own life. Evelyn also indicated that she wanted to study abroad because of her experiences in her culturally-based sorority, and positive messages received from peers of color about the positive aspects of studying abroad. While abroad, Evelyn learned the Spanish language and stated that she is able to read, write, and have conversations in both English and Spanish with her peers of color. Both Ashley and

Evelyn wanted to learn more about other cultures as well as how they would be able to learn more about themselves outside of the United States.

With experiences that test cultural boundaries, White students in this study seemed to have an overwhelmingly positive interest in investing time and energy to discover what their own cultural identity and heritage means to them. Donovan discussed the fact that his parents and family never discussed their White racial identity. Only infrequently did his family indicate any connection to a mixed Irish, German, and Scottish heritage. His ethnicity has never been a part of this life; in fact, Donovan indicated that many of the stories from his own rich cultural heritage have most likely been lost:

Being with this group made me realize that I have a heritage too and I should probably figure out what that is so I could find a way to explore more passions, you know, and figure my own heritage, culture, ethnicity, identity, and all that and what it means to me and what role that plays in my life. I honestly don't know a whole lot and I never really asked my grandparents or anything yet but I will probably soon.

Donovan conveyed that he is interested in figuring out more about his ethnic identity since he saw his peers of color relating deeply to both their racial and ethnic identities. In Donovan's response, it was evident that the process of investigating his own ethnic roots could provide him a clearer sense of his own identity as a White person.

Ashley pointed to the importance of her Jewish heritage and that she has passion for rediscovering how she can connect with more aspects of its culture:

If I was in a group where I was helping Jewish people I would probably feel a greater passion for helping Jewish people in Europe because I'm more connected with that. It hits closer to home because you feel more morally obligated and connected than people who have absolutely no connection. I think it's all about identifying with the mission of the group. For me, as a White person, I don't think I have the deepest connection that I could. I have a different connection around heritage, and now, it hits closer to home. I feel more morally obligated and connected than people who I am connected with and my Jewish heritage.

There is a sense of obligation for a student from a specific identity to support others from the same identity. With Ashley's involvement in her organization, she began to see how passionate students of color came to advocate for change for people from their countries of origin. Ashley then became more interested in finding causes associated with her own heritage as a Jewish woman. This is another way that students can access empathy for unjust or inequitable racial differences.

Each student indicated that exploring their ethnic heritage is an area that they are investigating further, for example, Crystal also discussed the importance and impact of knowing where you come from:

My ethnicity gets iffy [sic], we really don't know where we are from. Basically my mom's side is German and Irish and my dad's side is Scandinavian, at least I think. I mean, it's not the smartest thing to not know where I come from. I should probably know and look into that. It would be ignorant of me to just say oh, I'm just White because that's not what you are, that's not your ethnicity. It is important to know it, you know?

The journey of identity development for White students in cross-racial organizations becomes more urgent for the students once they come to realize that they could have had a deeper connection with ethnic roots. The context of a White majority culture and a general unconscious identification with Whiteness perpetuates White culture as non-existent.

Whiteness as a factor (or non-factor) of marginalization. Students seemed to be concerned about how others perceived them in their roles as White members of a multicultural group. Particularly, students' White racial group membership was either a factor that contributed toward participants' feeling of being unintentionally marginalized as part of the group by those inside of the organization, or by people external to and outside of the organization. For one of the participants, Whiteness was a non-factor of

marginalization. Outreach from students of color towards potential White student members also played a significant role towards inclusion – rather than marginalization – of White students during the initial phase in White student participants assessing whether or not they would be a part of a multicultural organization. Participants seemed to be more apt to searching for additional information on the group if a student of color approached them with an invitation to get to know the members and the organization. Crystal indicated that she may not fit culturally with Whiteness, although she does have a White phenotype and identifies as White. Donovan shows a desire to learn more about his own ethnicity based on his perception of his peer's race, ethnicity, and culture. Overall, White students understood the concepts of inclusion and exclusion based on race. White students could then access empathy for marginalized peers of color when they had been excluded or treated poorly based solely on their race. When White students had deep relationships with peers of color, they could relate deeper to the pain of institutional racism and individual acts of discrimination based on race.

Ashley, Crystal, Donovan, and Evelyn each received personal invitations to join their organizations. Personal invitations to join multicultural groups were important for White students as part of the motivation to get involved. For example, Evelyn initially showed interest in her sorority when approached by a current member because of the culturally-significant work that she had done while she had been working for PWU's student government. Evelyn had brought an event to campus that would raise awareness around issues faced by specific cultural communities at PWU:

[Member name removed] came to me about [group name removed] because she saw that I had been planning a cultural awareness raising event with our student government. She saw the work that I was doing and thought I would be a good fit. She was like “hey, come

check us out – you seem like the kind of girl that would be an asset to our group” and she catered personally to me.

Due to her culturally-significant work, Evelyn was invited to join a culturally-based organization that also shared a similar vision for their work.

Shortly after joining their organizations, Donovan and Evelyn indicated that they had sometimes felt as if they “didn’t fit” with the other student members of color in their groups. They indicated that these feelings of being marginalized were due, in part, to their Whiteness. Messages coming from their peers of color inside their organization and individuals who were external to their organization both contributed towards the feeling of being marginalized. As time passed, however, these feelings of marginalization became less as the students became more involved in their organization.

Marginalization due to messages from members inside the organization. Evelyn discussed how she oftentimes felt marginalized due to messages that she received from her peers of color in her organization early on in her involvement. For example, Evelyn pointed to some barriers that made her feel marginalized unintentionally by her group:

At first it was awkwardness of not knowing anybody and not knowing what kind of people they were, you know what kind of stuff they think is funny and what they liked to do, you know, the normal stuff. But once I started to get to know them there are things like jokes and stuff that you’re not used to. After a while, you get used to it or they start rambling off in Spanish and I don’t understand it. I’m like “not everyone speaks Spanish”. So sometimes, yeah, cultural stuff can make a difference but it’s not like it’s wrong or they do it on purpose, that is just how it is.

Eventually, White students began to adhere to the group norms experienced by other members of the organization and “buy into” them in order to continue feelings of inclusion into the group. Accepting group norms was an important decision to make in order for Evelyn to continue to stay involved in her organization.

Evelyn also shared her perception about the role that her Whiteness plays within the group:

We joke about it a lot that I'm always the first one there at events and meetings. It's just like a norm for me in my family, White people, you know, we're early. With event planning, we knew exactly who was going to show up, who was going to eat. Every time with [group name removed] we have to plan twice as much and do lots of things twice; I think that it is kind of ridiculous, but I understand and enjoy it. It's a change from what I'm used to.

Evelyn talked about her perspective on the expectations from people of color for White people to be organized, on-time, and efficient. Evidence of White culture is apparent in the characteristics described by Evelyn, but it seems as if certain traits associated with Whiteness were accepted by her peers of color.

Donovan indicated initial feelings of discomfort and fear with having his Whiteness be recognized within his group of students of color, almost as if it was an "elephant in the room" until it was acknowledged and accepted by his peers.

Me being White was never really brought up at the beginning because I think it was so obvious that people didn't even acknowledge it until I did. I remember when somebody made a comment about me being White and I had to sort of laugh it off because I feared being excluded from the group if I didn't find it funny; plus, it was kind of funny anyhow. Soon I began to laugh about my White because I saw some White culture stuff that just didn't work for me anymore and how interesting it was that I was so close with all of the guys. All of guys that I met always thought that it was awesome that I was part of the fraternity especially because all of the other guys they met before me weren't White; there's not many of us all over in the fraternity, I mean like chapters away from [PWU].

Initially, Donovan found himself avoiding racial conflict due to discomfort in the group. Over time, he began to accept what it meant for him to be a White person in the group while also appreciating the differences of his peers of color. He also felt that he became increasingly accepted into the group inclusive of his White racial identity.

Marginalization due to messages from members outside of the organization. In addition to messages that bring up feelings of marginalization for students coming from members inside of the organization, messages from people outside of the organization were perceived to bring up feelings of marginalization for students as well. Evelyn pointed to a specific experience she had early on in her involvement with her culturally-based sorority:

It was one of the first times that we had a social with [another culturally-based Greek organization] and I was like whoa, hello! I felt like not only because I was new that nobody knew who I was but also because like I was surrounded by all Latinos and literally my skin stands out in the group. I could feel people watching me and hear them thinking “who is this girl”? In that situation, I could sense the tension and not knowing quite what to do; it’s a little nerve-racking never knowing what quite to do when I’m in a room like that, you know, you have to have the entrance and introduce yourself. The girls that are in my group help to ease it in; they’re like “oh hey it’s [Evelyn]”. It’s about getting the first part of the introduction out.

Evelyn indicated that her feelings of marginalization were variable depending on how many students of color may be in one place at one time. She alludes to intruding on “safe space” for students of color at PWU and how she often has to justify her reason for being in a space that is known on campus to be mostly for students of color:

Getting past the barrier of being White in my sorority depends on the person and how open they are, and how many people are there in certain situations. If there are a lot of them (students of color) there then I think there’s a different group mentality and they are less willing to accept me in a place that maybe isn’t meant specifically for me. When we hang out with other multicultural groups like at [name removed], when I walk in there literally every staff person looks at me like “what are you doing, are you lost”? So I have to tell them why I’m here, and I say “uh, I’m here to see [person’s name removed]. It’s just like really awkward sometimes.

When Evelyn enters a space “meant for” students of color, there is tension between the expectations of the space versus her identity as a White person. She seemingly reacts positively to this conflict and affirms her motivation for coming into the space. Recurring

visits from Evelyn help the gatekeepers of the space to begin to recognize her and make her feel welcome.

Donovan discussed his feelings of marginalization based on tension between identity of his organization as a multicultural group for primarily students of color versus his own identity as a White person:

I remember when we would meet new people because of the fraternity, I often felt awkward because they had to introduce me sort separately and make sure they tell people that I'm a member as if otherwise they didn't than I wouldn't be seen as one. I remember that when we would hang out with sororities I would feel as if I didn't fit in completely because I was White. I felt that it took a while for them to get to know me and accept me into the group or into their inside jokes or things like that. I don't really feel as if I was tokenized, but rather felt that I was some sort of exception to the rule. I knew there weren't a lot of students like me.

Donovan recalled situations where it seemed to him as if others outside of his fraternity placed judgment on him because of his membership as a White student in a multicultural group:

I felt that I was constantly being judged and scrutinized by people who didn't know me very well because I was involved in my fraternity. One time I overheard somebody saying something about wondering why I was even part of the group when there were so many others things that I could do. At times, I felt as if I was beginning to be seen as an imposter or something. But I'm in it for the right reasons, you can ask anyone.

These messages came from PWU administrators who placed judgment on his intentions to get involved in a group that may have been "meant for" students of color. Donovan's feelings of being an imposter in his group contributed towards his feelings of being marginalized due to his Whiteness.

Evelyn noted that her feelings of being marginalized in the group have decreased throughout the time that she has been involved:

Now, I know all of the members of the other organizations pretty well and they all know who I am. A bunch of them lived together; we say hi, and we're friends. Like when we're

at the [name removed] they all know my name and they greet me. I go and take naps between classes or work on my paper or my computer, whatever. Even if none of my sorority sisters are there.

Through a deep commitment to her organization, its members, and their mission, Evelyn was able to resolve conflict positively and make progress towards becoming valued as a member inclusive of her Whiteness. Evelyn talked about the different methods that she has used in her experiences that help her to relieve tension regarding her Whiteness between her and the students of color in her group:

Some of my strategies to break that social barrier are to be very forward and introduce me so people know who I am. I'm friendly so I'm not trying to go in and bulldoze somebody. I can be friends with anybody regardless of what's going on so that's what I think the principle of the whole thing is, it's because I'm friendly with everyone it's easy to blend right in after we get the introductions out of the way.

Strategies to resolve tension and conflict of group identity versus personal identity were successful for Evelyn and Donovan because of their close relationships with their peers of color.

Marginalization as a non-factor. Even though Donovan and Evelyn indicated that their initial feelings of marginalization faded over time, Crystal and Ashley both discussed that they did not at all feel marginalized at any point during their involvement due to their White identity in their multicultural groups. Crystal had been more significantly involved in her organization and perceived that she had developed deep friendships with her peers of color. Ashley, on the other hand, did not indicate that she had developed a deep personal connection to the students of color in her organization. Ashley is a member of a historically White sorority and indicated that she gets much of her social needs through interaction with her sorority sisters in her sorority house. Ashley

discussed how her Whiteness didn't affect feelings of marginalization in her cross-racial group involvement:

Figuring out how you fit within any organization is always a part of anyone's thought process. You ask yourself "how do I identify with the people in this room?" Well, for me, the co-president was the only other White person in the room at all of these meetings. They were all Asians and African-Americans, but the differences in what brought people together didn't affect anything for me.

Ashley's membership in a historically White sorority could be an indication of a search for belonging that closely tied to her pre-college experiences living in a middle-upper class neighborhood.

Although Crystal specifically discussed feelings of marginalization in her organization, she was quick to point out that her Whiteness did not negatively affect her feelings of belonging in the group. Marginalization due to Whiteness was not a factor for Crystal from her perspective. She asserted that she has had different experiences than most White people she knows. For Crystal, marginalization was a non-factor:

I don't think my White identity influenced anything for me. I look at it differently. I wasn't even thinking that they might not like me because I'm White. I try to never look at it racially, because you know that's so lame [sic]; I don't like doing that stuff. I was taught by parents not to look at people like that. In high school and stuff I've had so many diverse experiences and many friends from different places. I can never look at it like that.

Crystal said that her Whiteness is not her most salient identity:

Do I think that my experiences differ in this group because I'm the only White person, well no, I don't think my experiences differ at all. I've always been involved with multicultural communities. I don't really see it as I'm a White person, or do I think they're judging me because I'm White. They are my friends; they are not just people in [group name removed]. We all look after each other. The only difference is an age difference. My first year in [group name removed] I was the youngest one, and this year I'm the oldest one. Before I looked up to people in [group name removed], but this year I'm the one who is looked up upon. I never had a problem with being White at the [group name removed], that's not the issue. I get along with everybody, so it's not something I have a hard time with.

Crystal shows indications of denying the impact of her Whiteness on the attitudes of her peers of color. Although she does recognize the oppressive impact of Whiteness of people of color outside of her cross-racial space, it is apparent that she does not believe that her White identity negatively affects her peers or hinders her role and responsibility to her group. She does have some insight into how her involvement as a White person in a multicultural group may be positively received by her peers of color. Her perception is that she is appreciated for reaching out and staying involved when the majority of White students on the campus do not engage with students of color to the extent that she is involved.

Increased consciousness of differences based on race. Each participant in this study indicated that they had drastically increased their own awareness about differences based on race due to their prolonged cross-racial involvement.

Ashley, in her work with the Advocacy/Service group, discussed the race-based differences that she had noticed before and after her study abroad trip. Ashley's international experience shifted her thinking:

I had never thought about myself as a White person in context with other people before I studied abroad in [name removed]. I was a member of [group name removed] prior to my trip to [name removed] and stayed with it afterwards. My involvement hasn't changed much, maybe I'm more involved, but only my awareness I think has been changed. I don't interact differently with anyone there I just have heightened awareness of differences in ethnicity and race. I never really thought about that as much before.

Ashley added a comparison between her increased consciousnesses as situational when she is working with her cross-racial organization. This is in comparison to her involvement in her sorority where she is not as conscious about her Whiteness:

I think about my White identity more when I'm with groups of multi-ethnicities. There are other women in my sorority who aren't White, but I guess I don't think about that, like, at all. They're just my sorority sisters and not students who aren't White. Most

people are White, so it is really not an issue, I identify with same ethnicity as the majority of people in my sorority house.

Retreat back into White culture was facilitated more easily for Ashley since she did not have significant, prolonged involvement nor did she have deep friendships with her peers of color. When Ashley began her cross-racial involvement, she began thinking about Whiteness through a different lens since she was one of the only White students in her multicultural organization.

Due to her involvement in a culturally-based sorority, Evelyn pointed to race-based systemic issues that she became more aware of due to the relationships she now has with her sorority sisters:

I've noticed there are some cultural stigmas especially for Latino communities in relation to health care. An example is like going to the doctor – you can't always do this in those communities because of a language barrier. There's different ways of thinking culturally. If my grandma is sick, she goes to the doctor. If one of my sorority sisters has an *abuela* that is sick she probably doesn't because she cannot afford it or because she doesn't speak English well enough to just go. It's a big cultural stigma that it's such a hassle to go to the doctor that nobody goes. But that's my norm for me and my family. It's not fair.

Crystal pointed to her own experiences in being treated differently based on race. She has thoughts on her own White identity and White privilege due to her increasing awareness of differences based on race. When it comes to her experiences versus the experiences of those in her cross-racial group, Crystal had a perception of Whiteness as a barrier to empathy, more specifically, "being in the shoes of people of color" and boundaries related to race when talking with her peers of color:

When issues come up, I can relate to the issues, but I can't say that I've been through them. There are differences between how I'm treated as a White person versus how Black people get treated based solely on race. When topics like that up, I don't exactly avoid them but I just make sure that I don't cross any lines. There was a situation where a cop pulled me over with some of my Black friends, and my friends were like "no you're cool; you got that White privilege on you". I think that it's horrible that my Black friends had to go through some of this stuff, but I can sympathize and empathize with them. I can't

ever act as if I've experienced it, but I want them to know I want to be supportive. I don't know it feels, but I know how I think it would feel.

In contrast to her experiences in "society in general," Crystal indicated that she does not consistently think about White privilege while participating in her cross-racial involvement:

I haven't thought about my White privilege at all while I'm with [group name removed]. The only way it comes through is within society and the larger picture. I feel like it doesn't have that affect in [group name removed]. My White privilege is in society, not in the space with my group. We're all equal and have equal say, and we're all students and we help other students with [group name removed], so I've never had a problem with White privilege with them.

While Crystal's perception is that she has never "had a problem with White privilege," her peers of color could have different perspectives. This emphasizes the importance of understanding the thoughts and perceptions of students of color about White students in multicultural organizations.

Donovan also indicated that he had significantly increased his own consciousness of Whiteness due to differences in his group and at PWU based on race:

For the first time in my life I think I started to figure out that I had somewhat of an advantage in life because I was White. I hadn't really taken any classes on race or any ethnic studies classes but I think that my experience showed me this.

Donovan discussed race-based differences that he noticed during his cross-racial involvement. Some of these differences were based on the group's perception by individuals that the group encountered in specific situations in the community:

I found that I sometimes had to be the spokesperson for the group if we went somewhere where we had to speak with a group of White people. Like for real [sic] this one time on a volunteer trip we took. We walked in and even though I wasn't the person in charge of the community service the person who we met basically talked right to me the whole time as if I had to turn around and translate it for the guys or something.

During his cross-racial involvement, Donovan noticed that his peers of color were treated differently – oftentimes worse – than he had been treated in similar situations. This led to a heightened awareness leading to empathy for the students of color with respect to how they were being treated based on racial differences. Donovan begins to understand White privilege based on everyday experiences with his peers and at his predominantly White institution:

In the group I was treated differently. I mean for me I started to realize that the guys always had to introduce me to others and had to explain why I was part of [group name removed]. I really can imagine how it must feel to be a person of color in [city name removed] everyday or at [PWU] because we're a campus with a lot of White students. Imagine being the only student of color in the room especially if you're not used to it. I guess I'm just wondering if that's what it feels like. It's not like I wake up every day and tell myself I'm a White person. It just is, you know?

Evelyn pointed to differences between her family, hometown, and class privileges related to what she knows about her peers of color in her cross-racial involvement:

My family is all Caucasian all the way back to Europe; my family is upper-middle class and was in an all White neighborhood. So I just grew up in this pocket of White people. But with the rest of the girls, they all grew up in lower-class neighborhoods, with lots of Latinos around, they knew each other in [city name removed], it's a lot different there. It is completely different for them and it shows in college; some are first generation born in the U.S. so there are a lot of different cultural influences on their family and what goes on as opposed to what goes on in mine.

Evelyn also discussed how her sorority instilled leadership skills into her life.

Involvement in a culturally-based sorority was one of the ways that helped her relate to people who were racially different from herself, find more multicultural opportunities, gain skills in cross-cultural communication, and learn about herself as a White person:

My experiences in [group name removed] helped with some of the experiences I was looking for. Being a part of the OSU community, like helping plan events, it's about who you know. A lot of my girls know a lot of people and can help connect you to others on campus. I work in a couple different areas on campus and I know of job postings before other people do often. I learned a lot about myself because of being involved. Yeah, and I

also helped volunteer with [group name removed] as well which was another experience that was multicultural.

Personal commitment to the values, goals, and mission of the organization

matters. Each participant showed significant attraction towards the work that members of the organizations were committed to as part of their responsibility in the group. In addition to the aforementioned personal invitation from student members of color to join, the organization's values, goals, and mission of organizations were an important factor in motivating these students to initially get involved and were a significant force for them to stay involved.

In connection directly with the mission of the organization, Ashley's cross-racial organization was created as a local chapter of a national organization that is based on the premise of a book which focuses on socially just practices and methods for treating diseases in developing countries. Her group works to provide advocacy, service, and fundraising for international health projects. Ashley described student members that are a part of the organization as "mostly Black students and Asian-Americans." Ashley is only one of two White students who were part of the group:

I joined [group name removed] because I loved the book and what I saw as the mission of the organization and also because I actually saw that [PWU] had a group. I really love [group name removed] and what they do for public health internationally. I think it's all about Identifying with the mission of the group, like we do events around campus and raise awareness. We do good stuff and participate on campus to get awareness out for AIDS around the world.

Ashley discussed the point at which her Whiteness was most salient to her with respect to the intended mission, values, and goals of the organizations that she belongs to:

The contrast between being in Greek Life and being in [group name removed] is a huge difference. The predominant Whiteness of Greek Life, we are brought together by the social aspects mainly – we also do service and academics, but social is the main reason. With [group name removed], service is the main goal, accomplishing service. The

differences in what brings people together make the difference in who joins the organizations. People join Greek life to have a community and a social organization, maybe leadership, but people join [group name removed] because they feel passionate about the mission and what they do.

Evelyn stated that her organization had a value system that resonated with her on a more personal level. The mission of her organization is something that she seemed to consider one of the main purposes of her being in college:

It's important to live with the [group name removed] mission make it obvious to the entire campus about why we're here and what we do. We have to take the baby steps sometimes and getting started was pretty hard. By the end of the year, we're going to be stronger in our membership and it will enable us to do more things on campus so that we show we care about the [PWU] community. Our commitment to the [culturally-based groups] is an important part of our work. Collaborating with other people is important so that we're not the only ones carrying the weight for a lot of cultural programming on campus.

Donovan indicated that he would have never known about his personal connection with the mission and values of his organization if he had never been reached out to by his peers of color to join:

I was reached out to a few times and invited to join the organization. I think once I found out what the mission and values of my organization were it made me want to join even more. I mean the guys were cool and all but I really loved what they stood for as an organization. I was really committed to what it stood for. There were just a lot of cool factors about joining the fraternity. It's not like they just give you membership you have to earn it and there was something cool about that to me. I saw how they were really respected in the [PWU] community. Another goal was to help out members academically and socially and I knew that those were some of the ways which I wanted support and I felt that I could help to support others in those ways. I also saw how tight the guys were together. That was often the most important factor for brothers joining the fraternity. Some guys also really enjoy doing community service and some are there only for the social aspect – it really depends but you get the idea.

The purpose of Crystal's organization incorporates programming, outreach, engagement, and activism with African-American and Black culture in the U.S. The goals of her organization are to provide experiences and space for students of color from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups to find belonging on campus. As part of her

work in her cross-racial involvement, Crystal stated that she has an affinity towards cultural activities related to Black culture:

I think I'm drawn in by the activities, and being able to work to do it. I do about two really big activities every term. I get to help with pre-Kwanzaa, Black History Month, the dinner, you know. I really like [group name removed], the environment, and all that we do. For me, it's about being part of it, you know?

The racial, ethnic, or cultural communities that organizations serve are also important pieces to connect White students with the mission, values, and goals of their organizations. Evelyn, for example, discussed the personal work that she has to do in order to "catch up" to the awareness and knowledge of certain issues only affecting the majority culture of her organization:

I feel like because one of our purposes of our organization is to serve the Hispanic community, they already are aware of the problems that their culture faces. I have a lot of ground to cover to catch up, but I enjoy learning about that kind of stuff. The main issue is just that I don't know and it's about me taking the time to catch up, read about the issues, look at the statistics, and do the research. One of our values is addressing those problems and if I want to be a contributing member I have to learn and know what those are and what is going on. The mission of my organization is important to me and I find out by asking questions. It bothers me when people involved with multicultural groups are ignorant to what is going on – to me it feels like 'what are you only doing this half way?' I like to be up to speed one hundred percent so that I can understand every issue.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings associated with the experiences of White students involved a cross-racial university association, club group, or organization where students of color were the racial majority for at least ten weeks. This chapter also examined and how these cross-racial college experiences related to their consciousness of Whiteness. From the narrative data presented throughout Chapter 4, the researcher was able to make a number of conclusions.

The first conclusion is that a higher degree of White consciousness and White identity development seems to correlate positively with a higher degree of cross-racial involvement and depth of friendship groups with students of color in college. Tension, or conflict, between the group's "collective" racial identity versus the students' own individual identity contributed towards elevated White consciousness and a more progressive development of one's own White identity (Sabnani, Ponterotto, Borodovski, 1991). For most students, cross-racial involvement facilitated situational and contextual conflict at deeper levels more quickly and provided more opportunities for students to take a pro-minority stance. When participants were able to have the opportunity to take a pro-minority stance, they seemed to develop a more critical assessment of the situation and understand the racial dynamics of the conflict. When working through the conflict, participants were able to evaluate many perspectives that include both their perspective as a White person and to think critically about the perspective of students of color. This process contributed towards increased awareness of privilege and oppression based on race (Johnson, 1997; McIntosh, 1988). Deeper cross-racial involvement meant that students had deeper relationships with students of color who were part of their organization. This helped White students to have empathy and thus positive racial attitudes; this contributed towards increased consciousness of differences based on race.

The second conclusion is that participants in this study showed a positive interest in discovering more about their own cultural heritage and ethnic identity. Prior to their involvement, student participants did not reflect on their White identity unless they were in situations of direct racial conflict. Participants saw that students of color in their groups had a particularly strong connection with their own ethnic identities. After

significant involvement and seeing the strong connection that their peers had with their own identities, participants in this study realized that they too have an ethnic identity which facilitated a personal desire to further investigate one's own ethnic group.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This final chapter will continue to build upon an understanding of White students who are cross-racially involved in multicultural organizations and how their consciousness of Whiteness was shaped. Additionally, this chapter describes techniques for engaging White students in multicultural experiences on contemporary college campuses and provides insight into the development of racial justice allies based on cross-racial experiences. This chapter will provide (a) a discussion of the findings, (b) general conclusions based the results of this study in constellation with a review of the literature (c) limitations to this study and recommendations for further research, and (d) implications for practice in student affairs.

This qualitative study explored the experiences of self-identified White students currently enrolled at a predominantly White institution who were cross-racially involved in a multicultural association, club, or organization that had students of color as the racial majority for at least ten weeks. This study also examined students' consciousness of Whiteness and the development of students' White identities based on their cross-racial experiences. The sample size of 5 students – which was relatively small to begin with – decreased when one student was disqualified when it was discovered that the current make-up of the student group that the student was involved with did not currently have students of color as the racial majority. The methodology in this study was designed so that the researcher could gain insight from participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences and not suggest any sweeping generalizations, theories, or models. This study addressed two research questions: (a) “what are the experiences of White students involved a cross-racial university organization?” and (b) “how do these experiences relate

to the consciousness of their White identity?” Although the sample size of 4 was small, this study can lend its information to higher education professionals who desire to engage White students and create a more multicultural campus. Furthermore, this study can contribute towards understanding racial attitudes that can be aligned with those of a racial justice ally.

General Conclusions

Overall, students showed an exceptional willingness to discuss their experiences as a White student cross-racially involved in a multicultural student organization. Participants each felt that their experiences were unique in comparison to other White students on campus. Three out of the four participants developed deep relationships with their peers of color and see their cross-racial experiences as an integral part of their college experience. Furthermore, participants thought that the vast majority of White students do not often engage themselves across racial boundaries and understood the importance and benefits of doing so for both personal and social reasons. For participants in this study, consciousness of “Whiteness” – a dynamic socially constructed understanding of what it means for an individual to be White in the United States (Reason, Roosa Millar, & Scales, 2005) – came out more intentionally when they were actively involved in their multicultural organizations as opposed to their general experience on campus. A review of the literature posits that students often perceived their race socially constructed as “neutral” alongside an unconscious identification with Whiteness (Helms, 1992; Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994). Although it is unclear whether these students saw their Whiteness as neutral prior to their significant cross-racial involvement, they did develop a more complex understanding of what shapes race in

context of their own experiences. At a PWI, White privilege means that oftentimes students do not have to think about their experiences through a racial lens because they are not treated differently based on their race (McIntosh, 1988). Students' White identities in college are not salient for them in their everyday lives, but this could change if a student is part of a cross-racial group. Cross-racial organizational membership provides another context in which students can envision outside of the White majority norm of a PWI. In this study, participants' increased their consciousness of Whiteness while participating within their organizations. This elevated consciousness carried forth when interacting with people outside of their organization as well. Consequently, students perceive their dimensions of their White identity as both internally defined and externally influenced (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Pre-collegiate multicultural friendship groups provided three out of the four students with some skill in cross-cultural communication. These same three students had a deep connection with their peers of color. Having diverse friendship groups in K-12 environments may have been a catalyst to the formation of positive attitudes and openness to groups of students of color in college. The participant who did not have diverse friendship groups in high school was not as deeply involved as the other three participants. Multicultural pre-college experiences have given White students an open door to search for more multicultural experiences in college. For the participant who was not as deeply involved with her organization as compared to other participants in this study, retreat into White culture was easier due to the predominantly White campus environment and other involvement opportunities taken advantage of where most students involved were White. Retreat into White culture happened more often for the participant less significantly involved. More deeply involved students found belonging in

their cross-racial organization. In specific instances, participants perceived that their multicultural organizations were spaces where they could retreat from White culture, as opposed to retreating into White culture as posited by White identity models (Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991; Helms, 1992, Rowe, Bennett Atkinson, 1994). In their multicultural environment, participants could distance themselves from other Whites and thus the oppressive nature of White culture in general.

Anticipated Findings

A number of findings from this study were anticipated while analyzing the data for this research. Only 5 students had responded to participate in this study and only 4 had qualified to be included. The small number of respondents was anticipated because White students who are cross-racially involved in multicultural college experiences are a distinct and rare student subpopulation (Chang, Astin, & Kim 2004). An additional qualification was that the group had to have its current membership make up a racial majority of students of color. For each participant, they were one of the only White students in their multicultural organizations. These findings were not surprising because multicultural student organizations are mostly taken advantage of by students of color where White students are overwhelmingly not involved (Sallee, Logan, Sims, & Harrington, 2005).

Further anticipated findings were concepts that had already been established within literature regarding White students and White identity development (Rowe, Bennett, Atkinson, 1994). In this study, White students had increased consciousness of differences based on race which included a general awareness of the concepts of race-based privilege and oppression in contemporary society and on the college campus

(Antonio, 2001b; Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006). This increase in consciousness was due to their participation in their multicultural organization where they watched privilege and oppression play out almost every day. All participants experienced a varied degree of empathy for students of color in having to deal with racial discrimination, and used empathy as a tool for understanding (Reason, 2005). Additionally, participants experienced increases in White consciousnesses when within their cross-racial organization, but often saw it as situational when working outside of the multicultural organization or as a member of another organization. Furthermore, participants seem to have developed positive attitudes towards multiculturalism, diversity, and cultural differences due to positive messages received from peers of color (Sallee, Logan, Sims, & Harrington, 2005). Racially diverse campuses enhance the chances that students will socialize across racial groups (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004). In this study, PWU is a campus that does have opportunities for White students to have cross-racial interactions.

Another salient but expected finding is that participants needed to picture what they get out of the experience. Participants in this study often pointed to culturally diverse experiences as better experiences because it added value to their lives while in college and could better prepare them for life after college. Furthermore, self-interest meant that students had invested into the goals, missions, and values of the organization. This clear sense of self-interest allowed students to maintain a high level of commitment to the work in alignment with the mission of the organization (Kivel, 2002).

Unanticipated Findings

Several findings in this study were unanticipated while analyzing the narrative data for this research. Cross-racially involved White students have unique experiences

with regard to exploring racial identity development (Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans, 2005). This was evident throughout the theme areas and the narrative data in this study, including an exploration of bi-cultural boundaries and discovering limits of their “Whiteness.” The first unanticipated finding, and the most salient, is about participants experiencing dissonance between an individual White identity and the identity of their culturally-based organization. For three out of the four participants – each who has a deep sense of belonging in their organization and with their peers of color in friendship groups – received messages from their peers of color that they weren’t perceived all of the time as being “only White.” Participants questioned their race on different levels. Peers of color didn’t identify participants with being White yet they had a positive attitude towards the White student; this could indicate that peers of color had negative experiences with Whites and thus do not want to consider their White peer part of that racial group responsible for oppressive and negative behaviors. Due to these messages, participants had the limit of their “acceptedness” tested. With experiences that have White students question and test cultural boundaries, there was an overwhelmingly positive interest in investing time and energy to discover what their own cultural identity and heritage means to them. Personal identity exploration was expected, however participants discussed a powerful desire to learn more about their ethnicity and ethnic heritage. Participants indicated that exploration of both heritage and identity was an important factor in order to reconnect with their families about their family history.

The second unanticipated finding may provide insight into White identity development for students in college (Sabnani, Ponterotto, & Borodovsky, 1991). Internal conflict seemed to arise for students based on newly discovered information about the

oppressive nature of White culture. When this happened, students often held a strong Pro-Minority/Antiracism stance, and – in specific instances – participants perceived that their multicultural organizations were spaces where they could retreat from White culture in conjunction with the frustrations directed toward the White culture in general for this behavior. This study’s findings indicate that “Retreat from White Culture” could be a behavioral aspect of more deeply involved students who have found belonging in multicultural organizations. In their multicultural environment, participants could distance themselves from other Whites and thus the oppressive nature of White culture in general.

Limitations of Study

There were several limitations to this study. The first limitation was the population of students from which to find participants. White students cross-racially involved in multicultural organizations are a rare and distinct subpopulation. It is unknown exactly how many students fit this parameter, but the researcher was fortunate enough to have 4 students who qualified and were willing to share their stories. For the students who did participate, 11 questions were asked within a time limit of 60 minutes. Two out of the four participants also had to leave for class right after the interview. Although the researcher used strategies to get more information from students during the final questions of the interview, two of the four students did not give as complete or complex answers as they did in previous questions.

An additional limitation was the non-variability of the sample. Two out of the four students were involved in Greek-lettered organizations. Both of these students were both deeply involved in their organizations and had different experiences than the other

two participants because the nature of fraternity and sorority life is complex as compared to student groups that are not Greek-lettered organizations. The two participants who were fraternity or sorority members indicated that they spent a majority of their time with peers from their groups because of the amount of time necessary to devote oneself to the organization. This naturally facilitated deeper involvement compared to the other two participants. The sample in this study also contained a disproportionate number of women compared to men.

Another limitation was the fact that this study did not examine the many other social identities that students may have with regard to student development, nor did the researcher ask participants to disclose any of these identities other than their age, gender, student status, race, and ethnicity. The researcher believes that knowledge of additional social identities could lend to a more holistic picture as to experiences as a cross-racially involved White student, motivations to join a multicultural organization, and the shaping of Whiteness.

Recommendations for Further Research

In order to more deeply engage White students on predominantly White campuses, further research and assessment is necessary. A key concept that was uncovered in this research was the significant impact that cross-racial pre-college experiences have on White students. Significant pre-college cross-racial friendship groups and club involvement gave participants an open door to search for multicultural experiences in college. Further research is necessary to understand how to facilitate more intentionally positive cross-racial experiences for students in general prior to their enrollment in an institution of higher education. Indications from participants in this

study show that racially diverse friendship groups had a significant impact on creating positive racial attitudes.

Focusing on students who were already enrolled in a college or university, Tanaka (1996) examined the impact of multiculturalism on White students utilizing a longitudinal sample of 25,000 students entering 159 institutions. Chang, Astin, and Kim (2004) also used a longitudinal approach to assess benefits of cross-racial interaction among undergraduate students. Chang, Denson, Saenz, and Misa (2006) did research with Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) data and found that students who have higher levels of cross-racial interactions tend to report significantly larger gains in general knowledge, critical thinking ability, and problem solving skills since entering college due in part to their knowledge of and ability to accept different races and cultures. Chang, Denson, et al. found that White students are increasingly likely to engage in cross-racial interaction at each successively higher level of diversity. In this research on White students cross-racially involved in multicultural student organizations, the level of diversity was at its greatest because the White students were one of the only White students in their organizations. The researcher recommends a longitudinal study for several institutions over four to five years to examine the impact of multiculturalism on White students who are cross-racially involved in multicultural organizations on a college campus. Because cross-racial involvement is deeper than mere cross-racial interactions, White students could be positively impacted more significantly than in the Chang, Denson et al. study in terms of general knowledge, critical thinking ability, and problem solving skills due to a deeper sense of empathy and acceptance different races and cultures. Researchers could also gain deeper insight into developing attitudes of racial

justice allies for White students because students may begin to more completely understand the cost of racism to White people.

It is also important to understand the racial attitudes of students of color towards White students who are part of their multicultural organizations. This research only focused on one side of the story: White students in multicultural organizations. The focus was only on the experiences of these White students and their racial attitudes relating to the shaping White consciousness. This research did not, however, include any portion of the story of students of color in these same organizations. To understand the whole story, research must be done on the experiences of students of color in multicultural organizations and how they perceive White students in their organizations. Additionally, it would be desirable to understand the racial attitudes held by students of color towards White students in these organizations due to their involvement.

Implications for Practice and Concluding Thoughts

The emerging role of student affairs professionals is to work with students to develop their own personal identity and contribute positively to society. Historically, it has been a challenge to even acknowledge race as an important identity for students in higher education (Forman, 2004). Since the emergence of identity development literature, the need to work with White students to end negative, oppressive behaviors towards students of color has also emerged. To end oppressive behaviors, student affairs professionals must work with students to teach them about White identity development, concepts of White privilege, and systems of oppression. Cross-racially involved students have emerging traits that align with the important work of a racial justice ally. In order to become racial justice allies, White students must understand that they maintain a racist

society unless they actively dismantle it. Student affairs must continue to engage students in conversations about race and nurture student identity development. The key is to influence student learning without being condescending or judgmental, but rather being gracious and nurturing. Currently, White students do not involve themselves with culturally-based experiences, but do so often when approached first by a student of color (Tatum, 2003). To engage White students in co-curricular cross-racial immersion experiences, student affairs professionals have opportunities to create space for this to happen naturally. As concluded in this research, White students who are cross-racially involved in multicultural student organizations develop positive racial attitudes, which is one basic characteristic of an emerging racial justice ally. Deep cross-racial involvement facilitates an easier transition to begin the journey as a racial justice ally because White students have deeper feelings of empathy with close friendships with students of color.

Student affairs administrators can work with White students to develop identities in alignment with that of White racial justice allies. Sallee, Logan, Sims, and Harrington (2005) posit that student affairs educators and faculty who want White students to question their privileges and develop a healthy White identity need to have institutional structures in place that support the creation of diverse campus environments. Structures could include retreats, programs, or spaces to reflect on personal identity, ethnicity, culture, and family history. Allies affect positive change in the racial climate of a predominantly White institution. To effect change, student affairs administrators must provide educational opportunities that reinforce the importance for personal identity development in the work to become racial justice allies. Administrators must also frame learning opportunities in a way that students see the benefits for them and the benefits for

society in general. White students who have significant cross-racial involvement with a multicultural association, club, or organization have begun to seek out a more diverse campus environment because they see the benefits to them and to their organizations.

While White student affairs professionals are supporting White students around developing as racial justice allies, efforts must also be made to have White student affairs administrators continue their own journey of White identity development. In order for White students to aspire to be racial justice allies at a PWI, there must be enough support from student affairs professionals and higher education administrators who are further along in their journey of multicultural competence. Role modeling multicultural competence is an important piece for White ally development. Therefore, White student affairs administrators must also develop an increased consciousness of Whiteness and how it affects interactions with colleagues of color. If student affairs administrators are expecting their White students to support the creation of a multicultural campus, then professionals on campus must also cooperate in a parallel track for White identity development in which they can acknowledge their own race-based privileges, biases, and role in an oppressive society. This is a foundation for multicultural competence for White staff, faculty, and students at a PWI.

The challenge with multicultural competence at a PWI lies in the organizational state of PWIs in the U.S. There is a consistent lack of racial diversity within college student services administration at PWIs (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004; Reason, Broido, et al., 2005). Organizational diversity must be increased in higher education administration. Affirmative action is one method of increasing organizational diversity at PWIs, even though several states are moving backwards in racial justice efforts by

banning it (Pope, Reynolds, Mueller, 2004). Organizational diversity helps to build multicultural skills and develop racial justice ally attitudes within staff and faculty that can be taught to student populations on campus. This same concept of applying organizational diversity within higher education administration can also be applied to student group diversity. Students who have in cross-racial interactions have shown numerous benefits: acceptance of difference, growth in knowledge, critical thinking ability, intellectual growth, self confidence, and problem-solving skills (Chang, Astin, Kim, 2004). These benefits contribute towards positive change in terms of both individual student growth as well as holistic changes to the racial climate of the campus. The profession of student affairs is vital in facilitating positive growth and development in college so that students can positively affect change while on campus and after graduation within their professional roles in the world.

For students in college, increasing consciousness of Whiteness indicates that they are working towards a full and complete understanding of their own racial identity – in concert with the many other identities on the Jones and McEwen “molecule” (2000) – and privileges that coincide with their socially dominant identity as a White person. Racial justice allies are White students who actively work against systems of oppression and privilege that maintain power (Reason, Roosa Millar, & Scales, 2005, p. 530). Thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and actions aligned with that of a racial justice ally can only be formed by a White student when he or she has a critical understanding of his or her own Whiteness. Students must do their own personal work around developing a healthy and balanced racial identity so that they can come to terms with what it means to be White in today’s society. White students must acknowledge their responsibility for

maintaining an inherently racist society and widespread racism solely due to their White group membership, but must also identify with a healthy personal antiracist White racial identity. For White students in multicultural organizations, these attitudes seem to form faster due to racial justice capital acquired at a quicker pace by being immersed in significant cross-racial experiences for long periods of time. Student affairs professionals can take advantage of the quickened pace of identity development and increased consciousness of Whiteness by taking the opportunity to have students reflect on what it means to have a White identity in a multicultural society.

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Appendix A

Appendix A contains three documents: (a) the invitation email, (b) the interview questions, and (c) the IRB informed consent form. Please note that individually identifying information has been concealed in each of these documents.

Invitation email

To: Self-identified White students cross-racially involved in a multicultural club or organization

Subject: Volunteers needed for research study

Dear Student:

My name is Mike Shingle and I am a graduate student in the College of Education. I plan to study the experiences of students who self identify as White or Caucasian and their involvement particularly in cross-racial (or cross-cultural) student associations and organizations where students of color are the racial majority. The results of this study will be used to write a Master of Science thesis in partial completion of a Master of Science (M.S.) degree in College Student Services Administration at Oregon State University. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. The study would ask that you participate in an individual one-on-one audio taped interview during the next few weeks of the Fall 2011 term.

Qualifications to participate in this study include:

- * Must be at least 18 years of age.
- * Must identify as White or Caucasian.
- * Must be currently involved in a multicultural student association or organization where students of color are the racial majority and have at least ten weeks (one academic term) experience within this group during your tenure at [REDACTED].

If you meet the qualifications for participating in this study, and wish to do so, please email me at mike.shingle@oregonstate.edu or contact me via text or phone at 541-292-2538. I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Mike Shingle
Leadership Development Assistant
Student Leadership and Involvement

Interview questions

The interviews will follow a semi-structured format so that the researcher can ask follow-up questions and continue to probe about ideas and topics as they arise.

1. Can you describe the organization that you are involved with that fits this study's qualifications? (re-state qualifications)
2. Can you describe the reason(s) that you initially became involved in your organization?
3. When you first joined, what was it like to be a White person in a group with mostly students of color?
4. Can you describe what positions or roles you have taken on within your organization?
5. Can you describe the reason(s) that you stayed involved with your organization, or did you ever consider leaving the organization? Why or why not?
6. At what point during your involvement did your identity as a White member become really apparent to you? Can you describe a specific situation?
7. What has your experience as a White person in this group been since that situation?
8. Do you feel that your racial identity as a White person was a very salient part of your identity throughout your involvement? Why or why not?
9. How do you think that your experiences differ within your organization as a White person compared to that of students of color in your organization?
10. Initially, what were some of your expectations as a White member of this organization, have these expectations that you just described been met, and if not, how did they differ?
11. How do you think your identity as a White person influenced your expectations mentioned previously?

IRB Informed Consent Document



College of Education
 Oregon State University, 473 Wabso Hall, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-6403
 Phone 541-737-4661 | Fax 541-737-8871 | osgo@oregostate.edu/education

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: A Phenomenological Analysis of Contemporary White Students' Involvement in Cross-racial College Experiences and the Shaping of White Consciousness

Principal Investigator: Tom Scheuermann

Student Researcher: Mike Shingle

Version Date: June 24, 2011

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?

This form contains information you will need to help you decide whether to be in this study or not. Please read the form carefully and ask the study team member(s) questions about anything that is not clear.

2. WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of self-identified White students who are involved in a significant cross-racial experience within a predominantly White institution and how these experiences relate to the students' consciousness of Whiteness.

The study is being conducted by a student for the completion of a thesis.

Up to ten students may be invited to take part in this study.

3. WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

You are being invited to take part in this study because you have self-identified as a White student who is involved in a student organization, student work setting, or university-affiliated student group that has students of color as the racial majority and have been a participant in that group for at least ten weeks at the university level.

4. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

This study involves research centered around racial identity development. The study activities include an interview that will be structured around eleven predetermined open ended questions.

The participant is free to skip any questions that he/she would prefer not to answer. Related follow-up questions may be asked during the interview depending on a participant's answer to each of the questions.

Study Duration: Interviews will last one hour at most.

Recordings: Audio recordings will be taken during this interview. Audio recording is a required study activity, and participants should not enroll if they do not wish to be recorded.

Oregon State University

IRB Study # 5020

Expiration Date 08/25/2012



College of Education
Oregon State University, 473 Wabio Hall, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-6403
Phone 541-737-4661 | Fax 541-737-6671 | omgaretino.edu/education

Future contact: We may contact you in the future for follow-up questions that are directly related to your answers in this study. You may ask us to stop contacting you at any time.

Study Results: Participants may request a copy of the transcribed audio at any time after the completion of the interview portion of the study.

5. WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND POSSIBLE DISCOMFORTS OF THIS STUDY?

The only foreseeable personal discomfort in this study may come from discussing personal history or background information regarding one's own racial identity.

Breach of Confidentiality: There is a risk that we could accidentally disclose information that identifies you. We are using the internet and email as a means for communication with participants in this study. The security and confidentiality of information sent by email cannot be guaranteed. Information sent by email can be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses.

6. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

This study is not designed to benefit participants directly. This study has foreseeable benefits in understanding and knowledge related to involvement in college and improve access to cross-racial opportunities for White students. The hope is to contribute towards a more inclusive campus climate with respect to racial justice.

7. WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

8. WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION I GIVE?

The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Federal regulatory agencies and the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you.

If the results of this project are published your identity will not be made public.



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Since audio recordings are made within the interview portion of the study, only the primary investigator and one student investigator will have access to these records. They will be used only for purposes of this study and will be erased by June 15, 2015.

To help ensure confidentiality, individually identifiable information will be kept in a secure location and separate from the interview records. They will be used only for purposes of this study and will be erased by June 15, 2015.

9. WHAT OTHER CHOICES DO I HAVE IF I DO NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. If you choose to withdraw from this project before it ends, the researchers may keep information collected about you and this information may be included in study reports.

10. WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact:

Tom Scheuermann
 Director, University Housing and Dining Services, and Graduate Faculty, College of Education
 102 Buxton Hall
 541-737-4771
tom.scheuermann@oregonstate.edu

If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

12. WHAT DOES MY SIGNATURE ON THIS CONSENT FORM MEAN?

Your signature indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Do not sign after the expiration date:

Participant's Name (printed): _____

 (Signature of Participant)

 (Date)

 (Signature of Person Obtaining Consent)

 (Date)

Appendix B

Below is an example of the researcher’s coding technique as outlined in Chapter 3 in the data analysis section. Please note that individually identifying information has been concealed.

Ashley | Crystal | Donovan | Evelyn

2. External factors influencing exploration of bi-cultural boundaries (not quite a a bi-cultural identity)

[redacted], I get along with everybody, knew one of them, very open, “joking, nah, she’s not white, she’s lite-skinned”. Gets iffy, don’t know where we are from, mom’s side is German and Irish, my dad’s side is Scandanavian. “It’s not the smartest thing to not know where I come from. I should probably know and look into that. It would be ignorant of me to just say oh, I’m just white because that’s not what you are, that’s not your ethnicity”

Comment [s1]: Race + ethnicity, important!

This made me realize that I have a heritage too and I should probably figure out what that is so I could find a way to explore more passions; to explore my heritage, culture, ethnicity, identity, and what role that plays in my life.

Comment [s2]: Heritage

[redacted] never really said anything or made it seem like they’re astonished that I am part of the group. They are more thankful for it.

When it comes to collaboration on campus especially for students of color at the cultural centers who may not know me at first I think they kind of get a little confused I’ve noticed. They’re like [redacted] what? They’re a [redacted] group right? After a while it’s not a big deal, they realize that I’m committed to this. My mentality is about getting things done, and I don’t think that’s an attribute of my cultural identity but rather that’s just who I am. At first, there’s this awkward tension about what my group is supposed to be versus who I am in my group. Otherwise, within our sorority once you establish yourself then you’re good to go. They haven’t even met me yet but they know who I am. It’s the same walking into a center. [redacted] initially, it’s like who are you, but eventually they get to know who you are.

Comment [s3]: Tension about what my group is supposed to be versus what cultural I represent.

I don’t know if it had an influence, I thought about the fact that I was one of the only white people there, but it wouldn’t have made me not join – [redacted] tend to think of myself as pretty open to other ethnicities, but others might not join if they knew it was a multiethnic group”

Comment [s4]: Self as open, others as not

It was interesting because I spent like all of my time with them. My roommates were a part of my fraternity. [redacted] would get messages from them about me being brown on the inside and white on the outside. All of these external sources told me that I was “not really white, I was just lightskinned”. That’s sort of when I knew I was part of the group. it was sort of like my rite of passage with them. Because we were all so tightknit it felt really good to hear that. There was a sort of integration with the group that met my needs of belongingness. This made me do some work to think about my own identity and who I really was. Internal reflection on own identity – [redacted]

Comment [s5]: Deep relationships

Comment [s6]: Accepted by students of color

Comment [s7]: ID Development,

3. White phenotype as a factor of marginalization (yes it is, or no it isn’t)

Yes – INTERNAL to organization

At first it was awkwardness of not knowing anybody and not knowing what kind of people they were; what the thought was funny and what they liked to do, you know, the normal stuff. But once I started to

Comment [s8]: Role in organization?

Ashley | Crystal | Donovan | Evelyn

get to know them there are things like jokes and things that you're not used to. After a while, you get used to it or they start rambling off in Spanish and I don't understand it, I'm like not everyone speaks Spanish.

Comment [s9]: Language/culture

Yeah, I mean, we joke about it a lot. I'm always the first one there. It's just like a norm for me in my family, [white people] we're early. With event planning, we knew exactly who was going to show up, who was going to eat. Everytime we have to plan twice as much and do lots of things twice; I think that it is kind of ridiculous.

Comment [s10]: Expectations of White people? Social construction of whiteness?

joined because I was asked to join. My whiteness was never really brought up at the beginning because I think it was so obvious that people didn't even acknowledge it until I did. I remember when somebody [redacted] had to sort of laugh it off because I feared being excluded from the group if I didn't find it funny; plus, it was kinda funny. Soon I began to laugh about my white identity and how interesting it was that I was so close with all of these fraternity men. All of the [redacted] that I met always thought that it was awesome that I was part of the fraternity especially because all of the other guys they met before [redacted].

Comment [s11]: Didn't want to be marginalized.

Yes – EXTERNAL from organization

"A friend told her to apply there, but I thought why would they want some white girl [redacted]?"

Comment [s12]: Reached out to by student of color

When we hang out with other multicultural groups [redacted], when I walk in there literally [redacted] person looks at me like what are you doing, are you lost? So I have to tell them why I'm here – uh, I'm here to see Bianca. . . It was just like really awkward

Comment [s13]: Justification of role/presence in organization.

Getting past the barrier] – it depends on the person and how open they are, how many people are there. If there's a lot of [students of color] there then I think there's a different group mentality and they are less willing to accept me in a place that maybe isn't meant specifically for me. Some of my strategies to break the social barrier are to be very forward and introduce me so people know who I am. I'm friendly so I'm not trying to go in and bulldoze somebody.

Comment [s14]: Racial barriers. Group mentality. Strategies to move past.

It was one of the first times that we had a social [redacted]. I was like whoa, hello! I felt like not only because I was new that nobody knew who I was but also because like I was surrounded by all Latinos and literally my skin stands out in the group. I could feel people watching me and hear them thinking who is this girl? In that situation, I could sense the tension and not knowing quite what to do; it's a little neveracking never knowing what quite to do when I'm in a room. You know you have to have the entrance and introduce yourself. The girls that are in my group help to ease it in; they're like "oh hey it's [redacted] it's about getting the first part of the introduction out.

Comment [s15]: White as a minority.

Comment [s16]: Increased racial consciousness causes tension/conflict.

I remember when we would meet new people because of the fraternity, I often felt awkward because they had to introduce me sort separately and make sure they tell people that I'm a member as if otherwise they didn't than I wouldn't be seen as one because of my appearance. And I remember that when we would hang out with sororities I would feel as if I didn't fit in completely because I was a white dude. I felt that it took a while for them to get to know me and accept me into the group or into their