AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Caitlin E. Kerrigan for the degree of Master of Science in College Student Services
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Title: An Appreciative Inquiry Approach for White Student Affairs Professionals
involved in Racial Justice Work

Abstract approved:

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This qualitative study examined the experience of White student affairs professionals

involved in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution in the Pacific

Northwest. This study explored participants' consciousness of their white identity, white

privilege, and commitment to end systems of privilege and oppression in regards to

White supremacy and racism. 8 participants were recruited and interviewed as well as a

literature review to shape the research questions, method, and results. The researcher

used an appreciative inquiry approach in the researching focusing on what White student

affairs professionals are doing well in racial justice instead of focusing on what they are

not doing well. The principle results were varied and extensive. Participants who were in

the study demonstrated a heightened awareness of their white identity, white privilege,

and systems of privilege and oppression. They reflected on their experiences in racial

justice, challenges they face, how they advocate on their campus, and what keeps them

sustained within their work. There were 6 themes that emerged throughout the research

including: (a) finding White student affairs professionals' place in racial justice work, (b)

the regional whiteness of the Pacific Northwest, (c) what racial justice means for White

people, (d) a need for institutional change, (e) restructuring allyship, and (f) the future of

justice work and the importance of optimism. Findings from this research will help

inform student affairs as a profession and professionals (White student affairs

professionals and professionals of color) working towards racial justice. This research will help White student affairs professionals to reflect on their white identity and white privilege in a meaningful and practical way. White student affairs professionals should reflect on their identity as a white person to work more effectively with students and professionals of color and also serving as support and role models for White students. This research will serve as a tool for Whiteness to be examined and empower White people to work towards ending systems of privilege and oppression.

An Appreciative Inquiry Approach for White Student Affairs Professionals involved in
Racial Justice Work

by
Caitlin E. Kerrigan

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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.

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Caitlin E. Kerrigan, Author

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

With a diversifying student population come increasing challenges including how

student affairs professionals can serve as social justice allies. More students of color are

attending college while the composition of student affairs administrators continues to be

predominantly White (Mueller & Pope, 2001). Student affairs professionals need to be

multiculturally competent and prepared to handle issues that arise on our campuses. Pope,

Reynolds, & Mueller (2004) suggested "that it is necessary to reexamine what constitutes

basic competencies, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary for effective

professional practice in student affairs" (p. 6). Mueller & Pope (2001) found that research

surrounding multicultural competence and social justice has been largely focused on

undergraduate students, with limited training directed at higher education and student

affairs. Multicultural competence helps student affairs practitioners create multiculturally

sensitive and affirming campuses as they grapple with systems of privilege, oppression,

and power. Many student affairs professionals are not prepared to address multicultural

concerns due to the lack of resources, skills, and knowledge that is available (Pope,

Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). Student affairs professionals need to educate themselves on

multicultural competence and social justice to address the evolving student population.

Mueller and Pope (2001) described this phenomenon: "The growing complexity of

multicultural dynamics at many institutions necessitates that student affairs professionals

acquire the awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with culturally diverse

populations" (p. 133). More importantly, student affairs professionals need to assess themselves on a personal and professional level and admit to what they don't know.

One of the main issues that student affairs professionals confront is the lack of experience or skills necessary to talk to each other and students about social justice, multiculturalism, and diversity. The lack of communication and awareness fuels frustration student affairs professionals feel towards one another. Roper and Conneely (2009) explain the struggles student affairs practitioners experience while addressing diversity:

"We spend a lot of time in our organizations whispering about diversity, which suggests we are keeping something about the issue from one another. Some colleagues quietly express frustrations they feel toward those from historically under-represented groups, while colleagues from under-represented groups vent frustration that coworkers from dominant identity status backgrounds 'don't get it.' The situation inevitably stems from our inability to speak directly with each other regarding diversity" (p. 18).

Student affairs professionals experience this inability to speak with each other when engaging in racial justice work. In order to change this culture, student affairs professionals must open lines of communication so we can speak directly with each other regarding diversity and racial justice. By taking an appreciative inquiry approach, student affairs professionals can open communication and build each other up instead of tearing each other down.

It is common in racial justice work for White people to feel guilty and too discouraged to engage in the work after realizing their privilege. When White people are

confronted with their privilege they may shrink back and refuse to take part in the conversation or do the work and this is problematic. White people may shut down and find themselves unable to overcome or ignore their guilt. Despite the efforts of White individuals that engage in racial justice, many times efforts put forward by White people is disregarded and unwanted. Often times White people feel helpless in work to increase racial justice. At times, White people don't know what to do, where to start, or how to contribute to dismantling systems of privilege and oppression regarding race.

As Roper and Conneely (2008) expressed, when it comes to issues of diversity in student affairs, we have a tendency to tear each other down instead of encouraging and supporting each other. Instead of focusing on the bad, student affairs professionals need to connect with each other and find a common bond and mission to work towards. Student affairs professionals need to find a way to be united and engaged in the work. If student affairs professionals are able to have honest and sincere conversations with each other regarding racial justice, they will be able to build authentic and meaningful relationships that will help in dismantling systems of privilege and oppression. Student affairs professionals will be better prepared to support students if we are on common ground and united to fight racial justice and end White supremacy. In order to support students of color both White student affairs professionals and student affairs professionals of color need to work together.

For White student affairs professionals, education on racial justice is crucial. In addition to recognizing race in society, it is essential that they view themselves as racial beings (Mueller & Pope, 2001). Additionally, the more aware White student affairs professionals are of their own racial identity, the more effective they will be when

working with students of color or with students who have a different cultural identity

(Mueller & Pope, 2001). Reason, Scales, & Millar (2005b) encouraged "all student

affairs professionals to reflect on their own racial justice attitudes and actions…Student

affairs professionals must complete this process if they are to promote racial justice ally

development in the students they serve" (p. 56). Therefore, the question arises, what is

this process? Kendall (2006) emphasized the importance of self-work for White people

including examining White privilege at both a personal and systemic level. Kendall

(2006) suggested White people need to explore what it means to be White. This personal

journey starts in two steps including: "first, we need to know where we want to get to in

our understanding and behavior. Second we need to identify honestly where we are now

and how we got here" (p. 5). These first steps provide the foundational framework for

White identity development and consciousness. Without this self-work or reflection on

what it means to be White by White student affairs professionals, the implications of

privilege and oppression for students, faculty, and staff of color are overlooked and

systems will continue to be perpetuated. Americans have an individualistic perspective

where they believe that if they are not consciously or openly prejudiced or hurtful, then

they don't consider themselves part of the problem (Johnson, 2006). This is also

applicable to White student affairs professionals who witness racism on their campus and

do not take action to make a change. WSAPs' silence continues to fuel racism, and

separates themselves from faculty, staff, and students of color. Johnson (2006)

articulated, "if we participate in systems the trouble comes out of, and if those systems

exist only through our participation, then this is enough to involve us in the trouble itself"

(p. 87). It is no longer enough to sit idly by as White student affairs professionals if racial justice is our end goal.

In addition to White identity development, racial justice ally development is also crucial for White student affairs professionals to understand. Reason, Millar, & Scales (2005a) defined racial justice allies as, "White students who actively work against the system of oppression that maintains their power". Reason, Scales, & Millar (2005b) provided three sections that describe racial justice ally development: "1) understanding racism, power, and privilege, both intellectually and affectively; (2) developing a new White consciousness; and (3) encouraging racial justice action" (pp. 55-56). Without an understanding of racial justice ally development, student affairs professionals are in danger of harming people of color. Bishop (2002) articulated this by stating,

> If a person attempts ally education who does not thoroughly grasp the concept or demonstrate being an ally in their own action. . . oppressive attitudes can be solidified and confirmed, or backlash or triggered. Those who suffer the most from this backfiring of good intentions are those who are most vulnerable. . .because they are targets of oppression (p. 128).

Many times, White individuals who are aspiring to be racial justice allies do not recognize the impact of their actions. Comments that are meant to be ones that connect themselves to a person of color can be offensive to a person of color and the reaction is to push the White person away. This may be manifested as White student affairs professionals become devoted to racial justice work. However, Reason, Scales & Roosa Millar (2005) emphasized White student affairs professionals share a special responsibility to take action as racial justice allies and serve as positive White racial role

models. To do this affectively, Reason, Scales & Roosa Millar (2005) warned that one cannot teach what they do not know.

Racial justice education for students is prevalent on campuses across the country. However, what are the implications of White student affairs professionals who are working towards racial justice if they haven't done their own "work"? What negative stereotypes and beliefs are being perpetuated if White people don't recognize their privilege and Whiteness while working for racial justice? The push for White students to explore racial justice is important. However if White student affairs professionals want to educate White students about racial justice and serve as allies for students, faculty, and staff of color they must first do self-work. There is limited research that addresses White student affairs professionals and their quest for uncovering their own White identity and consciousness in relation to racial justice work. With this in mind, this research serves to explore the experiences of White student affairs professionals in racial justice including how they gained awareness, struggles they face, and how they remain sustained in the work. Hopefully this research will inform and provide insight to the experiences of WSAPs in racial justice.

Definition of Terms

Throughout the literature review, the researcher used key terms that are important to define for the reader. By defining the key terms, the reader will have clarity and understand the use of the terms in the context of the study. Below is a list of key terms with definitions.

- Racial justice ally – "Whites who are actively working to end racism and racial oppression" (Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005).

- Social justice ally – **"members of dominant social groups (e.g. men, Whites, heterosexuals) working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based upon their social group membership" (Broido, 2000, p. 3).

- Racism – "any attitude, action, or institutional arrangement that results in the subordination of another group based ostensibly upon group-linked physical characteristics" (Jones, 2002, p. 30).

- Individual racism – "refers to the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs of the individuals that result in unequal treatment of individuals on the basis of their racial or ethnic group" (Jones, 2002, p. 32).

- Institutional racism – "is a pattern of racism embedded in the policies and practices of social institutions-the educational system, the legal system, the economic system, family, state, and religion-that has a negative impact upon certain ethnic groups" (Jones, 2002, p. 32).

- 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, 2007).

- Whiteness – "represents an understanding of what it means to be White in contemporary society" (Reason, 2007, p. 127).

- 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). Additionally, Peggy McIntosh (1988)

described White privilege in this way, "White privilege is like an invisible

weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas,

clothes, tools, and blank checks" (p. 1).

- Multicultural competence – "a distinctive category of awareness, knowledge, and

  skills essential for efficacious student affairs work; a level of multicultural

  awareness, knowledge, and skills that allows student affairs professionals to

  competently work with diverse groups of students and colleagues" (Pope,

  Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, p. 9).

Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature

Throughout this research it is appropriate to provide a review of the literature to have a better understanding of theories, terms, and ideas that fuel the work of White student affairs professionals involved in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution. This chapter will cover the historical construction of Whiteness, White identity development, racial justice ally development, and student affairs' role in racial justice.

Historical Construction of Whiteness

In order to gain an understanding of the role of White student affairs professionals in racial justice, it is crucial to take a look at the historical construction of Whiteness and systems of privilege and oppression. First, it is important to define what it means to be White in the United States. Deconstruction of Whiteness is the first step towards understanding the unearned privileges White people receive due to the way the United States was founded, grew, and developed as a nation and culture. Kendall (2006) expressed, "In race-based American society, the White race is the standard against which all others are measured. We can never know what it is to be other if we aren't very clear about our own experiences as White people" (p. 2). To gain a better insight into Whiteness in the United States, White individuals need to see themselves as part of the White race group (Kendall, 2006).

As a starting point, it is important to examine how American history was constructed through a White lens. Hughes (2007) stated, "The process of how Whites created, sustained, defended, and altered their identity and its related privilege is at the heart of understanding race and of all American history" (p. 205). White Americans must

address the selectivity of what is presented as part of America's history and address how

racism from the past influences us today (Jensen, 2005). European immigrants did not

experience the same challenges that immigrants of color experienced. However, the

experiences of European immigrants taught them that White privilege depended on

distancing themselves from immigrants of color.

 Kendall (2006) made an important distinction regarding White people: "It is

important to note that in the United States, while any racial group might view itself as

superior, only the White group has the power to institutionalize that belief into laws,

policies, practices, and culture and to subordinate other groups based on that

institutionally held power" (p. 22). With Kendall's (2006) observation, it is evident how

race was constructed through many avenues including the legal system. Throughout

American history both state and federal courts sought to determine and define who was

White enough to naturalize as a citizen (Haney Lopéz, 1996). Defining "White" as a part

of someone's identity was a complex process because race is seen as something that is

socially constructed in contrast to biologically constructed (Haney López, 1996).

Additionally race is defined in congruence with other social identities including class,

religion, nationality, gender, and sexual identity (Haney López, 1996). There was a lot of

confusion throughout the naturalization process, as White was defined and immigrants

were either determined White or not White enough to become a U.S. citizen. The effects

of associating citizen with White have damaged our history and humanity as a nation.

White Identity Development

 Racial identity development of persons of color and White persons has come to

the forefront of student affairs literature in recent years (Evans et al., 2010). Critical

consciousness about sociopolitical issues often comes when one confronts his or her own privilege (McIntosh, 1989). Critical consciousness is crucial in terms of Whiteness. White student affairs practitioners and White students need to understand Whiteness and the implications it has on systems of privilege and oppression. There are several White racial identity development models that describe the process that White people experience and will be talked about below.

Helms's model of White identity development. Helms (1992) introduced two identity development models including one for people of color and one for White people. The White Identity Development Model (WIDM) presented by Helms (1992) was created to increase 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. Additionally Helms stated, "White racial identity theory attempts to provide a framework that makes sense in light of the socialization and common life experiences of White people" (p. 24). Helms (1992) proposed that each person in the United States has a racial identity that is experienced within the framework of privilege and power. The WIDM is widely known and is the most researched model of White identity development. Helms (1992) suggested that a healthy White identity develops in a two-phase process.

First phase: abandonment of racism. The first phase of Helms's White identity development model, *abandonment of racism* is characterized by the process of moving from oblivious or naïve conceptions of race (Helms, 1992). When an individual experiences dissonance between what they have always known and what they are experiencing now, they begin to reconsider notions of Whiteness. This shift involves a White person recognizing his or her complicity in maintaining a racist society (Helms,

1992). Within the first phase there are three stages: *contact, disintegration,* and

reintegration (Helms, 1992). *Contact* is characterized by "an innocence and ignorance

about race and racial issues" (Helms, 1992, p. 24). Individuals in this stage are not

consciously White and make assumptions that people of color are raceless as well

(Helms, 1992). Many people in this stage use denial as a self-protective strategy to

pretend that race does not matter (Helms, 1992). People in the *contact* stage start to move

towards the second stage when they are forced to confront racism in society, have

reached a level of maturity that allows understanding of the consequences to a White

person of offending other Whites, and cannot find a way to avoid or assuage the internal

tension that arises as a result of this new awareness (Helms, 1992, p. 30). *Disintegration,*

the second stage, is characterized by a general sense of confusion. Helms (1992)

described that individuals in this stage acknowledge for the first time that they are White,

and that there are unearned privileges they receive from belonging to the White

membership group. Additionally, individuals start to identify negative consequences and

the potential losses through the awareness that maintaining uncontested membership in

the White group includes treating those from other race groups immorally (Helms, 1992).

In order to cope with this painful realization and conflict over irresolvable racial moral

dilemmas, White people distort reality (Helms, 1992). In *reintegration,* the final stage of

the first phase White people are conscious of their own Whiteness and consider White

people superior to people of color (Helms, 1992). White people resolve their inner

turmoil and protect themselves by scapegoating or blaming people of color for their

condition rather than Whites (Helms, 1992).

Second phase: evolution of a nonracist identity. The second phase of Helms's (1992) model, *evolution of a nonracist identity* involves deeper reflection and attempts to interact with other racial group members. Helms (1992) defined the first stage as *pseudo-independence* where individuals no longer maintain that Whites are superior, but do not have a new belief system to replace previous socialization (p. 32). Whites use intellectualization and denial where they recognize the political implications of race; However Whites distance them from systems of privilege, oppression, and racism where they benefit (Helms, 1992). Individuals enter into the fifth stage, *immersion-emersion* after they move out of the *pseudo-independence stage.* Helms (1992) described *pseudo-independence* as a stage where White people start to understand the unsanitized version of White history in the United States and the construction of privilege and oppression. As part of this stage, White people actively explore racism, White culture, and assimilation and acculturation of White people (Helms, 1992). White individuals address personal responsibility for racism and a realistic awareness of Whiteness in this phase (Helms, 1992). White people start educating other Whites about the moral implications of Whiteness and seek other Whites who are doing similar work to understand the meaning of being White (Helms, 1992). In order to combat isolation and loneliness, White people actively confront racism and seek within-race and cross-racial experiences that allow the person to develop a humanitarian or equalitarian attitude towards people regardless of race (Helms, 1992). Individuals enter the final stage, *autonomy* when they feel safe and secure with themselves when engaging in experiences to foster their personal definition of Whiteness. White people in the *autonomy* stage take ownership of their racial privilege

and Whiteness and work towards abandoning White privilege and learning more about other racial groups (Helms, 1992).

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson's White racial consciousness model. Rowe et al. (1994) defined White racial consciousness as, "one's awareness of being White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership" (p. 133-134). Rowe et al. (1994) presented the White Racial Consciousness Model to explain White attitudes toward their own and other racial groups. This enabled Rowe et al. (1994) to describe the phenomena more accurately, predict relationships better, and provide a more stable base for assessment than offered by the identity development models (p. 133). Rowe et al. (1994) assumed that White racial consciousness and White racial awareness are interconnected. A change in racial attitudes is initiated when dissonance is experienced between White racial consciousness and White racial awareness (Rowe et al., 1994). This model uses "types of attitudes" that White individuals experience as they start to understand and uncover their consciousness of Whiteness (Rowe et al., 1994). Rowe et al. (1994) grouped attitude types into two categories including unachieved White racial consciousness and achieved racial consciousness.

Unachieved White racial consciousness. The unachieved White racial consciousness types consist of: *avoidant, dependent, and dissonant* (Rowe et al., 1994). The *avoidant* type is characterized as individuals who have not consciously thought about their race or the racial experiences of other racial groups, often dismissing, ignoring, or avoiding race until forced to address their denial (Rowe et al., 1994). Individuals in the *dependent* type have committed to a superficial form of White consciousness, however take no ownership of being White and depend on others to form their opinions (Rowe et

al., 1994). Individuals experience confusion and levels of uncertainty as they enter into

the *dissonant* type. Confusion arises as the struggle to distinguish what they once knew

and what they know now about race relations (Rowe, et al., 1994). Individuals in the

dissonant type transition towards seeking more information and experiences that will help

them abandon previous attitudes towards race and create new racial attitudes for the

future (Rowe et al., 1994).

       Achieved White Racial Consciousness. Achieved White racial consciousness

consists of four types of consciousness: *dominative, conflictive, reactive, and integrative*

(Rowe, et al., 1994). Those who demonstrate *dominative* racial attitudes are ethnocentric

and believe they are superior to people of color (Rowe et al., 1994). The *conflictive* type

stand for justice and equality, however disagree with measures that might be taken to

achieve these goals. In the conflictive type mentality, everyone is seen as equal and as

having equal opportunities (Rowe et al., 1994). The *reactive* type was described by Rowe

et al. (1994) as individuals who recognize that inequalities and injustices exist and that

people of color bear the brunt of the injustices throughout their lived experiences.

Individuals in the reactive type also acknowledge that White people receive unearned

privileges and benefits that perpetuate inequality (Rowe et al., 1994). The *integrative*

type is characterized by acceptance and understanding of the complexities that

accompany race and have come to terms with being White (Rowe et al., 1994).

Individuals hold an integrated view of their own identity in relation to people of color and

are committed to social change (Rowe et al., 1994). People who hold integrative attitudes

may have genuine interactions with people of color and be involved in social activism.

However, it is important to distinguish that integrated individuals should be aware that

integrated attitudes do not imply a state of racial self-actualization or transcendence, but more of a process (Rowe et al., 1994).

Watt's Privileged Identity Exploration model. Watt (2007) introduced the Privileged Identity Exploration model (PIE) to "assist practitioners who are using strategies that are focused on raising individual's critical consciousness by encouraging them to dialogue about their privileged identities" (p. 118). The PIE model is used as a tool to anticipate defense mechanisms and behaviors practitioners may run into while facilitating dialogues surrounding privilege (Watt, 2007). The PIE model was created in response to participant responses during difficult dialogues about systems of privilege including racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism (Watt, 2007). Watt (2007) identified eight behavior or defense modes displayed by participants. The eight defense modes are categorized by behaviors a person exhibits when *recognizing, contemplating, or addressing* his or her privileged identity (Watt, 2007).

Recognizing privileged identity. *Recognizing privileged identity* describes reactions when individuals are first presented with anxiety provoking stimuli about racial injustice (Watt, 2007). The reactions include *denial, deflection or rationalization* (Watt, 2007). *Denial* is a defense where the individual argues against anxiety provoking stimuli and denies that injustices exist (Watt, 2007). *Deflection* is a defense mechanism that allows the individual to make a comment that avoids coming to terms with the realities of injustices in society and deflects the focus towards a less threatening target (Watt, 2007). Behavior where an individual has a logical response to injustices characterizes the *rationalization* defense (Watt, 2007).

Contemplating privileged identity. Once an individual enters into the _contemplating privileged identity_ stage they start to conceptualize about diversity and social injustice. Individuals in this phase may experience _intellectualization, principium, or false envy_ defenses (Watt, 2007). _Intellectualization_ is demonstrated by individuals who avoid feelings of dissonance by turning the attention towards the intellectual aspects associated with the social justice issue. Watt (2007) described _principium_ where a person avoids exploration due to religious or personal principles. _False envy_ is a defense where individuals show affection for a person or a feature of a person in an effort to deny the complexity of the social and political context (Watt, 2007).

Addressing privileged identity. The final category defined by Watt (2007) is _addressing privileged identity_. Watt (2007) described _addressing privileged identity_ as behaviors of participants who are paying attention to their dissonant feelings about social justice in response to their new awareness and are actively trying to resolve the issue (Watt, 2007). _Benevolence_ and _minimization_ are two defenses presented in the _addressing privileged identity_ category of the PIE model (Watt, 2007). Watt (2007) described _benevolence_ as a behavior that exhibits an overly sensitive attitude towards a social and political issue based on a charity act. However, this response allows the individual to overlook how an act of charity is centered on both power of the giver and the powerlessness of the target population (Watt, 2007). Finally, Watt (2007) defined _minimization_ as a defense mechanism where comments reduce the magnitude of a social or political issue down to simple facts.

Watt (2007) identified three ways in which the PIE model helps facilitators in difficult dialogues. First, the model helps the facilitator recognize that the responses that

individuals have are primal and normal (Watt, 2007). Additionally, Watt (2007) stated

that the PIE model reminds her that the journey to critical consciousness can be fatiguing.

Lastly, Watt (2007) identified the PIE model as a stepping-stone to move conversations

about diversity and social justice forward. With this theoretical foundation of racial and

privileged identity development, it is critical to examine how social justice and racial

justice play a role in student affairs.

Social and Racial Justice Ally Identity Development

There are several concepts and models in the literature that address social and

racial justice ally development models. These come in many forms due to the vast variety

of identities that students hold. There are a variety of ally development models

throughout the research.

Edwards' Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development Model. Edwards

created a conceptual model to inform aspiring allies or those who identify as allies how to

be an ally and what it means to be an ally. Edwards (2006) wanted to help student affairs

professionals conceptualize and understand the effectiveness of allies and how to make

this a more sustainable practice. Edwards (2006) created a model consisting of three

developmental statuses of aspiring ally identities. The three developmental statuses of

aspiring social justice allies include *aspiring ally for self-interest, aspiring ally for*

altruism, and ally for social justice.

Ally for self-interest. Aspiring allies for self-interest are driven to protect those

they care about from being hurt (Edwards, 2006). What this means is that their actions

are motivated on protecting those they care for, however these individuals may be

unlikely to confront overt acts of oppression. Their motivation is selfish and they often

make assumptions about members of oppressed groups without asking for their input. These individuals see themselves as "good" people and don't acknowledge that they make mistakes on a regular basis. They typically are not interested in the system, but instead focus on stopping the bad people who are the perpetrators of oppression. Allies for self-interest don't see privilege and instead want to maintain status quo.

   Aspiring ally for altruism. The motivation behind aspiring allies for altruism is focused on another person (Edwards, 2006). They work *for* the targeted group. They see themselves as victims of oppression. Allies for altruism are searching for justice for oppressed groups and believe that helping others is the right thing to do. They seek to empower the oppressed group and tend to think that the oppressed group needs them. These individuals have difficulty admitting mistakes to self or others and are defensive when confronted with evidence of their mistakes. They want to be seen as the exception from the system but don't realize that they are perpetuating the system. They feel guilty about privilege and try to distance themselves from their own privilege.

   Ally for social justice. Edwards (2006) described these individuals' motivation as "combined selfishness" or doing the work for us or the common good. These individuals work *with* the oppressed group. They see that everyone is a victim of oppression but in different ways. Justice is needed for everyone. Allies for social justice want to create a sustainable passion for them, for me, for us, for the future. Individuals here are open and actively seek critiques of mistakes. They are actively working towards identifying their – isms and want to work on them. Allies for social justice, "seek to escape, impede, amend, redefine, and destroy the system". They are liberated when privilege is illuminated and work towards redistributing privileges to everyone.

Bobbi Harro's Cycle of Liberation. Harro (1995) created both the cycle of socialization and the cycle of liberation. In the cycle of socialization individuals are taught how to maintain systems of privilege and oppression. Individuals follow the existing systems that shape our thinking surrounding oppression and may blame self, other people, or uncontrollable factors. Over time this type of thinking cycles through and systems of privilege and oppression continue to be perpetuated. However, through Harro's research she identified that there must be a way to break the cycle of socialization and get individuals to focus on the cycle of liberation. The model that Harro (1995) created is cyclical in nature and combines theory, analysis, and practical experience. Individuals can enter into the cycle at any point and the cycle will be repeated because Harro (1995) recognized that there is no beginning or end while working towards ending oppression.

The model is multifaceted and consists of eight components: *waking up, getting ready, reaching out, building community, coalescing, creating change, maintaining, and the core*. Waking up takes place when an individual starts to experience herself differently compared to the past. It is indicated by an intrapersonal shift or change in what the individual believes about herself. The getting ready phase involves, "consciously dismantling and building aspects of ourselves and our worldviews based on our new perspectives" (Harro, 1995, p. 465). Individuals yearn to have authenticity and coherence between how we see and interact with the world. Reaching out is a step where the individual seeks experiences outside of self to check reality and open their eyes to other views and perspectives. This phase gives feedback about how our new worldview will be received by others. Building community is the interpersonal phase of the

liberation process that encourages individuals to change the way we value others and interact with them on a regular basis (Harro, 1995). There are two steps involved: dialoguing with people who are like us and dialoguing with people who are different than us. Coalescing includes taking action to interrupt oppressive systems. Individuals realize that they have more power as a coalition or a community. The creating change phase involves using critical analysis of assumptions, structures, rules, and roles of the existing system of oppression. This translates into creating a new culture that reflects the coalition's collective identity. The maintaining phase takes place when a diverse group of individuals work together to maintain the change efforts that align with their goals and resources. Finally, identifying the core of the cycle of liberation is important because it holds the cycle together. The core unites individuals who are committed to liberation and critical transformation.

Student Affairs' Role in Racial Justice

Higher education in America was established on the eve of the American Revolution for White men by White men (Rudolph, 1990). Inherently, institutions of higher education in the United States symbolically represent privilege. Accapadi (2007) emphasized that institutions of higher education in the United States were founded to serve White, Christian, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied, male dominated identities. Although institutions of higher education in the United States were founded centuries ago, universities today continue to be influenced by systems of privilege, power, and oppression. Institutionalized privilege has inherently benefited White people as students, faculty, and staff at institutions of higher education past and present. Given our nation's history, systems of privilege and oppression have shown up within the field

of student affairs. D'Andrea & Daniels (2007) implied, "institutional forms of racism are typically expressed in covert ways by individuals in schools, colleges, universities, businesses, and other organization entities" (p. 170). Cultural and institutional forms of racism happen on college campuses when White cultural biases and values are seen as better than cultural norms and values of people of color (D'Andrea & Daniels, 2007). Additionally, institutional forms of racism are perpetuated on college campuses through the use of culturally biased test scores as a major criteria for student admission, the continuation of culturally biased curricula, and lack of representation for faculty of color (D'Andrea & Daniels, 2007).

Several challenges arise for White people as racism is addressed on college campuses and society at large. First, it is crucial to show White people that racism is harming them as well. Often racism is seen as a problem for people of color and something White people should be concerned about for people of color's sake (Kivel, 1996). However, Kivel (1996) demonstrated that racism also harms White people including: a loss of our own "White" cultures and histories, a distorted and inaccurate picture of history, a false sense of superiority, hurt interpersonal relationships, a distorted sense of danger and safety, and feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment or inadequacy about racism (pp. 36-37). The negative effects of racism are pervasive on college campuses for students, faculty, and staff as well as for all people involved.

The next step after addressing how racism harms White individuals in society and on college campuses, "is assisting persons in the dominant cultural-racial group, who are situated in power positions (e.g. administrative, policy-making positions) in college settings, to explore how their own privileged identities contribute to this complex

problem" (D'Andrea & Daniels, 2007, p. 175). Institutional racism continues to be

perpetuated on college campuses both intentionally and unintentionally. With a clearer

understanding of racism White student affairs professionals must learn how racism

affects them personally, which can be a difficult and painful process (Reason, Scales, &

Millar, 2005). Once White individuals are exposed and connected to institutional racism

and White privilege all persons can work towards dismantling systems of privilege and

oppression. Kendall (2006) made an important distinction that, "White privilege is an

institutional, rather than personal, set of benefits granted to those of us who, by race,

resemble the people who hold the power positions in our institutions" (p. 63). This

statement is relevant to higher education in the United States past and present. Once

White student affairs professionals are able to see the negative effects of racism and

White privilege in higher education, they will be able to see their role as racial justice

allies on college campuses. As we all engage in this work, we will learn how to create

coalitions and a common bond together to reshape our humanity and gain hope in the

future of racial justice. The following chapter will lay out the design of the study and the

participants involved.

Chapter 3: Methods

This study examines the experiences of White student affairs professionals who are involved in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution in Oregon. Racial justice can be defined in many ways, and participants were able to identify their own involvement in racial justice work. The primary purpose of this study is to take an appreciative inquiry approach into examining what actions WSAPs are engaging in to become better racial justice allies for students, faculty, and staff of color. This study serves to focus on what WSAPs are doing to address their privilege, power, and dominant identities when working with students, faculty, and staff of color. Appreciative inquiry can open the dialog surrounding racial justice work and allow WSAPs to critically analyze themselves about what they are doing both good and bad and move from places of "helplessness" and guilt to places of honesty and action. The researcher chose to use appreciative inquiry for the study to highlight the work that is being done by WSAPs in racial justice work on college campuses.

This research examined the questions: (1) what does racial justice work look like for WSAPs at a predominantly White institution? (2) How does taking an appreciative inquiry approach influence WSAPs in racial justice work? This chapter will describe: (a) the research perspective, (b) research design, (c) participants, (d) participant recruitment, (e) data collection, (f) data analysis, (g) and potential limitations to the study.

Research Perspective

An Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach was used in this research. Appreciative Inquiry is an approach and process for engaging people to produce effective and positive change (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). AI assumes that every organization or

group has something that works well, give it life, is effective, and creates coalitions

between the community and stakeholders. AI identifies the positive and integrates it into

other parts of the organization or group to increase energy, vision, and, most importantly,

action for change (Cooperrider et al., 2008). AI has the potential to create a common-

ground vision and strategy for the future, accelerate learning, encourage dialogue to

create shared meanings, improve communication, work towards sustainability, show

positive intent and trust with those involved, and build dynamic relationships and change

(Cooperrider et al., 2008). AI employs deliberately positive assumptions about people,

organizations, and relationships and effectively abandons a deficit-oriented approach.

Appreciative inquiry has been used in a variety of settings and organizations. Just

recently it has shown positive results when it is applied to higher education. Cockell and

McArthur-Blair (2012) claimed, "AI is a powerful resource for the complex environment

of higher education" (inside cover). Appreciative inquiry can be directly applied to higher

education because it is one of the most powerful forces for transformational change and

new possibilities (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). Higher education is constantly

changing and transforming with new challenges and opportunities arising.

Critical appreciative inquiry (CAI) is a new integrated practice that incorporates

social constructionism, appreciative inquiry, and critical theory. CAI emerged to

recognize the impact of difference, power and diversity and can be directly applied to

higher education settings and diversity work (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). CAI

fosters positive movement with highly complex issues while providing a deep

understanding of how we construct our worlds and emphasizing the importance of social

justice work in the higher education context. CAI is useful when addressing audience,

issues, and/or circumstances where social justice is the focus (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012). CAI is useful for this study because it provides a framework to examine racial justice and how WSAPs make meaning and commit to dismantling systems of privilege and oppression.

Research Design

This is a qualitative study that utilizes an Appreciative Inquiry approach to examine the experiences of WSAPs involved in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution. AI was selected for this study because of its direct application to WSAPs in racial justice work. AI allows WSAPs to reflect on their work and examine both the positive and negative experiences they have had advocating for people of color. AI interviews are different than other types of interviews because participants are asked to reflect on understanding from a positive, strength-based inquiry approach instead of looking at the organization or group as a problem that needs to be solved (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). In this study participants were asked to critically examine their upbringing, their development of White racial consciousness, their experiences, and how they strive to be racial justice advocates. Additionally, participants examined institutional and systemic dominance, systems of privilege and oppression, and their role as White individuals in society and more specifically on college campuses.

AI incorporates five principles, including: the constructionist principle, the simultaneity principle, the poetic principle, the anticipatory principle, and the positive principle (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The constructionist principle holds that multiple truths exist around what we know, how we know what we know, and whose voices and interpretations matter (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The simultaneity

principle states that inquiry and change are not separate moments, but happen at the same time. There are no absolutes with AI and individuals can take action instead of being stuck in one mindset or way of being. The poetic principle helps identify that human organizations are evolving and changing often instead of seeing them as a machine that is rigid and stagnant. This is useful in racial justice work because the focus does not have to be about what has gone wrong in the past but instead on what went well and how we can change for the future. This directly relates to the anticipatory principle, which helps with envisioning positive images of the future and how those can lead to positive actions. The positive principle helps build and sustain momentum through positive affect and social bonding (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

The researcher developed and implemented questions intended to explore the experiences of WSAPs at a predominantly White institution that have been involved in racial justice work. White identity development and consciousness are central for the participants in this study. Participants were recruited and the researcher found that they had a complex understanding of their Whiteness, racial justice, ally development, and racism in both the societal and higher education context. The focus of this study was both through a racial lens examining White consciousness, racial justice, and ally development as participants participate in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution. The researcher utilized the Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) White Consciousness Model as the racial lens and Edwards' (2006) Social Justice Ally Identity Development Model to analyze participant narratives.

Participants. The researcher originally planned on recruiting a total of ten White student affairs professionals engaged in racial justice work at a large, predominantly

White institution (PWI). The initial goal of recruiting ten participants was determined because the researcher thought it would provide a rich and in-depth analysis of what WSAPs were doing at a large PWI. Participants identified themselves as WSAPs who have a commitment for dismantling systems of privilege and oppression regarding racism and Whiteness. It implies that these individuals have done some self-work and actively pursue opportunities to work on their Whiteness. Their experiences are distinct with regard to racial identity development and racial justice. The small number of participants allowed a more in-depth analysis and the opportunity to delve deeper into understanding the experiences of WSAPs in racial justice work at a PWI.

Individuals invited to participate in this study needed to identify as White student affairs professionals who are engaged in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution (PWI). There are several reasons why the study took place at a large PWI. First, Whiteness at a PWI looks different than it would at a more racially diverse institution. At a PWI, when the majority of students, faculty, and staff are White, it is easier to ignore or acknowledge Whiteness and White privilege. Therefore, WSAPs who choose to engage in racial justice work run into a variety of obstacles. The researcher was interested in finding out more about how the participants became involved in racial justice work, why they consider themselves racial justice allies, struggles they run into, and how they envision racial justice work for the future. Although many institutions across the country are involved in racial justice work, the researcher chose to conduct the study at one institution to avoid confounding variables and environments. Examining WSAPs at one PWI allowed the researcher to have a better understanding and a deeper analysis of what racial justice work is taking place.

Participant Recruitment. The researcher received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in October, 2012. After the study was approved, an email was sent out to list serves explaining the study, the purpose of the study, and qualifications for participation. Word of mouth also contributed to participant recruitment. To qualify for the study individuals identified as White, worked in student affairs, and were involved in some sort of racial justice work at a PWI. Involvement in racial justice work is subjective for participants in the study. Therefore racial justice work spanned a variety of experiences and involvement.

The initial invitational email (Appendix A) that was sent to list serves across campus explained the purpose of the study and contact information for interested individuals could get more information about possible participation in the study. Interested White student affairs professionals who responded to the invitation email were sent a second email. The second email established a time and location for an hour-long interview that worked for both the researcher and the participant. An electronic copy of the Informed Consent document approved by IRB was also included so participants had a chance to review it prior to the interview. Participants were required to meet the following eligibility criteria: (a) must be 18 years of age, (b) must be currently employed as an OSU staff or faculty employee, and (c) must self-identify as a White student affairs professional involved in racial justice work. There was no clear definition of what racial justice work is at a PWI. Therefore, individuals were able to reflect on their own work and determine whether they thought they were involved in racial justice work. There is no clear definition of racial justice work, which adds complexity and richness to the work individuals are involved in.

Eight WSAPs including 4 females and 4 males participated in the study. Participants came from varying departments and offices across campus but all identified as White student affairs professionals involved in racial justice work. The participants ranged in age from 20s to 60s. Interviews took place during Fall 2012 at a predominantly White, large, public institution.

Data Collection

Due to the nature of the study, participants had a chance to self-identify as White. Additionally, participants were asked about how they identify their ethnicity, which varied from participant to participant. The eight participants who were selected were asked to participate in an interview that lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour and fifteen minutes. The interviews were semi-structured with six predetermined open-ended questions (Appendix A) and took place. All interviews took place in a private one-on-one setting to maintain confidentiality. Interviews were recorded with a digital audio device. The researcher took additional hand written notes throughout the interview as additional follow up questions and themes emerged. Interviews were transcribed in December 2012/January 2013.

Participants were given the opportunity to review the IRB consent form and give consent before the interviews took place. The researcher explained the purpose of the study in addition to telling participants that they could opt out at any point throughout the interview, skip questions, ask questions of the researcher, and send a follow up email if they remembered another experience at a later date and time. Before the interview started, the researcher assured participants that any information provided would not be

tied to their name or individual identity. Additionally, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in order to maintain confidentiality.

Interview questions were formed by the researcher with appreciative inquiry, racial justice, ally development and White racial consciousness/identity in mind. During the interview both the researcher and participants were able to stop and ask for clarification and follow up questions. At the end of the interview, participants were asked if they had any additional questions and comments and assured that they could contact the researcher with any inquiry. Finally, the researcher asked whether participants would like to receive the results of the study after it had been completed.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions were completed and a pseudonym was determined for each participant. The researcher matched the transcriptions with participant information. Handwritten notes that were taken during the interviews were typed and matched to the respective transcript in Microsoft Word. During the transcription process, the researcher made notes in a separate word document of similar themes or ideas that emerged from each interview. The researcher read through the eight different transcripts to get a complete picture of the entire data set. During this process the researcher reflected on the ideas, content, themes, tone, depth, and credibility of the information. The researcher made notes and comments on the electronic transcripts using Microsoft Word.

The researcher created a coding process to begin detailed analysis. In addition to the notes that were made during the initial read through of the interviews, the researcher started the coding process by reading through the first interview and made a list of topics, themes, or ideas that emerged. Subsequently the researcher used a similar process while

reading through the interviews. After reviewing all of the interviews, a master list was created in a Word document and arranged into thematic columns. Themes were categorized and assigned a color code using the highlighter tool in Microsoft Word. Next the researcher reviewed each of the transcripts and highlighted themes with their respective color. A variety of themes emerged naturally as the researcher started to review the transcripts. The researcher coded the transcripts and noticed both similarities and differences between the participant answers. Some common themes that were identified include how they became involved in racial justice work and how they sustain themselves as WSAPs in racial justice work. After reviewing the transcripts similar themes emerged between participants. These themes were identified and placed into theme areas (as seen in Appendix B).

After themes were extracted, the researcher grouped codes into patterns and themes that were related to interview questions and the review of the literature. The researcher used Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson's (1994) White Racial Consciousness Model while analyzing the themes of Whiteness that emerged. Using this approach helped the researcher examine the data with both a holistic and critical mind. As the researcher delved deeper into the data, she recognized several topical themes from the literature review. The researcher made notes of both similarities and differences where the data and participant experiences overlapped with the review of the literature. Throughout the data analysis process the researcher's goals included: capturing the experiences of WSAPs involved in racial justice work, reaching saturation in the data, and creating an outline of themes and conclusions. The outline identified and organized general hypotheses and conclusions by retelling the experiences of the participants in the study. The experiences

and stories of participants were interpreted and analyzed using White racial

consciousness (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994) and Aspiring Social Justice Ally

Development model (Edwards, 2006) to provide insight, interpretation, and conclusions

of how White student affairs professionals engage in racial justice work.

Limitations of Study

This is a qualitative study that examines the experiences of WSAPs in racial

justice work at a PWI using an appreciative inquiry approach. More specifically the

researcher used a critical appreciative inquiry (CAI) approach as a lens to recognize the

complexity of racial justice work and the implications for White people. CAI integrates

social constructionism, appreciative inquiry and critical theory. Based on CAI, multiple

truths exist for WSAPs in racial justice work due to the complexity of worldviews and

diversity in lived experiences. The goal of this research is to take into consideration what

WSAPs are doing in racial justice work and translate that into how other WSAPs can be

open to a different perspective and approach to becoming a racial justice ally.

Strengths of the Research. The researcher recognized that participants from the

study have had a different experience from other WSAPs because of their involvement in

racial justice work. The goal of the research was to find common themes from the

participants. Participants varied in their involvement, length, experiences, struggles, and

successes in racial justice work. Therefore the intent of the researcher was to collect

stories from participants to provide insight for how some WSAPs are involved in racial

justice work, not to generalize their experiences. The researcher's intent was to learn

from these people who are doing this work. Because their work is at a specific time,

place, and campus the results of the study are not meant to represent a larger group but to help others understand their experiences and thought processes.

Personal disclosure: bias and worldview. As a researcher my identity and worldview are influential in the research I am conducting (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). With this in mind, it is crucial that I recognize my biases and identities, name them, and realize how they influence my research. It is important to disclose my identities as I delve deeper into this research.

I identify as a White person and know the urgency of addressing systems of privilege and oppression. I have a social responsibility to work towards dismantling prejudice, bias, privilege and oppression at institutional and systemic levels. Without including White people in the conversation, little progress will be made towards establishing a more equitable and just world. My ethnic heritage is comprised of Irish Catholic on my father's side and French/Swiss/German/Russian and Jewish on my mother's side, I feel it is important to identify Catholicism and Judaism as part of my identity because these are two different perspectives that have influenced my upbringing and identity. Although I grew up secular, both of these identities have played a strong role in understanding who I am. I identify as a female in regards to gender and sex and see the world from a cisgender (my gender and self-perception match my sex) and privileged lens. I identify as a heterosexual individual and see and live my life through a privileged heteronormative lens. As I enter into student affairs as a new professional, I need to constantly be aware of my intersecting identities when working with students, staff, and faculty who hold identities different than my own. At the beginning of my program I learned about White privilege but did not recognize my own privilege as a

White person and how I was perpetuating systems of privilege and oppression in regards to race. Throughout my masters program I have learned more about who I am as a person and the identities that I hold.

I work in an office that was originally designed for and by students of color. I constantly think about the implications of having a White person work in the office and what that does to the dynamics. I became acutely aware of my Whiteness and how I was being perceived. What does it mean to have a White student affairs professional in an office that was originally designed for students of color? How is my dominance showing through as a White person? How do I support all students who come into our office? How are my other identities affecting others around me? Do students feel safe around me? My White consciousness was heightened as I started working in this office and also as I have started to educate myself about racial justice issues. I have had opportunities for open dialogue about Whiteness at a PWI and how it affects both White people and people of color. It is invaluable to include White people in conversations surrounding Whiteness and recognizing "White" as a race. When WSAPs and White people start raising awareness about White privilege and dominance it benefits everyone. As a WSAP I will continue to engage in racial justice work and this study is significant to my growth. It is important to see the work of WSAPs in racial justice work because it provides a framework and idea of how I want to start my career as a WSAPs in the pursuit of racial equity and recognizing how I can take small steps towards dismantling systems of privilege and oppression not only in my White identity but also in other dominant identities that I hold.

This means that I am invested in educating others about Whiteness, privilege, and want to take responsibility for my White identity. I chose to conduct this research because I wanted to see what others WSAPs are involved in on campus and how they are addressing Whiteness on a personal, institutional and systemic level. At first I was approaching my research from a deficit-based model asking the question, "what can White people do to not harm people of color in racial justice work?" However, my approach shifted drastically after consulting with my committee who suggested another approach. Instead of a deficit-based model (what White people weren't doing well), I chose to use appreciative inquiry to frame my research. Using appreciative inquiry allows me to focus on what WSAPs are doing well to address Whiteness, support people of color, and ultimately work towards ending systems of privilege and oppression in regards to race. This is a powerful perspective and approach because I recognized that WSAPs can move from feelings of doubt and guilt towards feelings of celebration, appreciation, and empowerment. This is absolutely necessary if we want White people to continue to engage in this work. Appreciative inquiry brings hope and optimism to all parties involved. It is a more sustainable and empowering model and this is why I chose to use it for my thesis.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter provides an overview of participants in the study and a comprehensive summary of the findings from the data that was collected during the interviews. Throughout the study there were several main questions that emerged including: (a) "What does racial justice work look like for White Student Affairs Professionals (WSAPs) at a predominantly White institution?" and (b) "How does taking an appreciative inquiry approach influence WSAPs in racial justice work?" Additionally, the researcher was interested in finding out more information about how the participants became involved in racial justice work, the challenges they face in racial justice work, and how they envision racial justice work for the future. The findings were organized into six different themes:

- Finding our place (White Student Affairs Professionals) in Racial Justice Work

- Regional Whiteness of Oregon

- What Racial Justice means for White people

- A need for institutional change

- Restructuring Allyship

- The future of justice work and the importance of optimism

The thematic data will be presented using narratives, direct quotes and examples from interviews, and information from participant responses.

Participants

There were eight White Student Affairs Professionals (WSAPs) who chose to participate in the study. Each participant identified racially as White. To maintain confidentiality and

assure anonymity of participants, no job titles, departments, or organizations were listed throughout the study. Additionally, identifying characteristics were changed and pseudonyms were used. The study took place at a large, public, and predominantly White institution. For the purpose of the study, the university will be referred to as PWU, or Predominantly White University

Participants identified racially as White, mixed White, or Caucasian. Participants were also asked their ethnicity. Their responses included Armenian, European American, mixed ethnicity, Native American, Scottish, Welsh, U.S. American, Caucasian, Finnish, German, Norwegian, French and Swedish. Each participant indicated that they did not know their exact ethnicity, heritage, or ancestry but were making educated guesses based on information they gathered through their families. Two of the participants had one immigrant parent and this significantly shaped their racial, ethnic and cultural heritage. Also, another participant was adopted into a family with a different racial identity, however she culturally identified with the cultural identity of her adopted family.

Participant information is organized in Table 1 by (a) pseudonym, (b) functional area (c) age range, (d) gender, (e) race, and (f) ethnicity.

Name	Functional Area	Age	Gender	Race	Ethnicity
Archibald	multicultural affairs	25-40	M	White	Czech, German, Irish, Polish
Ellen	student support services	41-60	F	Mixed White	Armenian, European American
George	leadership development	41-60	M	Caucasian	Mixed ethnicity Native American/Scottish Welsh
Rachel	leadership development/multicultural affairs	25-40	F	White	U.S. American

Ray	leadership development	41-60	M	White	Caucasian
Steve	leadership development	25-40	M	White	European American-ish mix of Welsh, Finnish, and German
Emily	leadership development	41-60	F	White	So I am Caucasian. Norwegian, French, German, and Swedish. Raised in a Japanese American family and identify with being Japanese American culturally
Ruth	student health	41-60	F	Caucasian	Euro-American

The following paragraphs will provide more detail of the participants that chose to be part of the study. It will include their demographic information as well as additional information like their involvement in racial justice work and how/why they became involved.

Archibald is a White student affairs professional who self-identifies as a White male and ethnically as Czech, German, Irish, and Polish. He is in the age range of 25-40 years old. Archibald is new to the institution, and has been involved in racial justice work at PWU for six months. At PWU Archie is part of the planning and facilitation of a White caucus retreat. Social justice and addressing intersectionality are central to his job at PWU:

> I am most congruent when I centralize racial justice as the mission of being a person who advocates for the needs of queer people, so to fight for queer justice requires a fight for gender justice, racial justice, economic justice and all those pieces. Though my specialization, target population under the description of my

> job is queer students, my queer students have many races and ethnicities and it is important to stay conscious of those identities.

His path to justice work started when he first became involved in housing when he was an undergraduate student and has guided his professional career.

Ellen identifies racially as mixed White and ethnically as Armenian and European American. Ellen identifies as a female and is 59 years old. She works in student support services where, "the staff and the focus is very much on students of color". She became an academic counselor in 1982 and has been involved in racial justice work through her job ever since. Ellen's mother was an immigrant from Armenia and this has significantly shaped her racial, ethnic, and cultural identity.

George self-identified racially as White and Caucasian. He described his ethnicity as mixed including Native American, Scottish, and Welsh. He is male, and is in the age range of 41-60. He has been in student affairs for over forty years in leadership development and regularly addresses instances of racial injustice within the community and students he works with.

Rachel is a WSAP who racially identifies as White and ethnically identifies as U.S. American. Rachel identifies as a female and is in the 25-40 age range. She is new to PWU and a recent graduate of a student affairs program. She was involved in racial justice work at her previous institution where she worked in the leadership and service office. Her work ranged from trips, panels and different leadership programs. She was also involved as an undergraduate student. At PWU she is part of intergroup dialog, White caucus retreats, and working with international students. She has spent time abroad.

Ray is a White male and describes his ethnicity as Caucasian. He is in the 41-60 age range. He works in the Student Union on campus in Leadership Development and has been involved in racial justice for years. He first became aware of injustice during his college years in the 1960s and early 1970s. While he was a student leader he experienced a sit in by the black student union in the program board office.

Ray's most significant and identifiable start in racial justice was in 1988 when a group on campus came together to examine student affairs racial justice training platform at PWU. He has been leading the group ever since leading workshops on campus and engaging with other White people. He continually engrosses himself in personal growth and learning through books, discussions, and other resources.

Steve is a White male who is in the 25-40 age range. Steve ethnically identifies as European American-ish. From what he knows, he is a mix of Welsh, Finnish, and German. Steve has been involved in racial justice work for almost eight years since he was first hired at PWU. He currently works in leadership development. He was also engaged in justice work at his former institution. During his first couple of years at PWU, Steve approached several offices on campus to work together.

> I was engaged with colleagues doing collaborative racial justice programming. I also got involved in an athlete summer bridge program that had a large focus on social justice. I have been a part of a number of different diversity based efforts through residence life and dining services, racial caucus based retreats. And then my own personal growth and development which is kind of my own reading, my own conversations, my own seeking out because I think racial justice is about kind of self examination, as well as other examination.

Emily is a White woman and also works in Leadership Development. She is in the 41-60 age range. Emily ethnically identifies as Caucasian. She is half Norwegian, French, German, and Swedish. Although Emily identifies as White and phenotypically presents

as White, she culturally identifies with being Japanese American. She was adopted and raised by a Japanese American family. Emily started working in Residential Life at PWU being one of the first people to address student training of racial justice work and creating welcoming and inclusive environments at PWU. She eventually moved to student leadership and involvement and planned a leadership summit directly addressing racial justice with student leaders from across campus. She is also heavily involved in caucus group work and was instrumental in planning a retreat to address White identity development, privilege, and oppression.

Ruth identifies racially as Caucasian woman. She describes her ethnicity as Euro-American and works in Student Health at PWU. Another part of her identity that has influenced her identity is that her mother is an immigrant from Austria. She was acutely aware of her mother, her mother's accent, and how her parents treated people who were racially different. She grew up on a military base where she interacted with a racially diverse population in North Carolina and somehow felt different than other White people who lived outside of the military base. Ruth has engaged in racial justice well before her time at PWU. She has a background and was trained in multicultural counseling. During her graduate program she was surrounded by prominent scholars in the field, and became passionate about racial justice and intersecting identities of race, spirituality and orientation. She has extensively traveled abroad and studied race relations and her experiences of being White in a different culture. When she arrived at PWU she jumped right in. She has been on diversity committees, served as liaisons for cultural centers, approached international education/students, started her own initiatives within her office, helped teach racial justice, and planned/facilitated a White caucus retreat.

Summary

A summary of the results were organized and categorized into six themes:

- Finding our (White student affairs professionals) place in racial justice

- Regional Whiteness of the Pacific Northwest

- What Racial Justice means for White people

- A need for institutional change

- Restructuring Allyship and what it means to be an Ally

- The future of justice work and the importance of optimism

The quotes, examples and information from the narrative data will be utilized exemplify and give detail to the themes.

Finding White student affairs professionals place in racial justice work.
Throughout the interviews participants identified the importance of WSAPs needing to find their place in racial justice work. WSAPs need to start by understanding themselves before they engage in racial justice with others. White people need to start with other White people. Several subthemes were identified including: White people need to start with self, people of color can do things that White people cannot, White people need to start with other White people, and White people need to take action instead of hiding from the work, These were broken down into subthemes that will be explained further through participant responses and the rest of the section.

Start with self. Participants touched on the importance of understanding themselves as a White person before they are able to engage in racial justice work. This starts with acknowledging their Whiteness, White culture, and understanding how White people are part of a system of privilege and oppression. Emily expressed that one of the

most important pieces around White privilege is being able to recognize her own. She

grew up with a Japanese American family and was sensitive to what her family had

endured; however before grad school she had little understanding of White privilege or

the fact that she benefitted from White privilege until she heard about Peggy McIntosh's

Invisible Knapsack:

> And that was the first time that I really started thinking about the fact that, "oh yeah, so I am White and there are a lot of privileges that come along with that" That really opened my eyes to start looking not only at how do I help other people to develop their cultural competency, but what do I need to know about myself.

After Emily made this realization, she decided to delve deeper into examining her own

identity as a White person. Before she started planning the White caucus retreat or

restructuring training to address social justice issues, she knew she needed to understand

herself.. This includes recognizing when she makes mistakes and recovering from them:

> One challenge is having to admit to myself that I have played a role in privilege and oppression. I grew up in a Japanese American community, and I felt like I was so aware. I had to admit that I don't know it all and that I may be part of the problem and don't even know it.

Later in her interview she touched upon the importance of educating herself instead of

relying on others:

> I came to a realization a few years ago that I am a work in progress in all this and I am going to make mistakes but I should do the work anyway. And continue to educate myself and not look to others to educate me, it is not their (people of color) responsibility. It isn't other people's job to educate me, I need to educate myself.

Instead of depending on people of color to educate her, she has made a personal

commitment to herself to explore deeper into racial justice work. Steve also reflected on

the importance of understanding his identity as a White person in racial justice. Outside

of formal efforts in his job, he talked about his own learning and growth.

People of color can do things that White people cannot do. During the

interviews participants identified that there are things that White people can't do. There

are many things that people of color can do that White people can't. This ranges from

being able to name White culture, identify White culture, and confront White privilege.

Ray said that he was unaware of White privilege or Whiteness until he started spending

time with people of color. He came to the conclusion that people of color are more likely

to identify and confront White culture and privilege. He admits that as a White person he

was fed "misinformation" about society and what it means to be or not to be White:

> I was not yet aware of the privilege, I was not yet aware that I was only seeing the
> goodness of black people in my life to educate myself, I was willing for them to
> be honest and direct with me and I hadn't yet conceived of the need for me to
> create a personal learning agenda and go do the work. It wasn't until probably
> somewhere in my mid forties before I was able to name White privilege. White
> privilege makes you blind, dumb, and insensitive.

Ray continued to talk about how White people are misinformed and unable to recognize

White culture, privilege, and dominance:

> I think of the emperor has no clothes often when I think about White privilege.
> Privilege blinds us to White culture and we can't even begin to put words around
> the question, "what is White culture"? I mean our Whiteness is blind to us and it
> is so apparent to people of color. And its' like they can talk all day all week, all
> month and give you reams of it and we can't identify it to save our soul.

Archibald expressed similar views when discussing White people and people of color.

Archibald elaborated that people from a subordinate identity are able to see the whole

picture in contrast to people from dominant identities that are only able to see what is

directly in front of them:

> Because they not only know their reality, they also have to understand the reality
> of people who have power. They have greater perspective. It is a shitty power
> laden reality, but when it comes down to the work that we do, people with a
> subaltern experience in some way have a sense that people with power will never

possess. They have a way of knowing, a way of understanding, creativity, and
insight that cannot be replicated.

Archibald recognized that as a White person, he isn't able to do what people of color can

do in regards to racial justice. Although he has been through extensive trainings around

social justice work, he will never have the same experience or perspective as a person of

color:

> So within the context of race, I don't care how many retreats a White identified
> person goes to, how many trainings, how many certificates, and how many gold
> stars, there are things that people of color can do that they cannot, just by virtue of
> being raced as White. And I think it is unproductive to think there is training or
> education that can replace the perspective of a person of color.

By identifying what White people cannot do in racial justice work, Archibald and Ray

helped recognize one thing that White people can do, talk to other White people.

White people need to start with White people. One of the recurring themes and

ideas that the participants revealed was the fact that White people need to start with

White people when engaging in racial justice work. Archie, Ellen, Rachel, Ray, Steve,

Ruth, and Emily voiced the theme of White people starting with White people.

At PWU Steve, Emily, Ruth, Rachel, and Archie are on the planning and

facilitation committee for a White caucus retreat. White students are nominated and

encouraged to spend a weekend away discussing White identity, privilege and

oppression, and how Whiteness manifests itself in society. This is the third year that the

retreat took place and it has been adapted year to year. Emily was at PWU when

conversations started around having a caucus based retreat for White students. She had

formerly been included in the planning committee for a caucus-based retreat for students

of color. Although she was part of the planning committee, she did not attend the retreat

because she didn't identify as a person of color. There were several people in the same

situation, and the thought occurred, "why not do this for White students?" Emily

described the process:

> I don't exactly remember how this came about but we were talking about
> wouldn't it be great if we had something like this for White people. Because so
> many times our efforts are focused towards students of color, and really there
> needs to be the responsibility on the White people to do better and to be more
> educated. There was a subgroup that kind of split out and added more people and
> started to develop this. It was hard, you know it was really hard. So what do we
> bring into this knowing that it is going to be a little different focus than the race
> caucus retreat, because the race caucus retreat is more about navigating a campus
> when you are a student of color on a predominantly White campus, and with
> White caucus retreat we really needed to do some ground work. 1. What is White
> identity? Because you know, a lot of White people don't feel like they have a
> culture. 2. starting to talk about those really hard things of privilege, power, and
> oppression. And we ended up doing a lot of work even within our development
> team, and doing exercises together, we brought in a consultant to do some work
> with us, and we also hired a woman from another college to help us build
> curriculum as well.

Emily expressed the struggle she and her colleagues endured as they figured out what

exactly to touch on and include in a White identity based caucus retreat. She also touched

on the fact that as facilitators they also had to confront attitudes and feelings around

being White and doing the work themselves at the same time as trying to engage White

identified students.

Not every participant is involved in the race-based retreat and are engaged in

working with White people in other ways. Ray discussed his role as an individual and

working with other White people (not in a retreat setting). After being in student affairs

for over forty years, Ray talked directly about his role as a White person in racial justice

work:

> My role within racial justice work is to work with White people. You know, there
> is nothing that I have to offer them (people of color) on the subject of racial
> injustice that is going to be a direct benefit to an individual person of color. And it
> may be indirect, I have been working with other people who identify as White,
> um but, I mean, although I certainly desire a relationship with people of color I

don't out of mutual respect or mutual interest, um, my social justice orientation is not the foundation of those relationships. And I think that if I had sort of used it as 'I am one of the good ones, you need to like me because of that' thinking, I wouldn't trust my relationships now that I know what I know.

Again, Ray reflects on the idea that people of color can do many things that White people can't. He values the work of people of color, but instead of thinking of himself as "one of the good ones" he has restructured his foundation in racial justice work to work with White people and avoid being a White knight. He also touches upon the fact that by hiding behind this "White knight" identity, it sets White people up to have inauthentic relationships with people of color.

Steve also held similar thoughts and feelings around his past perceptions of being a "White knight" and how that has influenced his approach to working with White people. He reflects on an experience with a colleague of color that drastically shifted his worldview when he first arrived at PWU:

I don't know if I was called on my Whiteness as much as I was called on my White 'knightness'. I walked into a colleague when I got to PWU, I had been doing the work in my former institution about the minority student leadership initiative and I was really active in thinking about how to not forget about the Matthew Shepard incident and create trainings in our counseling centers I saw myself as this "good White guy". I walked into a colleagues office and she happened to be a colleague of color and I basically said, "how do I help support the African American community here on campus you know? What can I do?" and the response that I got floored me and at first I took offense to it, and then I thought about it and I was like god you're an idiot. And her response to me was in a kind way, not in a negative way was "you know you don't need to worry about my people you need to worry about your people". It was a shocking moment but it was a moment that I carry with me now and it is probably shifted my world view more than any other moment because it really helped me to understand how I was showing up in my privilege and trying to be an ally I was throwing my privilege on top of people right?

This encounter with his colleague helped Steve recognize where he can make real progress. Instead of hiding behind his subordinate identity of low socioeconomic status

growing up, he realized he needed to acknowledge both his subordinate and dominant

identities in order to do this work. He took into account each of his dominant identities

and started to restructure how he can start talking about social justice issues. He also

touched upon helping others recognize their own areas of dominance and gently bringing

it to their attention:

> Um, and so it helped me understand that you know, the role I need is around 'how do I as a White male, able bodied, how do I become a person that speaks about this stuff? Or asks other White people to think about they are racialized. Because when people think to the term race, they never go to White, right? At least White people I won't say never but most often they don't go to the term White as being a race…it wasn't until I was really confronted by this really thoughtful amazing person who kind of helped me shake myself free of that White knight thing.

Steve decided to take action in racial justice by talking to other White people about their

racial identity and privilege and oppression. He was able to make a break through when

he first arrived at PWU that his role was to talk to White people and take an active role

on campus and be a positive role model for other White students and student affairs

professionals.

Taking action versus hiding from racial justice work. Participants reflected on

the need for them to step up when they see, hear, or experience racial injustice coming

from other White people. This comes in the form of speaking up when they hear a

dismissive or hurtful comment against people of color from people in their lives. This

includes family, friends, co-workers, classmates, and the community. Participants

expressed that speaking up against your loved ones is often times the most difficult thing

to do. However, the need is there; White people need to help other people recognize their

White privilege, dominance, and oppressive behaviors.

By the very nature of her work, Ellen works with students and faculty/staff

members of color. During a meeting in the past when she confronted a instructor:

> One time on campus with an instructor who um, found out I worked in my office and his response was, oh…you know kind of dismissive. And I don't remember what I said to him… 'you are off base if you are going to characterize that program negatively and the reason people do that is because we are working with people of color and we have to be aware of the racism that is involved and attitudes towards this program, so something along those lines. But I really really tried to correct him. And he got real apologetic and kind of, he almost seemed like he felt humiliated.

Ellen directly confronted this White identified instructor after he made a racist comment. She went out of her way to talk to him and make him think about the implications of his words. Throughout her time actively engaging in racial justice work, Ellen doubted and still doubts whether she is making much of a difference. However, she realizes that she is doing the work by actively speaking to White people who make racist comments.

Ray talked about taking a more proactive approach to talking to other White people. Once he had a better understanding of Whiteness and was able to own up to his privilege he expressed the urge to tell other White people. To symbolically "wake them up":

> So you know when you begin to understand um, what it (White privilege) does and how it operates and how it exists um, it's like, you feel like you should just run to the balcony and scream it to the world. "WAKE UP! WAKE UP! There is something going on that you are going to want to know about" you know, but that isn't necessarily effective. So you have to think about it in other ways to get the word out.

Ray realizes that there is a need to take an active stand against talking to other White people, but that in order to do this, it needs to be strategic. At the right time, place, and manner. Emily talked about this as well:

> I had realize there are some ways you can be effective in having conversations and some ways not…so I need to think of when and how can I be effective and when will it not and it will just upset me and make things worse. Just um, being intentional about how I am having conversations then um, and all that too is really hard.

The manner in which White people learn about White privilege is key. If someone is not

in a place to learn or hear about their privilege, they will likely retreat to a subordinated

identity, be trapped in White guilt, or ignore it completely. Emily recognizes that

although it is hard for White people to learn and confront their privilege that this learning

may be better coming from another White person. They may not be so defensive if it is

coming from someone who also claims this dominant identity:

> What I think that, if I am talking to other people who are White, then that can be
> seen less intimidating than talking to a person of color about these issues because
> they can feel like they can mess up. Because a lot of the time, and I know I
> experienced this myself previously, as a White person I often times would be in
> the conversation but not actively engaged in the conversation because I was afraid
> of saying something stupid or offensive and then getting chastised, or even
> offending or hurting someone. And I think as, if White people are talking with
> each other, White people feel a little safer to say things even if it is not going to
> come out the way it could/should you know? But at least to have the conversation
> and I think from that I think we can get to some place of learning and talk about
> some better language.

When White people talk to White people, there is room for error and mistakes. That is

why it is crucial for White people to engage in the work of racial justice. There is a place

for White people, and the first and most effective way is to talk to other White people

about privilege. Mistakes will be made, however there is room for growth and

development of knowledge. White people must take action instead of hiding from it.

When White people first come to terms that they have White privilege and

contribute to systems of privilege and oppression many go through a stage of guilt and

grief. All of the participants have experienced this, and now that they are WSAPs

involved in racial justice work feelings of self-doubt and guilt, and arise. However, one

common theme that emerged is the fact that White people must take action instead of

hiding form the work. Ray discusses the influence he has as a White man:

> Well I mean, it certainly gives me um, insider perspective to the most oppressive
> racial identity and so being seen as White and needing to do with White people
> social justice work um, I am in and moving into places where I have opportunities
> all the time. It is not the same with people of color. I mean, they may have an
> occasional opportunity, but I have continuous opportunity. So my White identity
> doing White privilege work, doing racial justice work, is that it is always um,
> available, there is always something in almost every group and every setting to
> move it along.

Ray is able to recognize what he has to offer and who he can and should reach out to. He

has a unique perspective and as stated earlier learning about White privilege may be

taken better initially coming from another White person.

Both Rachel and Emily expressed concern about being labeled an expert or that

they may have extensive knowledge surrounding social justice issues. Although this is a

concern, neither woman decided to disengage from the work. Rachel elaborated further:

> This is really the first space that is challenging me to focus specifically on my
> White identity, and that is a really different group to have. I think for me it's a
> challenge particularly because my job, my position is very… I was brought in
> because of my social justice experience, I feel like I have to have everything
> together, which no one is all together. It's just a little intimidating at first to be
> vulnerable about that kind of topic and question how far along I actually am…

Rachel talks again about her vulnerability and the value of it in her work. Instead of

pretending, Rachel chooses to be vulnerable and show a more authentic self. Emily had

similar feelings after being engaged in justice work for so long at PWU:

> I think in a way it limits me sometimes. I think "I am not an expert, I am not an
> expert in all of this". I have done some things to educate myself and I have
> worked to educate others but I am not an expert in this and sometimes I will doubt
> myself about whether I am the person to be doing this work. I also feel
> intimidated if I am doing, if I am having these conversations with people of color
> that I don't know and thinking like, oh well because I am not the expert and here I
> am this White person, does it, are they seeing me as being the White knight who
> is trying to save the day based on so many of our movies and things like that. You

> know I worry about how they might be viewing me, as disingenuous and if I am
> even qualified enough to lead the conversation so I think that is limiting in a way.
> But I do it anyway.

Again, Emily shows vulnerability in the work, but continues any way.

Steve had similar concerns but talked more pointedly at his struggle with

addressing his identity:

> One of the things that I had to get over worrying about and this was such a huge
> like, privilege thing or just dominance. I worried that other people would think I
> was taking up too much space in this work. And the assumption there was that
> people thought I was doing it, right? It is examples like that that impacts my sense
> of responsibility, it impacts my perceptions, what other people think of me, and it
> impacts how friends relate to me now so all those things. In terms of how it
> affects me it is around the dominance piece and having to struggle to figure out
> where am I just throwing my dominance around and where am I actually in the
> conversation in a way I should be?

An amount of care and thought go into Steve's involvement in racial justice work at

PWU. He brings up an important point and concern about taking up too much space.

With this mindset, he is more likely to be conscientious of his influence and think more

critically when his dominant identity comes through in his work. Although he expressed

his concern surrounding his dominance, this does not hold him back in his work at PWU.

Regional Whiteness of the Pacific Northwest. Racial justice looks different

regionally across the United States and more broadly the world. Most of the participants

are from out of state but are now living in the Pacific Northwest. One thing they all

seemed to notice and mention was the Whiteness of the Pacific Northwest.. Being in a

predominantly White state brings additional hardships for individuals engaged in racial

justice work. When a state is predominantly White, they feel that it is harder for White

people to acknowledge their privilege and power. George moved to Oregon in 2000 and

reflected back on this, "Until I got to Oregon, I had never really lived in an environment

where there was such a huge disparity in population percentages…I think this is the

Whitest state I have ever lived in". Ellen who grew up in southern California expressed

similar views of her first impressions of moving away from Southern California into

northern California included feelings of isolation. When she returned home to southern

California, she felt like she was more at ease:

> Going home to visit Los Angeles it always felt like that was the center of the
> world for many years and going to all the different markets with all the different
> ethnic groups, there would be a Latino section of town with markets with those
> foods, an Asian section with markets with those foods. It was like, here's the
> center of the world. So It felt very um, unreal in a way here in Oregon for me.

Ray spoke more directly about why racial justice work is so hard in the Pacific Northwest

in detail:

> Race is not a polite topic and the pacific NW is impeccably polite. You know
> there is a much more robust conversation on race happening in highly diverse
> parts of the country even parts of the country where some of the deep differences
> still exist, there is a more robust racial conversation occurring than here. It is
> about doing deep introspective personal growth, societal issue engagement. We
> are too damn polite here for really in depth engagement and pursuit of race. And
> we have the option because NW is what like 93% White? It is incredibly White
> even if it is just the high 80s, it is incredibly White. We don't have to think about
> it. Because it is not essential to operating within our systems of privilege that we
> have constructed for ourselves.

Ray continues with his thought describing more about why discussing race is difficult for

native Pacific Northwestern people:

> It hurts native or long-term residents to have the Whiteness called out. That is
> painful to them because they know it is probably not right, they probably know it
> is costing them something there is something they lost as the result of that
> Whiteness, and they really want to see themselves as good and just people and
> that they are embarrassed and feel guilt over the fact that this is not a racially
> diverse area

Ray discussed how Whiteness is manifested in Oregon. He talked about feelings of guilt

and shame and the possibility of losing relationships.

What it means for White people. Because of the parameters of this research, each of the participants in the study took some form of action in regards to racial justice work. Throughout participants' responses, subthemes emerged including: recognizing what you don't know, the importance of vulnerability, feelings of being out of place with other White people, and the necessity to give up control.

Recognizing what you don't know. One of the subthemes that emerged within the theme of what this means for White people is recognizing what you don't know. What this means is that participants talked about admitting to themselves that they have learning to do and to give up the perception of always being right in regards to race. During George's interview he talked about continuing to learn despite nearing the end of his career, "with age I have gotten to this place to where what I know is more about what I don't know". He identified himself as a life long learner and knows that he has a lot of learning to do. Also, he knows that he will never reach a level of understanding where he can stop:

> Well I think that first of all, there is so much learning that I have to do. I am from a learning aspect much just beginning. I think the one thing I have focused on, is how do I begin to become more comfortable with (not) knowing this? My knowledge base of systems of privilege and oppression is very much in the novice range. So I work hard to learn.

George accepts that what he has learned growing up is not the truth. Additionally, he talked about how uncomfortable it can be to admit what he does not know and not having answers. He works hard to restructure his mindset, to challenge society and the ideals that he was brought up with in the 60s and 70s. Along the same lines, Archibald reflected on not knowing and the value of humility:

> Justice work requires incredible humility, it requires being wrong, it requires you to say things like "I don't know". I think [in] good justice work you should say I don't know more often than you say anything. Or better yet you shouldn't say anything at all. You should just sit and listen critically as a White person. And um, I think that has been really really hard you know? Feeling shame, feeling stupid, feeling ignorant, rightfully, and um, having just to let go of this false sense of grandiosity. So it has been hard, but one of the most liberating things that has every happened to me.

To reiterate Arhibald emphasized the importance of being able to let go of the idea of knowing and shifting it to a perspective where White people don't know is liberating. It can be a painful process for many, but Archibald found it liberating not knowing and being open to learning.

   Vulnerability. A recurring theme that showed up with different participants was the importance of being vulnerable within racial justice work. Vulnerability looks different for each person; admitting what you don't know, reflecting on your background, recognizing biases and perspectives you hold, acknowledging mistakes and learning from them, and overcoming feelings of self-doubt or guilt. Archibald directly talked about the power of vulnerability for White people as they do racial justice work.

> I think vulnerability is often an authentic way for White people to let go of their errors and display themselves as more human. I think it means championing for other people and defending folks when they are and especially when they are not around. So it means all of us approaching colleagues who are different than us, believing that they are doing the best they can, believing their outcomes are just as valuable, just being really fucking excited about the things that they do, and people, and it's not going to change the way those folks are going to perform, but it changes the way we see them and we see them in a more just way.

Archibald expressed that vulnerability helps White people recognize their faults and see their colleagues of color in a different, positive, and just way..

   Participants became aware of their White privilege and Whiteness at different points throughout their lives. A lot of this involved realizing when they held racist

thoughts themselves or were confronted by others, especially people of color. Rachel

reflected back to when she realized that she had racist thoughts and how guilt kept her

from recognizing her White privilege.

Part of justice work for White people is having the ability to admit they have racist

thoughts or being open to feedback from people of color. Ellen's experience working in

an office that primarily serves students of color with a staff consisting of people of color

has really helped shape Ellen's understanding of privilege and Whiteness. She described

what her experience was like at first and how it has transformed over the years. She

admits to herself that she wasn't willing to acknowledge her ignorance and it wasn't until

she heard from a Latina colleague that she really started to listen and understand:

> You know I was amazed at how unaware, ignorant and resistant I was to the idea
> of White privilege. The discomfort started to happen when I became pretty
> friendly with a Latina staff member and she would see some mistreatment of
> herself and talk about it. And inside, I wasn't reacting openly, even with myself. I
> felt this discomfort of "oh, that couldn't be" you know, just a dismissal, disbelief.
> It wasn't until I think she was gone by the time when the pieces started falling
> into place and it was that initial discomfort with her that keyed my ears into
> hearing more of other people's experiences and sort of being a fly on the wall and
> having people, being in a room full of people who were able to just casually
> discuss what it was like for them. And you know, they assumed that I wasn't
> going to question it or whatever, and um, so, it wasn't like they were trying to
> prove anything, it was just a casual discussion and that is when finally the scales
> kind of fell from my eyes. And it was a real transformation, it was one of those
> experiences that you finally feel this weight off your shoulders. You can
> acknowledge that there was something going on all along and you look back in
> your past and you realize, "oh my god, what a jerk I was being back then"…

Part of the journey of racial justice and awareness for White people is also

confronting their upbringing and that their family, friends, and community members hold

racist attitudes and possess little knowledge of White privilege. One moment in Ruth's

past that sticks out in her memory when she was serving as a graduate assistant for a

professor who was doing focus groups for both black and White identified individuals.

Before she could jump into this work she was asked the same questions:

> I was a graduate student at the time and she interviewed us with the same questions and I remember that was the first time I think that I consciously thought about my grandfather being in Hitler's army, like he was a soldier in Hitler's army. And I thought about we had one of his knives with the swastika hanging in our house growing up my whole childhood because my grandfather gave this knife to my dad very proudly. I always remember my mom protecting Hitler saying she grew up in poverty but she would say, "Hitler was good to the Austrian people in terms of health and food" and I would be like, "mom??? How could you say that? He like killed millions of people" and she would be like, "yes, yes I know I know but he was good to Austrians". So I knew that part but I never thought about I am from someone that literally killed, like that is my immediate ancestry line.

The importance of Ellen and Ruth's mothers' immigrant identity played a huge role in their upbringing. It wasn't until Ellen's adult life that she started to understand why she was so proud to be "American" and a lot of that had to play into her mother dealing with the discrimination she felt when she first moved to the U.S.:

> I finally uncovered the fact that my mother was a real assimilationist. In fact I came across some letters she had written to her sister while she was in college and she was using phrases like, "I don't want to be tarred with that brush" and talking about other Armenians that she didn't want to associate with because they were too Armenian. And I thought, "no wonder I have that resistance, I got it from my mother. She was trying really really hard to fit in and I inherited that sense of pride of having her fit in. Because there was a lot of discrimination against Armenians when she was growing up. There were signs on stores saying no dogs or Armenians allowed and she couldn't join a sorority because of being Armenian. And as the narrative that I heard from her, was an awareness of racism existing against her but I had never heard her talking about assimilation part of her, it wasn't until I was reading letters from her younger days that I realized.

This alludes to the fact that the experiences of children with immigrant parents are complex and even though these two participants identify as White, their families struggled as they adjusted to American culture bringing their own views from their

countries of origin. These two participants reflected on the value of vulnerability

throughout their personal journeys in racial justice.

Out of place with other White people and losing relationships. Many of the

participants expressed feeling out of place with other people. The types of relationships

were varied including strangers, co-workers, family, friends and community members

who are not engaged in racial justice work or who refused to recognize Whiteness, White

privilege, and systems of privilege and oppression. Many relationships were lost or

weakened because of it. This was a repeated thought for participants in the study.

Participants named this as one of the biggest struggles they encountered in racial justice

work, recognizing that this isn't important to their loved ones, and that individuals that

they are connected to in fact hold opposite views. Steve talked about this:

> For me the biggest challenges come from if I, as I am always trying to be aware of
> these things, there are people in my life who I love and care about who might not
> also have the same feeling. And uh, and there are other people who are always in
> my life you know through marriage and other things who I am connected to, who
> hold opposite feelings. And for me the hardest thing is then engaging or choosing
> not to engage for the sake of relationship.

Steve identified racial justice as part of his life mission, so when he is unable to talk to

family members or old friends about this it hurts him as well. He struggles when to speak

up or talk about feelings that bubble up after a racist comment or attitude is made. He

struggles when others make assumptions about who he is and what he believes it when he

doesn't speak up and feeling guilty and "gross" about it. People in his life from his past

make assumptions about what he believes now based on who he was before. When he

makes a comment he receives push back and receives feelings of isolation.

> Old friends have an image of me that they painted because it was them projecting
> those feelings unto me because at that time I didn't say anything or speak up even
> though I felt gross about what was happening. They made assumptions about my

> values and my humanity and now that we are all older they maybe still hold some
> of those old assumptions or old beliefs that I certainly don't. So you know the role
> that I have to play in challenging those old relational friends, is not easy. There is
> a cost that comes to that. The cost generally is isolation. The cost is we don't hang
> out much anymore. You do lose relationships even if you try to do things in the
> most caring way possible. If you are not going with the flow, then you are not part
> of the group think because you don't engage in that group think anymore. And
> you are a harder friend to be around because of it.

According to Steve, challenging your loved ones is often the most difficult thing to do in

justice work.

Ruth talked about her upbringing on a military base where many families were

multiracial or had parents who came from different countries. As a child growing up she

lived in a diverse neighborhood on a military base and it was normal for her to play,

interact, or date people of color. However, when her dad found out about Ruth dating a

person of color he warned her against it despite telling her previously that everyone is

equal. It was the first time that she realized that her dad held racist thoughts and she was

angry. "He has been telling us everyone is equal and so I remember feeling very angry

that he would say that a black person would cause difficulty in my life and in someway,

he didn't say we were better but in some way being White um, you didn't want to mix".

Although her dad told her not to date people of color she also couldn't help feeling that

she didn't fit in with White people outside of the military base too. She associated these

feelings by noticing wealth disparities both on and off the base:

> I remember somehow, even though I was White too, my Whiteness was different
> than the Whiteness across the street. And I think at the time I knew there was a
> consciousness around that was wealth over there, but I had some dissociation
> from being White with them. So there was a consciousness around it because of
> the wealth and we didn't come from wealth and so in some ways even though it
> was White I saw myself as part of this other mixed group of people even though I
> was White.

George also discussed feeling out of place with other White people, however this is predominantly in his work:

> I am in meetings with older males that typically look like me. They are White, they are my age group. They have positions of power and this is both on campus and within the alumni population that we work with. And there's this kind of general perception that you belong here, you are automatically part of their group and what I find fascinating is that I rarely feel part of the group.

George's feelings surrounding the White men he works with are similar to Steve's. They both reflected on the perception of groupthink and how neither of them feel like they belong in this group. This leaves them feeling helpless to speak up against racist comments or actions. There is a perception of both of these men that they are part of the system or don't have problems around racial injustice when in fact they do. So when they do speak up they experience harassment, bullying, and isolation. However, both men are willing to take this responsibility in the face of their peers and if feeling like they both don't belong or losing relationships is the cost, they are willing to do so.

Rachel also disclosed that one of the things that she needs to work on the most is confronting individuals in her personal sphere, "I think that is one thing that I don't do very well is challenging people in my personal sphere and that is something that I really need to work on, to look at. Yeah, I tend to just shut up about it". She also delved deeper as she realizes the damage this has on her relationships, "it preserves the relationship but makes it not a healthy relationship not to know that we are not authentic or being real". What is the cost? Is it worth having relationships that are false? Rachel seemed to think about this and is working to challenge people in her personal sphere.

Ray has a slightly different perspective seeing that he steps in regularly to confront his family when they say something racist or oppressive in nature. One of his biggest challenges is :

> Probably resisting the urge to fix everyone that I care deeply about. My wife is certainly a good person and I love her but her depth of understanding and motivation for how she lives her life are not the same as mine. I have three sons now two of them with wives, and none of them are living their lives with racial conscious approach that I try to live my life. So needing to reconcile the fact that I have deep love and affinity and affection for people who are not doing uh, actively what I think is important is really really necessary to get my head around.

Recognizing what is and what is not important for the people in Ray's life is crucial for him to carry on. The people who are nearest and dearest to him don't necessarily have the same perspective and worldview. He talked about how he disrupts oppressive comments or behaviors with his family and friends:

> And so, within family setting brothers, mothers, in-laws to a certain degree are going to laugh, tell jokes, make comments that they will sort of regret because I am going to go after it. My presence in a group changes the group because people know enough about me that if it slips out of their mouth, and it often is accidental because I think they are truly trying to not have that conversation with me. And um, because they don't want to think about what we are doing or saying. And you know, after the first couple of times that you don't let things slip anymore, they don't want to get into a philosophical or even an emotive conversation.

So with Ray, his family has learned to stop and think before or during conversations around race, privilege, oppression, and White privilege. They are aware that this does not align with Ray's value and maybe, just maybe they will start to think differently too. Ray also talked about how his sister is deeply involved in social and more specifically racial justice. His sister adopted an African American son years ago and things have slowly started to shift with his family. When Ray his sister, or nephew are around the family is more thoughtful and conscientious about what they say and do; "it had to shift it had to

change or at the very least not bring it up in his presence. And certainly in my sister's

presence or my presence they have also learned that they have to live, function, and think

differently". Ray moves forward with hope for the future and his family, "if you can

change your whole family you can change the world".

Archibald expressed that he also felt out of place with other White people and the

changes he noticed as he moved to Oregon, "And when I came to Oregon, I remember

feeling like the only place I feel comfortable is with my colleagues who work in

multicultural affairs because we speak the same language, we have a lot of similar

perspectives". Archibald feels isolated from other White folks the more he educates

himself and strengthens his commitment to racial justice,

> I have less patience for some of my White relationships, which isn't good, you
> know it has changed my dynamic with my family, definitely changed dynamics I
> had with friends from high school, friends from college, and you know, a lot of
> the time I have to negotiate and I think, this just won't be a part of our
> relationship. I am willing to let this go, this is not a hill I am willing to die on. But
> that is a cost to your relationship when you decide you are not going to be
> authentic with the person you love and the person that you care about. It's like, I
> am really triggered by what you are saying, what you are saying hurts me, I don't
> agree. And everything out in our life I would vocalize it, but this, I am going to
> keep to myself because I don't have the energy. I do this all day, and I am not
> going to do this with you. So yeah, it has been hard.

Archibald speaks directly to the exhaustive nature of justice work. Whenever he hears

someone say or see someone do something racist, he feels the impact on himself as well.

He is very much aware that racism hurts White people. He has to sacrifice his true self in

regards to values and beliefs in order to maintain relationships with some of the people

closest to him.

Emily mentioned similar sentiments with individuals in her life. Relationships are

limited in her life because people think she is just being liberal and will just brush it off,

> There are definitely some relationships that have been limited because either they don't want to engage in those conversations with me or I avoid them because I don't want to engage in those conversations any more because it is not making a difference.

Emily started to express feelings of guilt as she chose not to engage with difficult people about racial justice work; however she recognized that and realized when things got too big or out of her control.

Ellen also felt the same way about the majority of White people; she is sick of them sometimes and their unwillingness to be open or recognize that they hold privilege and may in fact be perpetuating systems of oppression:

> I fall into the camp of being somewhat sick of White people sometimes. You know, and not being completely open. It is hard to maintain that balance. Just impatient with people who can't put themselves in other peoples' shoes. Like, you say, when you are in a subordinate culture you have to be able to put yourself in multiple positions in order to survive. The privilege of the White culture is that you don't have to do that and so a lot of people don't and I get very very tired of that and I don't want to be around it a lot. Someone who can't see what it is like for a person of color in this society, and accuse them of using the race card, I get real tired of that. And probably more impatient than I should be. I mean, it is very natural and I went through it myself to try to not see that part of this culture.

As Ellen talks about this, she has some sort of understanding through years of listening and experience what people of color go through. She isn't claiming that she knows "what it is like" but more of she is listening instead of ignoring the voice of people of color.

Institutional Change. Throughout the interviews, participants expressed the need for an institutional shift to take place. There are several examples of this below.

Ruth talked about using her positional power and education as a platform of privilege for the good of her colleagues and the community. One of the common connectors between everyone at a university setting is their privileged identity of being

educated or having access to education. Ruth touches upon the importance of these

intersecting identities:

> I feel like they really intersect a lot on campus. Um, because if I didn't have my
> doctorate then I don't know if I would have the same strong platform that I stand
> from. So it really does, it is combined for me because of my positional leadership
> on campus and being a White person that I find myself speaking out more than
> maybe what I would… um, so I think that it is harder for people who don't have
> money or resources or education for them to own their privilege because it
> becomes like, wow, look at I am in this job and I am not able to be who I want to
> be. So in some ways I am happy I am educated because I can't dismiss my
> privileges easily.

Ruth made an interesting point as she pinpoints education as a connector of those who are

at an institution of higher education. She can't and won't hide behind her education to

negate her other privileged identities. Being educated magnifies many of the privileges

that Ruth holds:

> I would probably own it equally if I didn't have it, but because I have the
> education,, it makes it even more in my face that I use it in productive ways, in
> ways that challenge the system… it intersects with my work, but I try to make it
> intersect in ways that I have consciousness that is useful and not oppressive.

Ruth uses her privilege and education in the community to address injustice that occurs.

It is not only part of her work, but her life mission.

Additionally Archibald offered a unique perspective on what it means to take

action as a White person in racial justice. He discussed the need for White people to give

up power in order to distribute resources equitably. He also talked about how many

White people talk about giving up resources but don't actually follow through with this

process:

> I think to me, what I would need to get a sense of to start believing that something
> might be infused with racial justice, is to see the active process of giving up
> privilege and giving up power. I think there are a lot of folks who are like, "there

has got to be a way that we can do racial justice and I don't have to give up any of my privilege, and I don't have to change my life at all" and I think that is complete bullshit. For racial justice to occur, the work of a lot of White people in an institution is going to look very differently. It means not having all the things you want, it means not advancing the way you want to advance, it might mean not getting paid as much, it might mean getting paid less, it might mean um, doing work in a different way, it might mean doing work you don't agree with. Racial justice means thinking in a different way and allowing in different lenses and moving at different paces, I think I mean, when you start seeing White folks kind of unhappy, it's when racial justice is occurring.

Giving up power for White people can mean a lot of things and comes in many forms and variations. Archibald identified several ways to do racial justice including advocating for people of color, changing hiring practices, or standing up against an unfair scholarship that doesn't target student of color. Archibald talked directly about working in a diverse department with more people of color than White people and how powerful that redistribution of power can be:

So if you have three colleagues of color in a division of 45, absolutely, the scrutiny and the intensity and the tension is palpable. But if you hire an organization that is 60% people of color and 40% identified as White, there's not as much tension. You know, I think about when I worked at the a university and I worked in a residential life program and there were more folks of color than White identified folks… as a community and cohort, there was a presence and that, that democratic representation of the politics of it, fortified people and, um, it just, it really in an unspoken way forced White identified folks to check their shit.

Archibald continued to talk about his role in hiring a diverse staff and the adverse reaction he had from the hiring committee. He was one of the first individuals to question the RA selection process and rubric for hiring candidates. Archibald describes what it looked like when he refused to follow the rubric:

When I started picking up students of color having colleagues or middle management supervisor challenge that, justify why you are choosing this person over this person based on our metric. And me having a really polite way of saying I think the metrics are bullshit and describe that in a way essentially, I think being

> an ally means disagreeing with the process and your willingness to not be liked. Are you comfortable with upsetting a lot of people? A lot of time, that's an example in relationship to many others, when you take a stand, sometimes your White colleagues internalize that as you accusing them of being racist. I have made a decision for myself, I am taking a stand on it, and people project from that, "you must think I am racist, you just think I am a bigot, you must think I am all this sort of stuff" and that is a lot to deal with and you have to be prepared for that you know, and figure out who you want to be in those conversations, and so, hiring a lot of that has come up. I think defending colleagues, interrupting gossip, calling naming racial microagressions, you know, I think you said that because you are black…this is what I think I see happening…

Within his role as a Resident Director in the hiring process for Resident Assistants, Archibald ran across several colleagues who questioned his motives or thought he was calling them racist. He chose to have difficult conversations and was willing to sacrifice relationships with White coworkers. He did not let his morals or values falter in order to appease his White colleagues. He took a stand as a leader.

Emily has been involved in different initiatives and departments on campus that have formed her approach and philosophy on integrating racial justice into her every day life. One of the earlier efforts she made when she was in Residence Life. She incorporating social justice education with Resident Assistant training years ago. She also teaches classes where she infuses social justice in her classroom throughout the term, not just one day to touch on justice work; "one of the things I like in the classes I teach [is] it is something I talk about throughout the entire term, not just one day of diversity and social justice. You know what I mean?" During her first years teaching, her students pointed out to her that she is the only professor in their program that tried to talk about social justice issues. She reflected on this statement:

> And the way a student said it, she said, "tries" I knew I wasn't doing it perfectly, and the fact that that was recognized and that I was trying, I was like, "okay I know I am not doing it perfectly but it is appreciated and I need to keep doing it"

you know? So yeah. And it's not like I am looking for accolades like oh you're a good White person, but it is more of, it's needed if you recognize that I am the only one doing it, then that means it is really needed. If I can't start making those changes, who is going to do it?

Steve talked about the radical shift from when he was growing up to today's

society and campus climate:

Just talking about White as a race would have been an oxymoron growing up. There was nothing there. But I am able to engage with these folks who are on our campus, people who are either traditional aged or older students who are coming to learn and engage in these dialogues and it is not balked at, it's okay. And I think that is a real radical shift. I think there are dynamic changes happening in terms of who is able to come to college and the supports that we are trying to create. Now we are at least thinking and doing things to support people who are not just the majority race, majority standing. So those are all good things.

Steve acknowledged that leadership plays a large part in being able to talk about racial

justice work and White identity at PWU:

I think a big chunk of it is leadership. PWU is a predominantly White institution, our leadership sees racial and social justice as a key element to student affairs professionals' ability to better serve our students and that wasn't the same ethos at my former institution. In addition [my] former institution, although PWU is a PWI the former institution was a PPWI or a RPWI, like a really predominantly White institution. And it was just set in an environment where there wasn't the same level of racial diversity in terms of percentages that we see here So it is probably a combination of leadership, institutional leadership, institutional ethos, and the population we see here so we need to be engaged in that work, it is imperative for us to do our work well.

Throughout Steve's career he has been committed to social justice and racial justice. He

is very grateful of the opportunities, leadership, and guidance he has received at PWU.

He recognizes that this work is built into student affairs and talked more about some of

the goals and initiatives that have encouraged PWU students to engage in this work

whether it is through seminars, general education requirements, or other areas on campus.

He also reflected on how he has matured and changed his approach from when he was at

his previous institution. Instead of using a White knight approach to help students of

color, his approach has radically shifted to include critiquing and analyzing the

institutional environment and climate so students, faculty, and staff of color feel like

there is a shift:

> Well I think I was proactive at my former institution for sure you know I was
> really eminently engaged. And after that incident with the two students who were
> running for office we worked with, there was a group of us who worked together
> and created a program called the Minority student leadership initiative. But it was
> kind of a White knight approach it was like, oh if we can only mentor students of
> color to positions of leadership then we would be better off instead. As opposed to
> what's the cultural change and dynamic we need to create with the students who
> are perpetrating racism right? Instead it was more like, let's fix the people of color
> as opposed to lets fix the environment, but that was the ethos of the institution at
> that time you know?

After talking to participants it is evident that an institutional shift is crucial for

racial justice at institutions of higher education. This means many things including using

privilege to shift attitudes and hearts surrounding racial justice, a redistribution of

resources to make it more equitable for people of color, having a leadership model that is

willing to address racial injustice through courageous programming, and examining the

environment in which we live in. With these changes in mind, student affairs

professionals can only hope for a better future.

Restructuring allyship. Throughout the interviews recurring thoughts

surrounding allyship appeared. In response to a follow up question (do you think White

people can label themselves racial justice allies) there was a resounding response of

yes/and. What this means is that White people can label themselves as allies but if they

don't take action and make progress to fight racial injustice, words are just words. Each

person has the ability to claim they are an ally, but if their actions speak otherwise, then it

doesn't matter what they say. Participants weren't particularly concerned with being labeled anything. Instead if they know that they are doing their part and their actions speak to ending racial injustice that is enough for them. Ray elaborates:

> I don't think you can ever give yourself an ally label. It is something um, that someone else describes you as but I don't believe in pursuing wanting or needing to be labeled an ally. That is not my motives or way, and I don't think you can go take a workshop on 'how to be an ally' I think your actions eventually identify you to their community or their communities who benefit from your dismantling of race or oppression, something or someone else describes you as. It isn't a merit badge.

Ray's thoughts and feelings about racial justice allyship are insightful and useful. Instead of seeing it as earning a merit badge, Ray does this work as part of his life mission and values. It is a much deeper commitment and he serves as a racial justice ally every day of his life. Steve expresses similar feelings around labeling allyship:

> I am not much on labeling anything. I mean, I think that to be honest I think that's it's self-aggrandizing, I don't know what it is. It is our need to stick labels on stuff. I think that, and not in a way of discounting difference but I think it just starts with being a human and the idea of humanity is really critical. And um, if you if you believe in other people's humanity and the fullness of them as a human, then this is just what you do. You just look for area. As a White person I have the opportunity to look for spaces where I can make a difference in seeing our world and being in a world where humanity is a core value. So I reflect personally on my own values and my values for love, for community, for family, all then equate for me I can do a simple formula. Those to me are important things that I hold dear and so it's not if somebody wants to label me something that is fine, but it doesn't create an identity for myself so to speak.

Steve talked about the importance of his values and how much he values humanity. Steve values fuel his work in racial justice, not being labeled an ally.

Emily shifted the conversation surrounding allyship from one person or thing to more of a verb and an adjective. Allyship is not a noun. Again, she touches upon the importance of doing the work versus labeling yourself, "I have also been learning more about allyship and really ally is a verb and an adjective, it's not a noun. So if you declare

yourself an ally it doesn't mean you necessarily are. You can work towards allyship."

One of the many luxuries of holding a dominant identity is the ability to ignore it all

together. Emily expressed that for her to be a true ally who holds a dominant identity, she

has to be constantly engaged in dismantling systems of privilege and oppression.

Archibald talked more about concrete examples of what allyship means. Instead

of being concerned with labeling people, actions will serve as the best method to assess

whether individuals engaged in justice work are being an ally or not:

> I have gotten out of the business of allies and identity and I am more in the
> business of assessing ally behavior. So I look less at who is an ally and who is
> not, but looking at a person and assessing to what degree is your behavior
> indicative of your allyship? And so then it is no longer certifying them or
> knighting them an ally, and I think that to a certain extent removes the
> conversation, who gets to decide…and I mean and then there is an analyzing
> behavior. Do White people have the objectivity to analyze their behavior and say
> is it indicative of allyship? So once we are at that level, it's got to be both. It's got
> to be both.

Archibald expressed that it can be dangerous to label White people as racial justice allies

because they may feel like they are doing enough or doing their part when in fact there is

always something more to do.

Archibald makes another point in that White people may not be able to decide or

label other people (or themselves) racial justice allies. He talked more about the

importance of holding values and working towards justice in your own eyes, but that the

opinions of people of color are just as, if not more, important when assessing 'ally'

behavior. Ruth said something similar as well:

> I can call myself whatever, but it really matters what the person I am trying to ally
> for or with sees me as. So I can say I am a social justice advocate or ally, but
> unless I am experienced as that? Am I really? Because it I really how I want to be
> experienced, not how I want to identify. So um, when you asked me that question
> I am speaking from my perspective which is very subjective. I don't know from

the other subjects experience whether it has felt that way unless they give me feedback.

Ruth focuses more on how she wants to be experienced by others instead of looking at her own opinions of her work and efforts as an ally.

Part of racial justice work is recognizing that racism also hurts White people.

Steve expands his thoughts here:

I think racism has absolutely hurt White people and me particularly whether it is around relationships that I don't have because of it, whether it is around experiences that I chose not to engage in because of it, whether it is fear that I hold because of it, um, so I think racism impacts us really deeply.

Within this train of thought, Steve expressed wanting this for himself, his family, and the common good.

The selfish reason is honestly because I have kids and I would much rather see them grow up in a world that is better than the one that I stepped into. So that is a major motivator. Another motivator is because I um, I see the pain that the current situation and context causes people who I see as friends, colleagues, and even acquaintances or even people I don't even know who are made to be and feel less than human. Whenever you are doing things that are in line with your values it feels like you are being authentic with who you are and being true.

Additionally, Steve sees this as an urgent and pressing issue:

What I feel is that there is this sort of urgency because I feel like the world can quickly come out of balance and really be screwed up and we could really see based on just misinformation, stupidity, and fear we can really see a negative environment that would be that would kill that would hurt people that would make this world a place that I don't know I would want to live. And so, it's imperative that we get this right and do it well. And so that is how I feel I am approaching it, but sometimes it is the other stuff too.

Many times participants feel like they are in isolation in this work but there are many benefits of doing this work in community. Archibald explains,

I am excited to be in a place like PWU and work with folks here. And people who like you can go to them in a really safe and vulnerable place and we unpack that shit with each other and challenge each other with that and constantly push each

other to be our very best. To be left alone and be isolated in racial justice it is hard to account for kind of a regression in that model that Edwards put out there.

Throughout participants' responses, they feel less of a need to label themselves an 'ally'. Instead, they are more concerned about how their actions align with their values and commitment to racial justice. They reflected on the importance of being in community while dismantling racism and addressing White privilege. If done alone, it can be isolating and intimidating. Participants touched upon their motivation behind racial justice and it included doing the work for the common good but also wanting to do this for themselves. Finally, one of the topics participants talked about was the future of racial justice and how important maintaining an optimistic attitude can benefit every person committed to ending systems of privilege and oppression.

The future of racial justice and the importance of optimism. Many participants discussed how racial justice is not only something that they do, but something that shapes their values, interactions with others, and their life mission. Although it has been a difficult road to discovering their White privilege and working towards racial injustice, they wouldn't have it any other way. Emily said:

> I think of it (justice work) as something that is infused throughout the other work that I do. It is one of those things where once you know you can't go back, you know? You have to do something with it or just, I don't know what. But it is one of those things that when you have that awareness, yeah, you can't go back to being ignorant right? I feel it is irresponsible of me if I don't take action.

Rachel expanded on the importance of justice work in her life:

> I can't imagine not being a part of that. The personal relationships and like hearing people's stories and all that you just carry that with you and knowing that you exist in the world And I think I am trying to find those supports, trying to use other people as supports and that you know I am not alone in the work because sometimes I think that I am. So, learning to rely on my colleagues and finding balance in other ways just trying to honor life for what it is. Know that even if

> things are still horrible by the time that I die that I have at least been a part of this
> journey and hopefully made it better.

Doing the work in isolation is no longer sustainable for Rachel. Rachel identified the

significance of having other White people to process and do the work with. She

recognizes the urgency and wants to take action.

Racial justice has been part of Ruth's life mission from a very young age. It has

shaped her life mission and she reflected on how it has to be built into your core values

and become the main driving factor for how you interact in the world.

> It has to be something that is in your core because otherwise it is too exhausting
> and depressing to do the work. There has to be something more than exposure in
> graduate school, and usually there is. For people who really stick with the group it
> is something so transformative around something in their life and maybe it is just
> Peggy's article, I hear that a lot. Like I just feel like for me it happened,
> awareness happened at such an early age and I think for other people too, when
> you have that there is no turning back. It just becomes, like you would be selling
> your soul if you didn't contribute to try and make this world a better place in that
> area you know?

Participants, particularly Ray, maintain an optimistic attitude in racial justice by focusing

on what good has come from racial justice work so far. In response to what sustains Ray

in racial justice work, he responded:

> Mainly because I have seen change happen significant change, profound deep
> change, I have seen benefits White people dismantling within our own culture. I
> have seen policies shift, I have seen national and international organizations
> change their dialogues over 36 years of my professional career. It is all different.
> And it would not be different were it not for people that committed to this.

Ray closed his interview with copious amounts of optimism:

> You know I would only maybe add that awareness yields the opportunity for even
> more awareness. So with each new perspective or piece of knowledge or
> awakening, um, it is like this sort of cellular structure and it just keeps
> multiplying. And the next level is going to reveal itself to you and it is going to
> open up all these other new pathways and possibilities and um, so I have never
> ever felt that I have arrived at a place. Life just keeps getting better that is all there
> is to it. And it keeps getting better by doing justice oriented work. That doesn't
> mean you don't have an occasional setback, but it usually means that we have
> overstepped or not considered something well or used the benefit of wise people

around me to think it through and so while it is a step backwards, it is momentary. It is locked in time. I have something to learn from it. I am so excited for next year and the year after that and the year after that to keep growing and trying to influence the world around it. It makes getting up everyday easy because you never know what injustice will end that day, what new awareness and justice can be possible that day.

Summary

Chapter 4 identified and summarized the experiences of White student affairs professionals (WSAPs) who are involved in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution. The findings included 6 themes: finding White people's place in racial justice work, the Whiteness of the Pacific Northwest, what racial justice means for White people, institutional change, and restructuring allyship. Throughout chapter 4, several conclusions were made surrounding the themes.

First, within the first theme it is important for White people to understand how they can contribute to racial justice work. One of the most crucial points is having an understanding of what it means to be White in today's society, White identity development, and White privilege. With a clear understanding of what it means to be White, WSAPs can move forward in racial justice work by working with other White people. Additionally, participants reflected on the fact that White people can't do the same things that people of color can do within the racial justice context. Their role is to work with other White people by taking action instead of staying stuck with feelings of guilt or helplessness.

Another finding that revealed itself was the complexity of racial justice in a predominantly White state, region, and institution. Being in a predominantly White area is difficult because people from this region have a hard time seeing White privilege or

that there is a problem at all. Participants expressed frustration with the regional Whiteness of the area while engaging in racial justice work.

Throughout the interviews, participants revealed realizations about what a commitment to racial justice means for White people. This varied from participant to participant, however, they talked about recognizing what they don't understand or know, that they must be vulnerable within racial justice, and that they have felt isolated, out of place with other people, and that they have lost relationships throughout the years. Even though participants expressed loss or being vulnerable, they recognized that these are sacrifices and challenges they must face if they want to be committed to racial justice and have it as a core value throughout their professional and personal life.

Participants noticed that one of the most effective ways to address racial injustice is to make institutional changes. In regards to student affairs, participants talked about leadership that addresses racial justice on campus through programming and having difficult conversations. Institutional change can be manifested through giving up privileges and unearned benefits. Instead of having one or two programs that help students of color succeed (we still need this too), we need to survey the institutional culture and awareness surrounding racial justice. If the leadership and culture is not aligned with racial justice, there needs to be an intentional shift by including both White people and people of color in the conversation.

Finally, participants were less concerned with being labeled an "ally". Instead they were concerned with how their actions align with their commitment to racial justice. They expressed the importance of being actively engaged and that the mere label of "ally" does not carry much if actions speak otherwise. Participants also talked about their

motivation of the "common good" behind racial justice. The "common good" signifies

that participants are doing this work for themselves and others to create a more just world

in the future. However, participants were intentional in their responses in that they

wanted racial as much for themselves as for people of color. This indicates that they

understand that racial justice will help White people take ownership of their White

privilege and that we all benefit for racial justice and ending systems of privilege and

oppression.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This final chapter in addition to previous chapters will help continue an understanding of the experiences of White student affairs professionals (WSAPs) in racial justice at a predominantly White campus. This chapter will provide insight to what the participants have been engaged in, struggles they encounter, and how they are sustained in the work. Additionally, this chapter will provide suggestions for other WSAPs who want to become involved in racial justice as well as what the role of White people is in racial justice. This chapter will provide (a) a discussion of the findings (both anticipated and unanticipated), (b) general conclusions that are tied to the literature, (c) limitations of the study and recommendations for further research, and finally (d)

implications for practice in student affairs.

This qualitative study explored the experiences of White student affairs professionals who are involved in racial justice work at a predominantly White institution. Participants were over the age of 18, identify as White, and involved in racial justice work (as defined by participants themselves). There was an overwhelming response to the recruitment material that was sent through a list serve from WSAPs who considered themselves involved in racial justice at PWU. The researcher decided to keep the sample size at 8 participants due to the length of time and breadth of the topic being explored. The methodology in this study included qualitative interviews through an appreciative inquiry lens. The researcher used this design for the study to gain insight from participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The research addressed two research questions (1) what does racial justice work look like for WSAPs at a predominantly White institution? And (2) How does taking an appreciative inquiry

approach influence WSAPs in racial justice work? Despite having a fairly limited sample size of 8 participants, the research is applicable to White student affairs professionals in higher education and student affairs as a profession. This study can especially lend its information for predominantly White institutions and WSAPs who are striving for racial justice at their campus.

General Conclusions:

The participants in the study were excited to talk about their experiences in racial justice at a predominantly White institution. Overall, there was a desire to share and reflect on their work in racial justice. The main method of recruitment for participants was through a list serve for all student affairs professionals. There was an overwhelming response with over 20 individuals who were interested in being part of the study. Through recruitment and the interview process, it is clear that many WSAPs are interested in racial justice and find it an incredibly important topic within student affairs. Additionally, participants were reflecting on their involvement as a White person in racial justice. This demonstrates that there is a great deal of interest and desire to be racial justice allies and defining the role of White people in racial justice specifically within the student affairs context.

Throughout the review of literature it was evident that there is limited research regarding the White racial identity development of student affairs professionals (Mueller & Pope, 2001). Participants stressed the importance for WSAPs to look into their White racial identity, Whiteness, and White privilege on varying levels. Mueller and Pope (2001) found that a higher awareness of White racial attitude leads to higher levels of multicultural competence for White student affairs professionals. The results of the

current study showed participants possess a higher level of multicultural competence because they are aware of their White identity. Participants are involved with various forms of racial justice extending from self-work reading, self-reflection, conferences, etc.) to institutional initiatives like a White race based caucus retreat. WSAPs create and maintain a multicultural campus environment by addressing Whiteness and dismantling systems of privilege and oppression. Reason, Millar and Scales (2005) suggested that student affairs professionals need to reflect upon their own race and the role race plays in their daily lives in order to support students in a similar process. This was also found within the participants' responses in the study. WSAPs who identify themselves as racial justice allies can model allyship for other student affairs professionals and students alike.

The results of the study also indicated that WSAPs need to start addressing White privilege with other White people to address Whiteness and dismantle systems of privilege and oppression at a PWI. This can take various forms. Participants discussed intragroup dialog through a White racial caucus retreat, finding community with other White people on campus, and addressing racial injustice that they experience with others. Beyond the world of student affairs, WSAPs also talked about addressing racial justice in their personal spheres as well. One of the more difficult groups to talk to about racial justice is loved ones who hold racist attitudes and/or say racist things. Participants expressed feelings of loneliness and isolation from other White people who choose not to engage in racial justice work. Many of the participants have lost relationships through their racial justice journey.

Despite losing relationships with others, participants have made racial justice not only part of their work, but part of their life mission. Part of that life mission is being able

to recognize that racism hurts both White people and people of color. It seems as if participants have moved past places of White guilt and are taking action. This recurring theme is important for White people to note as they start or continue their journey in racial justice. Participants recognize the significance of being White and being able to recognize where their dominance is playing out in every day life. Participants expressed that White folks enter into racial justice work they need to educate themselves so that they can work alongside people of color instead of relying on people of color to do the heavy lifting and teaching White people what it means to be White. With a better understanding of their identity as a White person, WSAPs will be better racial justice allies and role models for others.

Participants expressed what it means to be a racial justice ally and how they are sustained. Reason, Scales, and Millar (2005) touched upon the idea of importance of student affairs professionals serving as role models for college students by being active and visible. Furthermore, participants responses aligned with the importance of White student affairs professionals taking action as racial justice allies and serving as positive White racial role models (Reason, Scales, & Millar, 2005). Additionally, several of the participants discussed the role that optimism plays in sustaining WSAPs in racial justice. By maintaining an optimistic outlook, participants felt more empowered to continue working towards racial justice.

Anticipated Findings

There were several anticipated findings throughout the research based on the existing literature that were confirmed by participants. As stated above there was a clear message from participants that WSAPs who want to work towards racial justice at a PWI

need to start with self (understanding their Whiteness and how it plays out at a personal

and systemic level), work with other White people, and to take an active role on campus.

As a researcher I anticipated that participants would stress the importance of doing self

work as a White person in racial justice at a predominantly White institution. It is

imperative that White people have a clear understanding of their White identity, where

their privilege comes into play and how they can work towards breaking down their

assumptions and biases that they hold. Similar to Harro (1995), participants talked about

how racial justice ally identity development is a cycle meaning that there is no end to the

work we do in racial justice work. Racism and White privilege are part of our society and

are institutionalized. Racial justice, White privilege, and White supremacy are continuous

and invasive cycles that challenge White people (and people of color) in every day

interactions. There is no end point and no White person will reach a point of racial justice

saturation where they will stop learning. There will always be work to do on ourselves

and our knowledge of Whiteness, privilege, and oppression.

I anticipated that participants would discuss that White people need to start with

White people. As Ray emphasized, there is nothing that he as a White person has to offer

to people of color within the racial justice context. Instead he sees his role as starting to

dismantle racism and White privilege with other White people. Several participants

touched on the fact that people of color can do many things that White people can't do in

racial justice. Instead White people who are invested in racial justice need to start with

other White people.

One of the anticipated findings from the research was the value of vulnerability in

racial justice work for White people. Recognizing, confronting, and taking responsibility

for White privilege is a painful experience that invokes shame and guilt (Kendall, 2006). Several participants pointed out that White people need to be okay with being vulnerable in racial justice. They must be able to own up to their privilege and admit what they don't know. Vulnerability in racial justice work led participants to reflect on the loss of relationships and how isolating racial justice can be for WSAPs. Some things that participants seemed to go back to was feelings of isolation and loneliness. However, all participants talked about the importance of not doing this work in isolation. Reason, Millar, and Scales (2005) also talked about the significance of finding a group of like-minded others from which allies can draw support. By creating community, individuals can interpret information and maintain racial justice action in spite of obstacles or challenges (Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005).

Unanticipated Findings

Throughout the interviews there were results that I was not anticipating or expecting as the researcher. Many participants talked about the regional Whiteness of the Pacific Northwest and its implications for racial justice. Also, the more I talked to participants the more I heard them communicate the impact of labeling oneself an "ally" in racial justice. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of wanting racial justice to happen for selfish reasons. I was also surprised by the impact that having an immigrant parent had on two participants' White identity and racial justice ally identity development. Finally, before I interviewed participants I did not anticipate that they would so strongly express the need for institutional change including small things that participants do to start shifting the institutional culture towards addressing Whiteness and

White privilege on campus. I will delve deeper now to explain each of these unanticipated findings.

Participants throughout the interviews talked about the regional Whiteness of the Pacific Northwest. The Pacific Northwest's Whiteness plays an influential role in how WSAPs make sense of racial justice efforts at this PWI. Because most regions in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) is predominantly White, White people who live in the PNW have a hard time identifying White privilege and recognizing how Whiteness has been institutionalized and seen as the norm into which other racial groups have to fit into. One of the participants has noticed that White people in the PNW are resistant to hearing about White privilege and feel shame and guilt that where they live is not diverse. People in the PNW don't know how to have conversations around race and more specifically institutional Whiteness and their own identity as a White person. As a researcher I have noticed that the PNW is predominantly White, however because I have lived here for over 13 years, I often don't see the pervasive nature that Whiteness has on the region.

During the interview process, participants reflected on why they were involved in racial justice work and "who" they did the work for. Edwards (2006) created a social justice ally identity development model that is separated into three categories: Aspiring ally for self-interest, aspiring ally for altruism, and ally for social justice. I used Edwards' model to frame questions for participants. Edwards (2006) identified motivating factors for each of the categories. The main motivation for self-interest is selfish; They do ally work for people they know and care about. Ally for altruism does the work for the other person…"I do it for them" is heard often. Edwards compared it to charity work or working *for* the target group because they are victims. Finally the motivation for allies for

social justice is combined selfishness where the individual does it for a collective "us".

The way that Edwards (2006) designed these three categories there is inadvertently a

correct answer, the ally for social justice who does this for combined selfishness.

Edwards (2006) framed this so that the first two options seemed incorrect. I was surprised

when participants pointed this out to me. What I heard from participants was that of

course it has to be for "combined selfishness" reasons including both "us" and "them" as

main motivators, but what I heard more was that White people in racial justice need to do

this for selfish reasons. White people need to want racial justice for themselves if they

want to move forward. At first I didn't know how to interpret these results but the more

this came up from different participants the more I started to understand that White

people need to want this for themselves. White people need to see the benefits of doing

racial justice for themselves; they need to see how racism hurts White people and how

dismantling systems of privilege and oppression can liberate and free up their lives. By

recognizing the selfish motivators, White people can create a more just world and see

how they can leave a better world behind for future generations to come.

One interesting finding is that the participants in the study did not feel the need to

label themselves as racial justice allies. Instead, they were more concerned about their

actions and efforts towards dismantling White privilege, power, and discrimination, not

the label. As a White person I grapple whether or not I should call myself an 'ally'. What

gives me the objectivity to do so? As the researcher I asked participants whether White

people can label themselves as racial justice allies or if that was up to people of color.

The resounding answer was that participants were not concerned with being labeled an

ally but wanted to actually demonstrate their commitment and ability to advocate for

racial justice. Participants were less concerned with being seen as a 'good' White person or receiving a medal for their work in racial justice. One participant expressed that it can be dangerous to label White people as racial justice allies because they may feel like they are doing enough or doing their part when in fact there is always something more to do. Instead this needs to be an ongoing process where White people are constantly assessing their behaviors, thoughts, and motives in accordance with racial justice. It is important to note that, although White people may feel like they are being racial justice allies, the experiences and opinions vary from person to person. There is no universal action that identifies White people as racial justice allies.

The influence of having an immigrant parent for two of the participants played a significant role in their White identity development. Two of the participants have immigrant mothers from Europe. Phenotypically they present as White; However, their experiences as foreign White people are/were very different than the average White American. Both of these women's' mothers came from a different culture and country and had to assimilate. They endured discrimination and hardship. Ellen's mother emigrated from Armenia and after being discriminated against focused on fitting into American culture as much as possible. Growing up and in her adult life Ellen had a difficult time recognizing why she was so proud to be a White American. It took years for her to recognize White culture, her privilege, and White identity. Ruth also had a different experience from White participants who do not have immigrant parents. Throughout her White identity development she struggled with feelings of guilt and shame that her grandfather had served in Hitler's army and the fact that her mother who was in Austria during World War II defended his actions. Ellen and Ruth's mothers'

immigrant identity added another level of complexity to their White identity and their work in racial justice as WSAPs.

One of the unanticipated findings was the need to shift the institutional message, values, leadership, and focus surrounding racial justice. Institutional change requires commitment from all people but more specifically White people. WSAPs who are aware and committed to racial justice must use their positional power and leadership to reach out to other White people. White people need to be willing to use their privilege to give up power, institutionalize the importance of racial justice, be courageous with new programs and initiatives, and shift from a White knight approach to a cultural shift where the university values and honors all individuals. .

Limitations of Study

Throughout the study, the researcher identified several limitations. First, the recruitment process involved sending out a recruitment letter through a list serve and asking White Student Affairs Professionals to participate in the study. This self-selection process is not objective. Participants were able to decide whether or not they considered themselves racial justice allies with no influence from people of color.

Additionally, this study focused on the experiences of WSAPs at a predominantly White institution about their work in racial justice. The voices of people of color were not included in the study. Voices of people of color would be valuable in this study by providing another perspective and depth to the results.

Due to the time restraints and complexity of the study I was only able to conduct this research at one institution. This research focuses on the experiences of WSAPs at a predominantly White institution in the Pacific Northwest. If I had been able to expand the

research to other types of institutions in other areas of the country the results would be

different. This would demonstrate the regional differences and what WSAPs are doing in

racial justice across the nation. Also the study was qualitative with interviews. Using a

quantitative or mixed methods approach could potentially render different results.

Recommendations for further research

The purpose of this research was to gain insight into the experiences of White

student affairs professionals who are involved in racial justice at a predominantly White

institution. However further research and assessment are necessary to expand on this

topic and create an extensive understanding of WSAPs in racial justice work. As a

profession, student affairs needs to be prepared to support every type of student and the

identities that they hold. As our students diversify, student affairs professionals put an

emphasis on social justice and global citizenship. However, student affairs professionals

must also uphold these ideals and standards for students by understanding all identities

that they themselves hold. In regards to WSAPs, it is crucial that they understand their

White identity, privilege, and how systems of privilege and oppression work. Some

takeaways from the research were that White people need to start with themselves, they

need to work with other White people, and finally take action in racial justice work

(talking to other White people about White privilege and living in a White supremacist

culture) at their campuses instead of relying on people of color to do it. Further research

is needed to explore the efforts that WSAPs are doing to understand their White privilege

and identity at a personal level. Additionally, research is needed to examine what efforts

WSAPs are doing to talk to other White people about Whiteness.

Further research needs to be done on what is happening across the country. This study was limited to the Pacific Northwest where racial justice work is different than in other parts of the country. It would be fascinating to do this in an area that is more racially diverse to see if White people are addressing this with the same approach. This research could be expanded regionally and at other institutions nationally. I would recommend that this research be expanded to different institutions where it could be compared across institutions. Another factor to consider is institution type because racial justice may look different at a small private liberal arts college compared to a large public institution.

Implications for practice and concluding thoughts

As the student population diversifies, student affairs professionals need to be prepared and ready to support every student that they come in contact with. Student affairs continues to encourage students to be multiculturally competent and global citizens through self-exploration of their identity. However, student affairs professionals must also be multiculturally competent and global citizens. In regards to racial justice, White student affairs professionals (WSAPs) need to support White students in their White identity development. As WSAPs work with White students to discover their White identity they also are able to address White privilege and shed light on systems of privilege and oppression. By doing this, WSAPs are able to help students end oppressive behaviors towards people of color and more specifically their classmates and friends. One of the major issues today is getting WSAPs to do the self-work necessary to recognize their own White privilege and how they are contributing to systems of privilege and oppression as they work with students. This study was a snapshot of what some WSAPs

are doing and the key is getting more WSAPs committed to uncovering their White identity as they express interest in racial justice. WSAPs must realize that they are maintaining a racist society until they take action and make a commitment to racial justice.

Institutional change must happen to encourage a more equitable and just campus climate. Student affairs professionals play a huge part in creating a culture of care and a culture that values racial justice ally identity development. WSAPs have an opportunity to create a healthy White identity for the future and should work towards that by changing the institutional culture. As stated above these efforts can take the form of retreats, work groups, discussion groups, videos, and White identity development groups in safe spaces across campus. Within these efforts White people will have the opportunity to reflect on their White identity, White privilege, ethnicity, and how they play into society and systems of privilege and oppression. By providing the space, WSAPs and White students will be able to internalize, understand, and move forward in the process towards racial justice ally development.

WSAPs who have been engaged in racial justice for some time need to provide support and role modeling for WSAPs who are beginning their journey to uncover their White identity and privilege. The hope is that throughout time more and more WSAPs will be interested in liberating their White identity and restructuring it to something different. We must restructure allyship from labeling "good"/"bad" White people to instead create an understanding where individuals are able to align their beliefs, actions, and motivation to be a racial justice ally. Finally, White people need to understand how they can benefit from creating a more racially just world. It is important for them to want

it for the common good, however they need to focus on what it means for them. This is

one instance where it is encouraged for WSAPs to want racial justice for themselves.

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Appendix A

Appendix A contains three documents including: (a) the invitation email, (b) the

interview questions, and (c) the IRB informed consent form. In each of these documents

individually identifying information has been removed.

Invitation email

Title: An Appreciative Inquiry Approach to White Student Affairs Professionals in Racial
Justice Work

Principal Investigator: Janet Nishihara

Dear faculty or staff member:

My name is Caitlin Kerrigan and I am a graduate student in the College of Education.
This year I plan to study the experiences of White Student Affairs Professionals who are
actively involved in racial justice work at Oregon State University. The results of the
study will be used to write my thesis, which will contribute to the 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, which would include an
individual one-on-one audio-recorded interview during Fall 2012.

Qualifications to participate in this study are:

1. Must be at least 18 years of age.
2. Must be currently employed as an OSU staff or faculty employee.
3. Must self-identify as a white student affairs professional involved in racial justice at
OSU.

If you meet the qualifications for participating in this study, and wish to do so, please
email me at Caitlin.kerrigan@oregonstate.edu or contact me via text or phone at 971-
241-4685. I would greatly appreciate it if you would forward this on to others who may
be interested. I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your consideration of
this request.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Kerrigan
Intercultural Student Services GTA
Oregon State University

Interview questions

An Appreciative Inquiry Approach to White Student Affairs Professionals in Racial Justice Work

 Questions:

This is a set of predetermined questions that I will ask you during our time together. These are open-ended questions so feel free to expand your responses. You are able to talk freely about your experiences as much as you need. Again, thank you for participating, I am looking forward to hearing your story.

1. Can you describe your involvement in racial justice work at Oregon State University and how long you have been involved?

2. Can you describe the reason(s) that you became involved in racial justice work? Was there a catalyst moment, life mission, presentation, childhood experience, etc.

3. In what ways do you feel privileged by your white identity?

4. What challenges have you faced as you began learning about systems of privilege and oppression?

5. What sustains you in racial justice work? Why do you persist as a white student affairs professional?

6. How does your white identity influence your work in racial justice work?

IRB Informed Consent Form

Educational Opportunities Program
Oregon State University, 337 Waldo Hall, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-6405
T 541-737-3628 | **F** 541-737-3998 | http://oregonstate.edu/dept/eop

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: An Appreciative Inquiry Approach to White Student Affairs
                                          Professionals in Racial Justice Work

Principal Investigator: **Janet Nishihara**
Student Researcher: Caitlin Kerrigan
Co-Investigator(s):
Sponsor:
Version Date: November 16, 2012

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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 white student affairs
professionals committed to racial justice work at a predominantly white institution and
how that has influenced ally identity development, white racial identity development, and
sense of self.

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

 Up to 10 individuals 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 identified as white or
Caucasian and you are involved with racial justice work at Oregon State University.

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

The study activities include an interview session in a one-on-one private setting where you will be asked by the researcher a set of questions surrounding white racial identity development and your involvement in racial justice work at Oregon State University.

The interview will take a maximum of two hours; you will be asked to meet with the researcher once in a designated private room.

The audio recordings are required of the study, however you may choose not to answer questions for any reason throughout the interview. To protect your confidentiality any information that may identify you will be coded and stored separately from your actual information. Audio recordings will be erased after the completion of the study. Transcripts will be password protected and destroyed three years after the study is complete.

Please provide your email address and other contact information if you are interested in seeing the results of the study after it has been completed.

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

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with being in the study are minimal. They include experiences of discomfort as you discuss your past or background information tied to your identity as a white person in racial justice work.

Due to the limited number of participants, there is a chance that you could be identified in research reports. There is a risk that we could accidentally disclose information that identifies you through email or internet. Information sent by email or on the internet may be corrupted, intercepted, lost, destroyed, arrive late, or contain viruses. To minimize this risk, researchers will only use private password-protected computers and/or OSU computers with authenticated password logins to access material related to this study.

6. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

This study is not designed to benefit you directly. Instead the information gathered may provide insight into how white student affairs professionals do racial justice work.

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.

The principle researcher and the student researcher are the only people who will have access to the research materials including audio recordings. The audio recordings will be erased after the study is complete. However, transcripts will be erased three years after the study is complete. To help ensure confidentiality, we will store personal information separately from the interview records. Additionally, a number code will be assigned to each participant to ensure your privacy and confidentiality. The documents will be stored in a locked location in Waldo hall. All electronic files will be password protected.

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. Additionally, you may choose to skip questions you would prefer not to answer. 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: Janet Nishihara at janet.nishihara@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: Delete this line only if the study is exempt from full board review. The IRB will insert the appropriate date when the consent form is approved.

Participant's Name (printed):

_____

_____

 (Signature of Participant)   (Date)

_____

(Signature of Person Obtaining Consent)   (Date)

Appendix B

Below is an example of the coding process while the researcher was analyzing the data

and finding themes.

Common themes I am starting to recognize:

1. People of color can do things that white people can't

    • RAY: **identifying white culture, see whiteness for what it is**

    • George: page 11. Identifying white people as racial justice allies

2. Have to be willing to give up control

    • George page 7. Being comfortable not knowing (overlaps with

      vulnerability)

    • Archie, page 2, 6 (under taking action from this work #8)

    • Ellen, page 3

    • Ruth, page 5 (being minority abroad), 6

3. White people have to start with White people. Finding our place in racial justice

      work, knowing we are making strides despite doubts (Eric, Ray, etc.)

    • Archie, page 1

    • Ellen, page 2-3, 7

    • Rachel, pages 3, 5, 6 (not sure if white, but different example with native

      Americans)

    • Ray, page 1 (involvement with Whiteness in the community), 3

    • Steve, page 1: start with self

    • Ruth, page 2, 3, 9, 10

- Emily, page 1-2 (importance of starting and understanding self as well) 2-3 (EWI conversation and how it started…under institutional change theme), page 4-5, 8, 9

4. We need institutional change, not changing people of color (Ellen, Steve, Ray)

- George pages 9, 10, 15

- Archie pages 4, 5

- Ellen, page 6, 8

- Rachel, page 4 (how we are benefiting from people of color without giving back)

- Steve, page 2, 3, 5

- Ruth, page 10

- Emily, page 1, 2-3, 7, 8

5. Vulnerability and the value of this work

- George: page 7. Being comfortable not knowing…

- Archie, pages 1, 4, 6, 11 (in the #3 section)

- Rachel: pages 1, 3-4, 4,

- Ray, pages

- Ruth, page 7-8 (reflecting on her own family's history, Hitler. Shame as an American abroad, triggering people and how to deal with that = better understanding as an ally and advocate)

- Emily, page (being called out for using the term "retarded), 5, 6, 7, 9 (frustration but need to keep moving)

6. Feelings of being out of place with other white people/ Losing relationships or not being authentic because of awareness

- Archie, page 9

- Ray

- Rachel, page 5

- Steve, page 5

- Ellen, pages 1, 2

- Ruth, page 4 (family when she was young), 5

- Emily, page 7, 8, 10

7. Taking action vs. hiding from this work (Ray)

- Archie, page 3

- Rachel, pages 1-2

- Ray, page 5, 6

8. Importance of Intersecting Identities in Racial Justice Work

- Archibald, page 1, 2, 3 (also intersects with life mission and fulfillment)

9. Regional whiteness and what Oregon is lacking (Ray, Rachel, Ellen, etc.) Is it something about Oregon? Culture of being nice and polite hinders our conversations surrounding race.

- George: Page 5

- Ellen, page 1

- Ray, page 5

10. Our obsessions with labels…

- (STEVE, good vs. bad white person), page 4. Take allyship as a noun or verb and change it to a value, 6

- Moving past the label of "ally" Archie, page 11-12

- Ray, page 6

- Ruth, page 5, 8, 10 (reframing allyship and identifying as an ally)

- Emily, page 9

11. Racism hurts White people as well

- George: page 7

- Steve, page 6

12. Wanting this for self or common good (Edwards model but extended…Doing the work selfishly and for others)

- Archie: page 8, 12

- Ellen: page 7

- Ray, page 6

- Steve, page 5, 7-8

- Ruth, page 9

- Emily, page 8

13. Children of immigrants and self discovery of whiteness

- Ellen, page 8, 9

- Ruth, page 6

14. Variety of Racial Justice Involvement, sense of urgency, not doing the work alone, why (refer to question #1 for align with theme)

- Ellen, work, mission

- Rachel, page 5

- Ray, page 2

- Ruth, page 11

- Emily, page 7 (life mission)

15. The future of Justice Work and importance of Optimism
    - Ray, page 7
    - Steve, page 5