

ICD Thesis Project

# Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education

The Need for Reflective  
Engagement

Kristen Ross

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## **I. Introduction**

The small office of university staff member Juan Esparza, serves as a refuge for historically underrepresented students attending a small Christian university called Northwest University (NU), located in Kirkland, WA. Juan is the advisor for the Act Six Program, an urban leadership scholarship program, and serves as a support for minority students at NU. Juan has a heart for diversity, inclusion, and equality and desires for all students to feel welcome at NU. As he mentors and supports minority students, he hears countless stories of the difficulties minority students face during their time at school. In a discussion with Juan, he shared with me the following stories to help me understand difficulties students face on predominantly white campus. Juan told me the situation of an African-American student who is currently considering leaving NU. During high school, this student maintained excellent grades, was involved in leadership, and was a vital part of her school. Her time at NU has been difficult due to the lack of diversity among students, staff, faculty, and administration. She hasn't found real support both socially and academically. This student actively sought a solution by joining the board of the Multicultural Club. However, she still didn't find a sense of belonging because the programming was too passive in addressing race issues on campus. This student returns to her room right after class and spends weekends off campus. She is seriously considering leaving NU due to a campus climate that doesn't provide adequate inclusion for the success of minority students.

In a second situation, an international student was recruited to play soccer on the NU woman's team. When this student arrived to NU, she was dropped off at the soccer fields with her suitcase in hand, nervous, but full of energy and excitement. When she suited up to start practice, her teammates were uninformed about who she was and were confused as to why she was playing. The international student had limited English language skills and her soccer skills

were lower than the rest of the team. Because the NU team didn't have any background as to why this student was playing with them, and weren't educated how to support the student through cultural differences, there was distance created between the team and the international student. The international student felt excluded and ended up quitting the team. She also felt excluded in the dorms and had a difficult time in classes. The student ended up leaving NU, despite her passion to study and play soccer, due to a campus climate that lacked adequate inclusion.

These stories represents just two of countless experiences from historically underrepresented students across universities in the USA. Some students experience a higher level of blatant discrimination or prejudice, while others experience an unintended hurt and discomfort due to a campus climate that is naïve and lacks cultural and racial awareness demonstrated by faculty, staff, and students. Experiences like these illustrates how an inclusive campus climate is vital to the success and belonging of minority students on university campuses. As the population in the United States becomes increasingly diverse, it is widely recognized that universities must have campus climates that embody diversity and inclusion to accommodate this shift (Denson 805; Krishnamurthi 264; Smith Wolf-Wendel 2). Universities that are successful at this institutionalize diversity and inclusion initiatives, where every aspect of the university is transformed, including administration, faculty and staff, curriculum, and student programming. However, in these efforts, minimal programming is offered to engage and educate students of the majority culture on topics relating to diversity, culture, and race. Majority students may want to engage but they are not equipped. They often lack the cultural and racial development to engage topics of diversity, which in turn ends up hurting minority students (Denson 805). The stories above illustrate this. How would these situations have been different if

majority students were equipped to engage in the lives of students different from themselves? Within diversity and inclusion initiatives, universities must provide holistic education for the majority students to create a movement away from cultural naivety and bring students through a process of true engagement, led by self-reflection and awareness. This will equip students to not only be informed and better prepared engage in diversity on campus, but will also move students to become agents of racial and cultural reconciliation to bring change to the nation.

### *Defining the Terms*

I encourage readers to approach this paper and its content with an open heart an open mind, seeking to learn and understand. The focus of this paper is centered on the imperative to address diversity and inclusion within Christian higher education, and the specific need to increase the capacity in majority students to engage these issues. Doing this will create campus climates of inclusion, which is supportive and welcoming to minority students. However, in order for this to take place, it is important to understand the difficulties universities must recognize as they increase diversity and create inclusive campuses. These difficulties include addressing topics of racism, systematic and structural injustice, and white privilege. These are emotionally charged subjects that can invoke guilt, defensiveness, and anger, but that is not the intent. The purpose in addressing these difficult topics is to recognize and be informed about ways in which society is broken, specifically on the topic of race relations. Bringing the problem to light allows for repentance and a change in behavior. It allows for future decisions to be made in a way that moves away from injustice. This is embodiment of reconciliation, a principle central to the Christian faith. Dear readers, let us remember Micah 6:8, “He has shown you, o man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and

to walk humbly with your God” (*New International Version*). Let us lay down our pride, power, and privilege and humbly learn and be transformed.

For background, clarity, and understanding it is necessary to define key terms that are used throughout this paper. Diversity and inclusion is mentioned frequently throughout this paper. Diversity refers to the range of human differences including physical and experiential. While this term refers to characteristics of individuals, it also is active and refers to the ability to “expand and embrace more categories,” as defined by Mueller and Broido (91). Inclusion is the involvement and empowerment of all people, where the inherent worth and value of each person is recognized and integrated. The term minority students and majority students are also used frequently. Minority student refers to historically underrepresented students generally in regards to ethnicity. The majority population or majority students refers to the white population.

To be able to talk about diversity and inclusion specifically in the context of Christian universities, it is important to understand how the United States addressed diversity and inclusion both historically and currently. Next, it is necessary to look at the imperative in higher education to address diversity and inclusion, and finally discuss how that affects Christian universities. This paper will reveal that in seeking diversity and inclusion, there is a gap in educating and training majority students to engage such issues. The final portion of this paper offers a guide that universities can use when seeking to create effective programming to engage majority students. This guide is called “Five Components to Reflective Diversity Engagement.” When universities engage and educate majority students, campus climates will become more inclusive which will also impact society.

## II. The Historical and Current Climate of Diversity and Inclusion in the USA

The United States is often recognized as the nation of immigrants. It was founded by immigrants seeking freedom and has since become known as the melting pot or mosaic of cultures. It is seen as a land of opportunity where anyone who works hard has the equal opportunity for success. This is the American dream. The Declaration of Independence states, “All men are created equal and have unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (US 1776). Although the United States stands by equality, this hope and aspiration is not historically accurate and is not a current reality for many minority groups living in the USA.

The historical past of the United States which involves the exploitation and oppression of people of color is difficult to remember, but is essential because it influences the nation’s reality today. In the book *America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America*, author and theologian Jim Wallis discusses the nation’s deep ties to racism. The United States was a nation built on slavery. Slavery was profitable and had to be justified in some way (Wallis 74). Racial categories were created which defined those of color as less than human. Whites were seen as superior and colored were seen as inferior. The Three-Fifths Compromise of 1787 even formally defined people of color, specifically blacks, as less than a person. Even after slavery was declared unconstitutional, Jim Crow laws declared a “separate but equal” policy which enforced the belief that whites were a higher status than those of color (Alexander 28). Slavery is a clear form of racism, which is systematic oppression for economic purpose (Wallis 45). In his reflection of the impact slavery had on the United States, Wallis states, “The heart of racism was and is economic, through its roots, and results are also deeply cultural, psychological, sexual, religious, and of course political. Due to 246 years of brutal slavery and an additional 100 years of legal segregation and discrimination, no area of the relationship between black and

white people in the United States is free from the legacy of racism” (Wallis 46). The consequences of slavery still impact structures of society today.

### ***The Forms of Racism***

Although there has been great progress made against overt racism and discrimination, the nation is still affected from the lasting effects of its racist history. To understand its impact, it is first necessary to define racism. As defined in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, racism is “a system of advantage based on race” or “prejudice plus power” (Rothenberg 127). More holistically, *Seeing White* defines racism as, “a systematic as well as individual, sometimes unintentional, racial prejudice coupled with power” (Halley, Eshleman, and Vijaya 13). It is important to recognize that racism is connected to power or an advantage. What distinguishes racism from prejudice is that racism is “sustained by both personal attitude and structural force” (Wallis 45). While any race can hold prejudice, where one dislikes another because of group membership, the disproportionate power whites hold in the USA makes racism is connected to whiteness (Halley, Eshleman, and Vijaya 13). However, this is not to say that all white individuals express overt racist beliefs. Rothenberg states, “Racism, like other forms of oppression, is not only a personal ideology based on racial prejudice but a system involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals” (127). It is important to remember these different forms when approaching racism. These forms include individual, cultural, and structural. As described in, *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*, individual racism speaks to personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that reinforce the superiority of whites over nonwhites, explicit or implicit (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito 76). Cultural racism is, “the cultural images and messages that affirm the assumed superiority of whites and the assumed inferiority of people of color” (Rothenberg



126). Structural racism (also referred to as systematic or institutional racism) is where systems, both social and economic, favor white groups over colored groups. Although these forms of racism can be overt and intentional, they are often unnoticed or recognized as they are covertly woven into society. For this reason, it is especially important to bring light to covert forms of racism, so they can be recognized and changed.

### ***Structural Racism***

Structural racism is one of the most pervasive forms of racism in society which often goes unnoticed. In her article found in the *Harvard Educational Review*, Diane Gusa says structural racism can be seen as “racism by consequence,” as it has “historically evolved and presently operates within society” (465). The lasting effects of the United States’ history with slavery contributes to structural racism. Societal and political institutions are ran in such a way that benefit white individuals over individuals of color. Examples of this structural racism can be found in education disparity, hiring practices, housing limitations, immigration policies, the US criminal justice system, and many other sectors of society (464).

For example, the current US criminal justice system is a form of systematic racism that has received much attention over the last few years. Within the criminal justice system there is a disproportionately high incarceration rate for those of color compared to whites. Bryan Stevenson, author, attorney, and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, writes that in the 1970s, 300,000 individuals were incarcerated. In 2013, there were 2.3 million people incarcerated. As stated in his book *Just Mercy*, Stevenson says, “One in fifteen people born in the US in 2001 is expected to go to jail or prison; one in every three black male babies born in this century is expected to be incarcerated” (15). In her book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, author and lawyer Michelle Alexander compares this inequality to the

Jim Crow Laws, where there was separate treatment for whites and those of color (4). Based on the disproportionate incarceration rates, the system clearly executes unequal treatment.

Police brutality against individuals of color is another form of structural racism experienced in the nation (Alexander 251). In an extensive study conducted by *The Guardian*, in 2015 Black individuals were killed by police at more than twice the rate of white, Hispanic, Asian, or Native Americans (Swaine, Laughland, Larty, and McCarthy). The shooting of Michal Brown in Ferguson, MI in 2014 brought to question police brutality and the unequal treatment towards colored by the police. This incident ignited the “Black Lives Matter” movement, which campaigns for equal treatment for Blacks.

Although there are many who believe the criminal justice system disadvantages those of color, these topics are also met division and lack of support and understanding from those who fail to recognize that these injustices are examples of how structural racism still exists. Those who fail to recognize the racist nature of these systems are generally whites. Figure 1 demonstrates how whites and blacks have clashing opinions on if race was involved in the police incidences in Ferguson and New York. In both cases, blacks associate the issues with race, and whites do not. This demonstrates that there is a

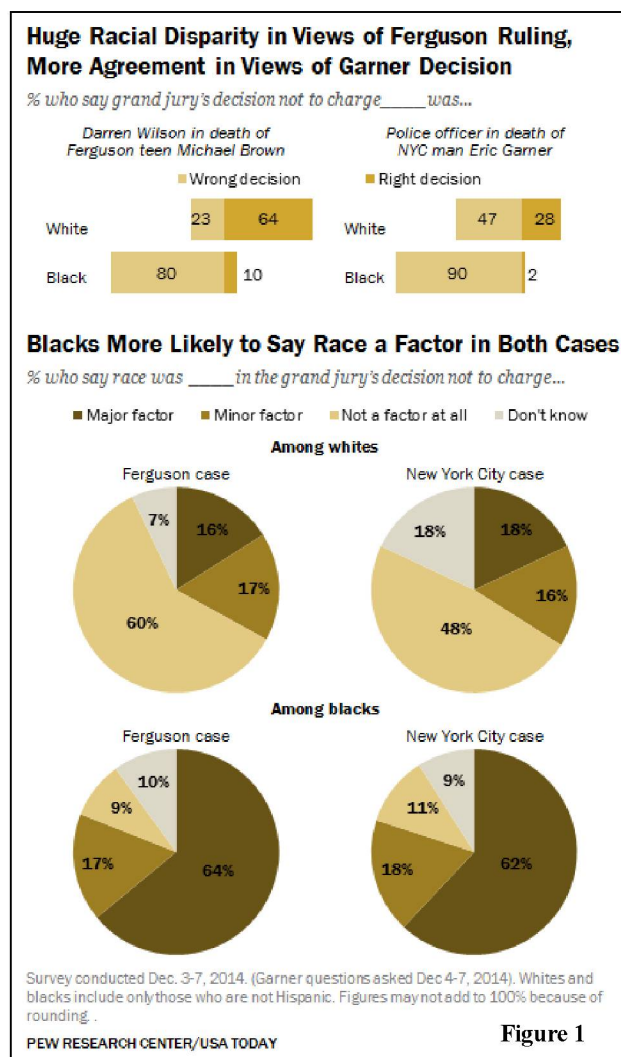


Figure 1

lack of understanding and recognition as to how these issues connect to larger systematic injustices.

There are many other examples of racism built into society. On the topic of hiring practices, one study found, an individual with a white sounding name is 50% more likely to receive a callback than those who have African American sounding names (Bertrand & Mullainathan). In education, quality schools are concentrated in affluent white neighborhoods (Geier). Regarding housing inequalities, individuals of color are less likely to be home-owners and blacks are twice as likely to be denied access to credit (Lawrence & Keleher). Because whites are not generally affected by these inequalities, this economic systematic oppression continues. Failing to see the structural inequalities, whites may even blame colored for their struggle, saying the lack credentials or aren't educated (Bonilla-Silva 44). Failure to recognize allows these structures to continue.

### ***Color-Blindness, White Privilege, and the Need for Awareness***

As illustrated above, systematic racism is embedded into the structures of society, yet, it is a tendency for white individuals to claim that we live in a post-racist society. This is justified by pointing out that the USA has an African-American president, there isn't overt segregation, and forms of blatant racism and discrimination are not socially accepted (Gusa 465). However, author John Powell explains how the concept of "post-racialism" demonstrates a position of race-blindness (7). In her book addressing color-blindness in higher education, author Kimberly Diggles explains that race-blindness, more commonly known as color-blindness, is "the assumption that racism is no longer an influential factor for disparities between the races (32). Individuals may say that they don't see color, but instead recognize everyone as the same. Conversely, the reality is that everyone is not treated equally. This perspective fails to recognize

that political and societal systems support whites over racial minorities, that whites have automatic advantage over those of color, and that discrimination is a daily experience of racial minorities (Diggles 33).

The perspective of color-blindness is connected to white privilege. An article addressing white privilege says that white privilege is the reality that white individuals have unearned benefits based on the color of their skin, as established by structures in society (Leonardo 138). Simply put, society provides advantages for whites over those of color. Authors Abrams and Gibson point out that this privilege is often invisible and exists whether it is recognized or not (151). The color-blind perspective is one example of white privilege. White individuals are not faced directly with racial conflict due to their race, and have the option ignore or remain unaware to structural racism that does occur. Racial minorities don't have the privilege to simply ignore these systems, because their lives are affected by it daily. In *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, Peggy McIntosh lists ways in which white privilege is found in daily life. Examples range from being able to purchase band aids that match one's skin color to seeing ones race represented in education textbooks.

Concepts of color-blindness, white privilege, and racism are difficult for white individuals to engage. Leonardo states, "White guilt blocks critical reflection because whites end up feeling individually blameworthy for racism" (140). When whites hear the term "racist", it evokes a defensive spirit. Racism is seen as a negative value and whites refuse to be associated with that. Leonardo explains, "They become so concerned with whether or not the "look racist" and forsakes the central project of understanding the contours of structural racism" (140). As a result of guilt and failing to recognize structures of racism, whites remain oblivious to racial problems, and the cycle of racism continues. The concept proposed by Miroslav Volf on

exclusion and othering is closely connected to this cycle. In his book *Exclusion and Embrace*, Volf describes “othering” as creating out-groups separate from oneself. “Othering” occurs through exclusion. “We exclude because we are uncomfortable with anything that blurs accepted boundaries, disturbs our identities, and disarranges our symbolic cultural maps” (Volf 78). When faced with differing perspectives and backgrounds, the majority population naturally self-segregates and clings to what is known and familiar. The 2013 American Values Survey, conducted by Public Religion Research Institute, revealed that three-fourths of white American’s have a social network consisting of only white friendships. As demonstrated in *Identity form Matters: White Racial Identity and Attitudes towards Diversity*, this speaks to in-group pride, where “strong in-group identification may predict in-group pride and bias” (Goren & Plaut 239). In-group refers to individuals who share similar backgrounds and identities. When whites are unaware or unwilling to engage in the reality of racial inequality faced in the nation, division, inequality, and separation between groups in society remains. White individuals must be willing to challenge their accepted boundaries for these structures to improve.

It is imperative to challenge structural racism and create systems that promote diversity and inclusion, because the nation is becoming increasingly diverse. There is currently a demographic shift occurring in the USA. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2045, 52% of the population will be made up of Black, Asian, and Hispanic citizens and 48% of white citizens. The nation is also becoming increasingly interconnected with the world because of globalization. When diversity is increased, understanding and equality for all races do not proportionally increase. In *White Institutional Presence: The Impact of Whiteness on Campus Climate*, Gusa reveals, “Even as individual racial prejudice declines, structural racist patterns persist and are attributed to the inertia of U.S. institutional cultures and practices” (465). Structures of racism

and discrimination continue because it is embedded into the nation's roots. To be able to work together as a diverse society, there needs to be a transformation in the thinking of individuals. Individuals must move away from division and harsh controversy, and arrive at a place of understanding, where productive conversations can be held. To challenge color-blindness and white privilege, individuals need to be aware of what creates division and be willing to engage issues of diversity and inclusion. To be racially aware is to recognize that life doesn't offer fair and just opportunities to people of all races (Diggles 32). The majority population must enter into a process of engagement and gain racial sensitivity and racial awareness to prevent continual systematic racism. Higher education is one sector of society where individuals can be trained on this type of engagement.

### **III. Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education**

All sectors of society are impacted by systematic racism and are faced with the challenge to combat these issues so inclusion is a reality for all groups. Higher Education is one specific sector which holds an imperative to address diversity and inclusion. In *The Status of Diversity*, Smith and Wolf-Wendel emphasize that based on the demographic shift occurring in the nation, colleges and universities are becoming increasingly diverse (8). The university population will shift to include an increased number of minority students. This shift is exciting, as argued by Lee, Poch, Shaw, and Williams, because it is recognized as a value for universities to increase in diversity which allows for the engagement of multiple perspectives and cross cultural learning (1). However, as diversity increases, universities must intentionally examine and transform their practices and policies to be inclusion for students from all backgrounds.

True inclusion doesn't come naturally, but requires examination of systematic inequalities as well as institutional transformation. First systematic inequalities must be

recognized. Mueller and Broido explain that systematic injustice is often built into the roots of the universities (58). Universities are regularly founded on the practices, traditions, and perspectives of the majority white culture. Segregation in schools and universities were a significant issue during the civil rights movement, and just 62 years ago, *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruled segregation in public schools unconstitutional. This history of segregation and exclusion is recent and still has lasting effects in all realms of education. Although there isn't overt segregation any more, systemic inequalities is built into the institution. Universities often say they welcome diversity and strive for inclusion of all students. Their commitment to this is demonstrated by accepting an increased number of minority students, organizing a multicultural center, or by celebrating different cultures each month. These efforts are a starting place, but true commitment to diversity and inclusion must be institutionalized (Diggles 38). Diversity is not equal to inclusion. During the 2016 American Council on Education conference, Professor Marta Tienda urges that simply getting minority students on campus is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition. To challenge this, diversity and inclusion efforts must be institutionalized. Administration, faculty and staff, curriculum, and student programming must be restructured to move away from promoting white privilege, and reflect multiple perspectives to bring inclusive. Ways in which to do this will be outlined later in this paper. Inclusion is not present simply by having a diverse student body. Universities must undergo an institutional transformation for real diversity and inclusion to occur.

### *Campus Climate*

The racial campus climate heavily impacts the level of inclusion felt at a university by minority students. Administration, faculty, the location, and other factors contribute to a university campus climate, but the primary contributors are the majority student body. As

discussed previously, like the white US population, majority students tend to hold color-blind perspectives towards race, and are oblivious to the privilege they hold. *The Need for Intercultural Competency Development in Classrooms*, explains that for many students regardless of where they grew up, “college is the first time they experience daily and direct encounters with individuals they define as different” (Lee, Poch, Shaw, and Williams 2). In a personal interview with a college student who will be referred to as Katie Andrews, Andrews commented, “Obviously there are a lot of white people here and not a lot of them have had experiences with other cultures. It baffles my mind when people don’t have understanding towards others. They don’t have knowledge about other countries. That is bad because a lot of people are naive to what is out there. Sometimes it boggles my mind just the things my friends say to me about other places” (Andrews 1). The essay, *White College Students*, explains that majority students do not recognize themselves as racial or cultural beings and lack the vocabulary to engage in such conversations (Cobham 218).

This in turn creates a campus climate that is unengaged in such issues. An article focusing on racial campus climates explains that an inclusive campus climate is necessary because it is heavily connected to the students’ experience (Museus & Truong 18). In a study to more fully understand the themes impacting an inclusive campus climate, Harper and Hurtado found that race topics were seen as taboo, diversity was claimed to be important, but there was little action taken to support claims (18). This is harmful to minority students because they have to abandon their cultural identity to fit into the climate of the university. In *The Climate for Diversity: Key Issues for Institutional Self-Study*, research showed, “Institutional neglect for the climate for diversity can significantly diminish students’ opportunities for feeling part of a



campus life and creating a satisfying undergraduate experience.” (Hurtado, Carter, and Kardia 57).

Studies prove that “students of color perceive campus racial climates to be more hostile than their white counterparts do” (Museus & Truong 18). The illustrations at the beginning of the paper represent two students who suffered from a perceived hostile campus climate. Both students left the university due to feelings of discrimination, as well as the lack of support and connectedness they needed to succeed. In another situation, in fall 2015, at the University of Missouri, student demonstrations called for the resignation of the university president in protest to the way the school handled racial tensions. Members from the university football team even refused to play out of protest. At Western Washington University, school was suspended for a day in November 2015 because of threatening hate speech that targeted students of color. Most recently, at Seattle Pacific University, a race conversation to hear the experience of minority students was held, however, after the meeting, students still felt unheard and represented. They are challenging university administration to act long term on their claim for diversity and inclusion. Students protested a campus climate that lacked inclusion and support for minority students. The campus environment experienced by minority students is reported as “chilly” and “alienating” which indicates a deeper structural problem that should be addressed (Smith & Wolf-Wendel 12). These repeated instances of exclusion based on race, signify that there is a gap in the experience of minority students that must be addressed for inclusion to be possible.

### ***The Imperative for Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education***

Universities are faced with an imperative to address diversity and inclusion to prepare students to engage the world, to remain viable, and as an ethical responsibility to provide support for all the students they serve. First, universities are a place designed to educate, transform, and

prepare students to engage the world. Individuals spend their entire lives growing, learning, and engaging the world around them. The education system specifically helps individuals do this and is established to teach and train students to navigate the world. Higher education, specifically undergraduate education provides a unique experience as students study topics specific to their interests. However, college must be more than simply academics. An article found in the *College Student Affairs Journal* explains, college is a period of holistic education, which engages both psychological and cognitive sides of students (Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford 8). College is a journey where students are required to sort through new ideas and better establish their world-view and perspective on the world. Preconceived ideas are challenged and students are forced to examine their beliefs and perspectives of the world. In addition to earning a degree, universities must equip students with the ability to engage differing perspectives in the world. Universities have an obligation to challenge and prepare students to be culturally competent global citizens of the world.

The vitality and the viability of universities lies in their ability to institutionally embrace diversity and inclusion, where minority students have the support and resources to thrive and structures of systematic racism are reduced. Universities are serving a new population and must learn how to best do that. Universities must engage diversity and seek inclusion because it contributes to minority student retention. Minority students graduate at a disproportioned rate to majority students. Research from Adelman (2006) demonstrates that there is a graduation gap based on race and ethnicity. As cited in *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making it Work*, Smith explains, "His data revealed that 45% of Latinos, 52% of African Americans, 65% of Asian Americans, and 68% of Whites finish." In exploring key issues in minority student retention, Deborah Carter reveals that reasons students drop out include lack of college readiness

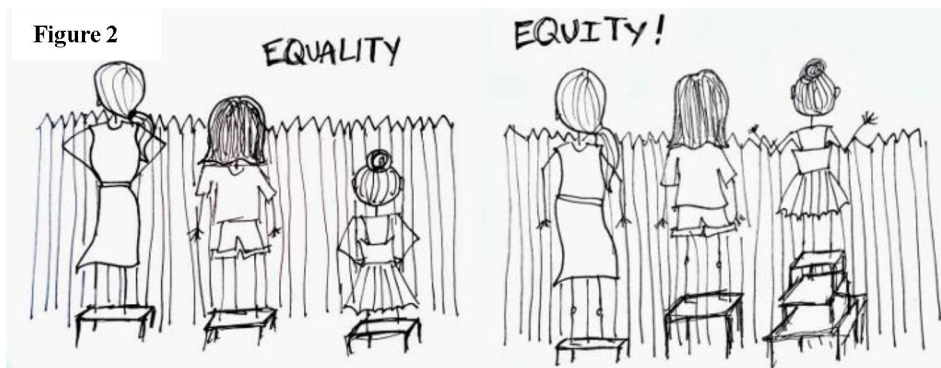
from high school curricula, certain academic majors not supporting minority students, and socioeconomic status (35). In addition, many minority students drop out due to lack of belonging and inclusion. A study on student retention reveals, “Aspects of students’ psychological experience and campus racial climate perceptions affect their persistence decisions” (Johnson, Wasserman, and Yildirim 95). When minority students attend university, they generally enter into a campus climate that is influenced predominately by the majority culture. When the majority culture is the white culture, minority students often don’t have the place to express their own culture. They experience tension with their identity and their sense of belonging. Their cultural traditions are often not understood by the majority culture. When asked to reflect on this in a personal interview, Katie Andrews commented, “[Minority students] visibly stand out because there isn’t a good mix of students here and also since [majority students] don’t have international experience it is hard for international students to be connected to [majority students] on that level” (Andrews). In addition, the students of the majority culture often lack cultural competence and lack knowledge on how to engage and celebrate differences. This results in stereotyping minority students. For universities to retain students, they must create a climate of belonging and inclusion for minority students to succeed and be successful.

Second, universities have an ethical responsibility to provide the best services to the students they serve. Students from a minority background unique challenges and have different needs than students of the majority culture. Minority students often overcome more to get to college. Carter explains that societal systematic racism, such as housing segregation and educational disparity, result in minority students entering university without the same academic training as their white counterparts (35). They are disadvantaged from a system that does not provide equity in education. In addition, minority students experience increased stress due to

their race. Daily, they are conscious and reminded of their race. Diggles explains, “White Americans are more likely to lack awareness of their racial privilege, and the ways in which the benefits they so often enjoy maintain the gaps between themselves and minorities. Racial minorities on the other hand, are likely to be quite aware of the social ramifications of being a racial minority in America” (34). For example, as explained in *Towards a Multicultural Model of the Stress Process*, increase stress in minorities is caused by being the only one of their race in a restaurant or classroom (Salvin, Rainer, McCreary, and Gowda 158). Increased levels of stress are also present due to covert racism or microaggression (Museus & Truong 22).

Microaggressions are seemingly harmless comments which perpetrate racial stereotypes. When a student is a minority on a campus, they often lack an “in-group” of friends with whom they have shared experiences and can identify with. Minority students need additional support to help balance the inequalities and stresses that they experience. Universities may think additional support is not necessary, and each student should be treated equally and have the same opportunities. However, equality is not enough. Universities must demonstrate equity, where additional resources and support are given to level the playing field and undo structural injustices. The illustration from a local blog in “Figure 2” shows how equity provides fair opportunity (*Equity vs. Equality, Meritocracies, Social Justice, and Codes of Conduct*).

Universities can provide this through seeking true inclusion for all students.



**IV. Christian**

## Universities and Diversity and Inclusion

In a subsection of higher education, Christian universities have a unique imperative to address institutionalize diversity and inclusion. Similar to how all universities have an ethical obligation to support and care for all students who attend their universities, Christian universities have an ethical call to embrace diversity and inclusion based off of the Christian values they are led by. Christian universities are founded on biblical principles. In examining several university mission statements, it is clear that Christian principles are a value for these universities and integrated into the mission, curriculum, and heart of the university. As an example, the mission statement of several universities are as follows:

- Whitworth University located in Spokane WA: “To provide a diverse student body an education of the mind and heart, equipping its graduates to honor God, follow Christ, and Serve humanity.” (Whitworth University)
- Seattle Pacific University located in Seattle, WA: “Engaging the culture and changing the world by graduating people of competence and character, becoming people of wisdom, and modeling grace-filled community.” (Seattle Pacific University)
- Northwest University, located in Kirkland, WA: “Carry the call of God by continually building a learning community dedicated to spiritual vitality, academic excellence, and empowered engagement with human need.” (Northwest University)

These universities, among others, directly incorporate carrying the call of God into their mission statement. If Christian universities claim commitment to Christian values, what are the values that should be reflected specifically in regards to the topic of diversity and inclusion? In examining biblical scripture, two central themes emerge including: neighbor love and the theme of reconciliation.

The concept of neighbor love is most widely recognized in the Great Commandment found in Matthew 22:37-39, “Love the Lord Your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” This principle is also echoed throughout the Bible in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Example: Lev. 19-18,34; Deut. 6:5; 10:12, 19; Rom. 13:8-10; Matt. 7:12; Rom. 15:2; James 2:8). Throughout these verses emerges the call to deeply love your neighbor and the stranger. The parable of the Good Samaritan represents a neighbor as someone who unconditionally loves and cares for a stranger despite cultural tensions that might make them enemies. Jim Wallis states “this is an unmistakable command to welcome the stranger and invite the outsider into the community, and, as such, it is an absolute repudiation of racism” (Wallace 105). This true engagement, love, and care towards those who are strangers leaves no room for discrimination or injustice. In her book *Resisting Structural Evil*, Ethicist Cynthia Moe-Lobedia believes neighbor-love is a vocation and call by God to love neighbors as self (Moe-Lobedia 15). She calls for a shift in moral consciousness, where we see the world as interconnected, seek to see the world through the eyes of the oppressed (Moe-Lobedia 120). Moe-Lobedia also argues that neighbor love is empowering, transformative, and self-sacrificial. True neighbor love calls for moral action connected to political and justice making movements (Moe-Lobedia 185). This form of neighbor love is precisely what is reflected in the Good Samaritan story. Tangible action was taken and the Good Samaritan entered into the life of someone who was different from himself and he sought to reconcile the injustice that was done.

A second principle that is central to the gospel is the concept of reconciliation. The death and resurrection of Christ puts reconciliation at the heart of the gospel, as God desired to reconcile sinful humanity to himself. He desired to be in unity with his creation. This

reconciliation process involves repentance, justice, and forgiveness. Brenda Salter McNeil, author of *Roadmap to Reconciliation*, writes, “A wrong must be acknowledged and the cause for the lack of unity identified. There is no sustained peace without justice and no sustained relationships without forgiveness” (McNeil 21). There must be a transaction of confession and forgiveness. In the context of God reconciling his people this transaction comes with confessing the deity of Christ as demonstrated in Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8, John 3:16, among others.

Our unity and reconciliation to Christ is not God’s desired end point for humanity. Through Christ, God reconciled himself to humanity, and calls humanity to be reconciled to one another. Ephesians 2 specifically speaks to a new unity that can take place in humanity through the work of the cross. “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two [Jew and Gentile], thus making peace. And in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross by which he put to death their hostility” (*New International Version*. Eph. 2:14-16). God desires to have a new unity between groups, not one of division or exclusion.

The Bible also speaks to the call God places on humanity to actively engage in reconciliation as demonstrated in 2 Corinthians 5:18, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (*New International Version*). As Christians, Christ calls us into the ministry of reconciliation. It is the heart of God for unity to be pursued on earth, because that contributes to bringing the kingdom on earth. As defined by Salter McNeil, reconciliation is “an ongoing spiritual process involving forgiveness, repentance and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God’s original intention for all creation to flourish” (22). Christians should actively seek out and be agents of this restoration.

The biblical principles of neighbor love and reconciliation are central biblical principles that should be incorporated into the values of Christian Universities. Neighbor love neighbor love consists of entering into the lives of the stranger and taking action to seek justice. By embracing diversity, universities reflect this principle. Universities can reflect this principle by welcoming students from diverse background and truly listen to and value their unique perspectives. Minority students should not have to assimilate into a university, but should be able to express their individuality. Majority students should enter into relationships with those different from themselves, to learn and to be transformed.

Reconciliation, specifically racial reconciliation, is about living in unity with one another specifically by entering into a process of repentance, justice, and forgiveness that restores broken systems. To combat systematic racism and create a climate of inclusion, Christian universities must be led by the concept of racial reconciliation. They must recognize the ways in which their power and privilege excludes others, repent, and enter into a transformed relationship of inclusion, which seeks to right the wrong done. This work is hard, but with the empowerment of Christ it is possible. Christian Universities especially should be committed to these principles. Regarding the call on Christian Universities, Longman writes, “An overarching characteristic of these campuses- large and small- comes from the passion, competence, and sacrificial investment that many people are making because they view the strategic mission of Christian higher education as being highly effective instruments for bringing “salt and light” into every sphere of influence across the broken world” (23).

Christian Universities around the nation have recognized that although there is effort to live out these biblical principles and increase diversity and inclusion, there is a gap in the experience of minority students and majority students. They have recognized that it is imperative



to re-think the way diversity and inclusion is engaged at their institution and have started making a serious commitment to such efforts. The Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) is a network 180 Christian universities around the world, which recently launched a commission on Diversity and Inclusion. “There is an imperative for continuing the teaching, learning and practicing of racial reconciliation within Christian higher education,” said CCCU President Shirley V. Hoogstra. “We want to have a posture of humility so we can ask, ‘What don’t we know and what can we learn?’ And we want to have the courage to forge ahead with boldness because Christ empowers and renews every day” (CCCU). With this attitude, there is great hope in the transformation that can come.

#### **V. How Christian Universities Currently Address Diversity and Inclusion**

In recognition that diversity and inclusion is an imperative to live out biblical principles and also remain viable in the increasingly diverse world, the CCCU held a conference which specifically focused on best practices to engage diversity and inclusion in September 2015. Keynote speaker and author, Daryl Smith, identified that for campus climates to be one that welcomes diversity and seeks inclusion, all levels of the university must be transformed and engaged. It can be common for universities to address diversity by simply accepting an increased number of diverse students, holding a cultural appreciation program during the semester, or even by hiring a staff member committed to diversity and inclusion. These approaches can be effective, but alone, they fail to address or change systematic injustice that may limit or hinder diversity and inclusion movements. A holistic approach needs to be taken, where diversity and inclusion is institutionalized and the university is engaged at every level. Smith shares best practices for this holistic approach, which requires every level of the university to be transformed including: administration, faculty and staff, curriculum, and student programming.

### *Administrative Commitment*

An institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion must first be demonstrated through administration commitment. All levels of the university should be engaged, from the highest to the lowest. Starting at the top, university leadership sets the tone and example for what true engagement looks at. A university administration is the core leadership of the university who set the tone for what is considered to be important at the school. A valuable leadership type is transformational leadership. This form of leadership is aimed towards a deeper structural shift or “point of view shift.” In his book to leaders, Quinn argues for this to happen, that the leader must be transformed themselves first (4). An institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion must be modeled at the top. Effective commitment can be accomplished through strategic plans for diversity and inclusive excellence. A strategic plan outlines specific objectives and outcomes that must be met and also provides a method for assessment. Smith urges that clearly defined goals and measurable outcomes are necessary for accountability (214). Having a clear strategic plan is important because it serves as a clear way to articulate what the diversity and inclusion initiatives are as well as requires assessment elements. When true commitment lacks, students, students report feeling as if the university claims of diversity are empty because when issues surrounding diversity get tough, leadership is absent in addressing the issue.

For example, at Northwest University, a racial comment was left on the whiteboard in one of the classrooms. Many students were offended and hurt by the comment. The administration addressed the issue by sending out an email saying strongly condoning the behavior. It was positive that the university acknowledged the behavior wasn't accepted on campus, however there was no dialogue about what made the comments wrong or hurtful. There was no discussion for students who were hurt to express their feelings, and there was no follow

up to make the incident a growing and educational experience from others. This resonated with students as the university having a surface commitment to diversity which lacked true commitment and engagement when an issue arose.

In contrast, at Whitworth University an issue arose with students dressing in “black face” for a costume party. The image was posted on social media and received critique due to the negative and derogatory history associated with black face. The school quickly addressed the issue issuing a consequence for the students, as well as used it as an educational opportunity to inform students about racial issues they may not be aware of. The difference approaches to these situations could be because Northwest University does not have a clear strategic plan for diversity and inclusion, while Whitworth University does.

### ***Faculty and Staff Training***

Second, faculty and staff must be engaged and commitment to diversity and inclusion because they play a significant part in the student experience. Faculty often teach from one perspective and one set of experiences which may make it hard for them to recognize the needs of minority students in their class as well as teach multiple perspectives. Like anyone, faculty and staff can fall victim to unconscious bias and may treat students a certain way. In the essay, *Oppression and Its Effect on College Student Identity Development*, Howard-Hamilton and Hinton explain:

When faculty members do not teach students how to view their own work and personal space from a multicultural lens they create a covert bias that limits students’ growth and development. The classroom becomes a place in which specific material from the dominate culture is presented, giving a subtle message that this model fits everyone, thus marginalized group must accept the norm. (23).

The bias a professor holds may enforce components of structural racism and contribute to a non-inclusive campus environment. Faculty should undergo training so they are aware of their own biases and are prepared to teach and empathize with multiple perspectives. Faculty have an opportunity to transform their classrooms into a place that engages difficult dialogue (Smith 239).

### ***Curriculum Development***

Curriculum development is a third component which must undergo transformation. University curriculum must be diversified. The American education system teaches from a limited set of voices and perspectives. However, Smith encourages that diverse perspectives add to the excellence of the university (237). Diversity in curriculum should be recognized as a strength and an opportunity for learning (Smith 239). Extensive research done at University of Michigan demonstrated that diverse experiences in student learning “would interrupt habitual thinking that is likely to interfere with learning” which would lead to increased cognitive complexity and creativity (Langer 1997 as cited in Smith 226). Curriculum diversity provides majority students with the opportunity to hear differing perspectives and challenge their assumptions. It also affirms minority student sense of belonging as they are able to identify with the perspectives represented.

### ***Student Programing***

The fourth area which needs to be involved to institutionalize diversity and inclusion is student programing. It is important to consider that student program only has lasting effects when they are held in tandem with administration, faculty and staff, and curriculum commitment to diversity and inclusion. Diggles urges that, “In order to be effective in increasing racial awareness, educational experiences ought to be experiential and transformative in nature. These

experiences should also be weaved throughout students' entire campus experience" (38). It can be a tendency for student programming to be the universities only approach to diversity and inclusion. However, programming alone doesn't demonstrate full institutional commitment. Diversity programming is impactful because it is an immediate and visible way to engage the student body on important issues. Programming should exist for both minority and majority students. However, as will be discussed, programming is generally focused towards minority students, but for a campus of inclusion, majority students must be engaged.

### ***Minority Student Programming***

Programming for minority students is a necessity to adequately support through the increased challenges they face and also to contribute to a sense of belonging. Minority students need more support during their time at university due to the systemic inequalities that give a disadvantage when entering universities. As explained previously, minority students are faced with systematic inequalities daily, and have increased levels of stress do to that inequality. Programming serves as a place to support and advocate for hardships students may experience. Programming also gives students network of support with students of a similar background and experience. A difficulty minority students face is the lack of an "in-group." Especially at private Christian universities, the minority student population is significantly less than the majority student population.

Often multicultural centers or diversity offices serve as a place for minority students to come together, be supported, and be heard. As an example, Whitworth University has an office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This office oversees institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion as well as gives student support. They offer student programs such as cultural awareness week, racial identity development training, and support ethnic student union clubs.

Seattle Pacific University offers similar programming through the Multi-Ethnic Programs department. These programs are important because they create an in-group and sense of belonging among minority students. For example, students who attended an orientation session specifically for minority and first generation college students, appreciated being able to connect with individuals from a similar background, and relied on those friends for support throughout the school year (Seattle Pacific University). These programs help students through discrimination they might experience and provide a safe place for them to embrace their identities. While student programming generally focus on support for minority students, it is important for programming to also engage and educate majority students on topics related to diversity and inclusion.

### ***Majority Student Programming***

The focus thus far has been on the need for universities to institutionalize efforts towards diversity and inclusion. This means involving all aspects of the university, so there is transformation in the structure, thinking, and framework of the school. Involving majority students in this conversation, and providing a place for them to be transformed in their approach towards diversity and inclusion, is a necessary part of institutionalizing diversity and inclusion. As discussed earlier, principles that should be reflected at Christian universities are ones of neighbor love and reconciliation. There is a lack of programs that provide true, transformative, engagement for majority students on diversity and inclusion. Majority students must receive intentional training on diversity issues so they are challenged to enter into the story of the other, live out neighbor love, and seek reconciliation. The duration of this thesis will be focused how to address this gap by examining why minority students need to be engaged, what

theories can guide knowing how to engage majority students, what is currently being done, and finally a proposal of guidelines that can be used when developing majority student programing.

## **VI. Majority Student Programing**

Intentional diversity programing for majority students is important to increase white students' critical racial consciousness. Critical racial consciousness speaks to one's ability to self-reflect about their own culture and backgrounds. Diggles states, "Racial awareness is a critical foundation to racial sensitivity" (31). Students at private Christian universities generally come from a white, middle to upper class background. They traditionally have limited extended exposure to experiences differing from their own. Individuals who are part of the majority culture have less racial awareness because they aren't required to think of their race on a daily basis. Part of the structural injustice in society speaks to this. Being white means having the ability to not be aware that you are white. For students to be able to enter into relationships with their neighbor and participate in diversity and inclusion efforts, they must be self-reflective and aware of their own culture.

Self-awareness is important so majority students can engage in conversation around race and diversity issues. Students are not often given an opportunity to deeply understand their own culture and are generally lack a voice and vocabulary to discuss these issues. As noted in *Developing Cultural Critical Consciousness and Self-Reflection in Preservice Teaching Education*, many students are silent about race issues or think racism is non-existent (Gay & Kirkland 183). This creates disconnect between majority and minority students. Minority students who may want to discuss struggles they experience, or even share their cultural background, are met by students who don't understand and can't engage. Minority students report feeling as if they are the ones who have to educate majority students, which is frustrating

when majority students don't have the critical racial consciousness to understand. To overcome these barriers self-reflection and cultural critical consciousness must be routinely engaged and modeled in programming (Gay & Kirkland 184). Gay and Kirkland also note, "Even students who are not deliberately opposed to dealing with racially and culturally diverse issues in education need guidance and support in critiquing and changing thoughts, beliefs and behaviors related to them" (184). Students must know themselves so they can engage with others. This relates to a principle of community development. Brant Myers, a leader in community development principles, demonstrates that good community development work is done by deeply being informed and knowing the community (182). In seeking neighbor love, it is the responsibility of the majority student to know their own background so they can better relate to, understand, and enter into community with those from a different background. University programming should provide students an opportunity to increase critical racial consciousness.

Diversity programming for majority students is important as majority students directly impact the campus climate in regards to how diversity and inclusion is engaged. As discussed previously, majority students play a large role in the climate of the school. The priority and focus of universities are often a result of what the student body claims as important. Students have a voice and hold power in the operation of the school. This fact is especially relevant when examining campus climate, the campus attitude, and student engagement towards diversity, culture, and race. When students are more culturally competent and engaged in issues surrounding diversity and inclusion, the campus usually reflects one of openness. This leads to an increased sense of belonging, acceptance, and inclusion among the minority students. However, when the majority student body is uninformed and unengaged in issues surrounding diversity and inclusion, minority student belonging decreases.



In addition to having the need of increasing critical racial consciousness and contributing to a campus climate of inclusion, universities must engage majority students in diversity programming to prepare them to engage the diverse world. The world is becoming increasingly connected. Globalization affects every occupation. The text *Cultures and Organizations* demonstrates that on a basic level, students must be educated on how to effectively engage and understand different cultures and background that a different from themselves (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 6). This is important in assisting students in being comfortable interacting with cultures different from their own. On a more complex level, students should engage diversity and inclusion to recognize how the globalized world is messy. The interconnectedness of the world doesn't equally benefit all groups. The western world leads the globalization development, which marginalizes groups - often those of color. Specifically Christian universities need to prepare students to engage this topic so when they go into the world they can be agents that fight against the marginalization of others. Moe-Lobeda sees this moral call as especially important. She states, "The challenge is not merely unmasking systematic injustice, but doing so in ways that evoke moral action. Moral vision without action is not moral vision" (Moe-Lobeda 113). There is a biblical imperative to engage justice and seek unity between people. Quality graduates are students who are mindful of this topic and are able to engage and advocate for justice. Graduates must have understanding on how to engage and understand with groups different from themselves. This will lead to societal transformation.

Universities claim they desire to increase diversity and inclusion on their campuses. As demonstrated above, true institutionalization and transformation surrounding diversity and inclusion issues happen when the entire university is involved. The majority population of students is a large part of the university whose attitudes, beliefs, and experiences greatly impact

the campus climate towards diversity and inclusion. For universities to reach their goal of true inclusion for all students, the majority population must too be transformed and educated on how to engage diversity and inclusion. Within diversity and inclusion initiatives, universities must provide intentional education programs to educate and train majority students on issues surrounding culture, race, and diversity. These programs should move majority students from cultural naivety and bring students through a process of true engagement led by self-reflection and awareness. This will equip students to not only be informed and better prepared to engage in diversity on campus, but will also move students to become agents of racial and cultural reconciliation.

### ***Theoretical Framework for Majority Student Programming***

In recognizing the importance for universities to provide intentional education programs to engage majority students on topics of diversity and inclusion, it is necessary to understand theoretically how majority students increase competence to engage such issues. There are many theories and studies focused on minority identity development. However, examining models specifically for majority identity development is needed, as majority students are the target population to engage. In the realm of research, there are limited studies and research theories relating to majority development. Two popular studies include the White Identity Development Model (Helms 1993) and the Intercultural Competence Model (Deardorff 2006, 2009). These theories will serve as a framework to guide the development of effective majority student programming.

### ***White Identity Development Model***

The White Identity Development Model, as developed by Janet Helms (1993), focuses on the process moving from a racist framework to a nonracist white identity. Addressing racism within white identity addresses three different types of racism including: (a) individual racism

(b) institutional racism, and (c) cultural racism. Individual racism addresses personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that reinforce the superiority of whites over nonwhites. Institutional racism speaks to structural injustice and inequality where social policies, laws, and regulations promote economic and social privileges for whites over non-whites. In the book *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*, cultural racism refers to believing the culture and customs or white culture are superior to non-white (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito 76).

To overcome these racial tendencies, Helms proposes a six-step model that moves students through two phases: abandonment of racism and defining a nonracist white identity. The first stage of abandonment of racism consists of three statuses including contact, disintegration, and reintegration. During the contact status, an individual has a color-neutral and naïve approach to other culture with limited interracial interaction. The second status is disintegration, where individuals acknowledge the treatment of whites and colored are different. This creates discomfort and dissonance resulting in the avoidance of colored individuals. In the third status of reintegration, white identity and privilege is acknowledged. In this stage, the feelings of guilt in recognizing one's privilege turns to fear and anger which is expressed passively or actively. To move out of this stage, an individual must question their definition of whiteness and must move away from justification of racism.

At this point, the second phase of defining a nonracist identity begins. The first status in this second phase is the pseudo-independent status, where individuals begin to question their assumptions of colored and redefine their white identity. Immersion-Emersion is the fifth status where "whites replace white and black stereotypes with more accurate information about what it really means to be white in the United States" (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito 79). The sixth

and final status is autonomy, where a new identity of whiteness is embraced. Individuals are no longer threatened by race, and actively seek to learn and reduce racism and oppression.

Helm's White Identity Development Model reveal that there is a process individuals go through when developing white identity. In exploring white racial identity, Leach, Behrens, and LaFleur report that little research had been conducted relating to white identity prior to this model (66). In a critique of this model, Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) reveal that there is little attention given to how whites feel about themselves. They argue that "white racial identity as currently conceptualized does not seem to emphasize a person's connected with the White racial group" (Leach, Behrens, and LaFleur 68). It assumes that whites have a developed self-identity. However, as identified prior, white self-identity is generally less developed because members of the majority are not required to engage their ethnicity regularly. As a suggested modification to Helm's model, Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) propose three identity forms: "a weakly identified *contact* status associated with low exposure to diversity, a prideful *reintegration* status associated with moderate exposure to diversity, and a *power-cognizant* autonomy status associated with continual, positive exposure to diversity" (Gorden & Plaut 239). These modifications still demonstrate that there is a period of unknowing, a period of unrest, and a period of acceptance during white identity development.

### ***Intercultural Competence Model***

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to interact successful with another culture or with someone from a different background. Although intercultural competence differs slightly from the topic of diversity and engagement, Deardorff's model of intercultural competence walks through the steps needed to engage in differences. Training majority students on how to engage in diversity and inclusion efforts requires students to engage in differences, so much can

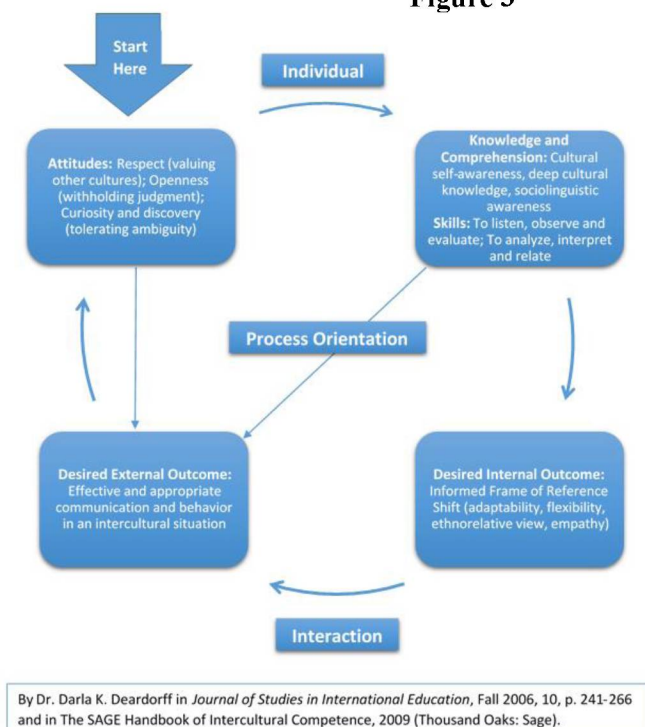
be gleaned from this model. Deardorff's model for intercultural competence is designed as a cycle consisting of four stages. The first to stages requires intentional individual development addressing attitudes, knowledge and comprehension towards engaging differences. When adequate individual development, desired internal and external outcomes take place, which represent the final two stages. Please refer to Figure 3 as a model.

Attitude development is the first stage of the cycle to intercultural competence. An individual must have the correct attitude to engage in differences. These attitudes include *respect*, *openness*, and *curiosity*.

Development of these attitudes are prerequisites to developing intercultural competence. *Respect* refers to the genuine value and dignity

in the other. *Openness* refers to recognition and "acceptance of multiple ways of interpreting the world and withholding premature judgement toward other worldviews, perspectives and behaviors" (Deardorff 2006 as qtd. in Lee, Poch, Shaw, and Williams 32). Finally, *Curiosity* and discovery refers to the need to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty (Lee, Poch, Shaw, and Williams 33). These same attitudes must be present for majority students to engage in diversity. Developing these attitudes takes intentionality, because it requires students to see beyond their cultural perspective and seek to understand the views of another.

Figure 3



In the second stage in Deardorff's model is Knowledge and Comprehension. This cycle stresses the importance of self-awareness and understanding one's own identity. As described in *The Need for Intercultural Competency Development in Classrooms*, "In order to communicate well with diverse others, one needs a basis of knowledge about their cultures to butt their words and behaviors in the appropriate context" (Lee, Poch, Shaw, and Williams 35). One needs to understand their own cultural biases to engage in a differing perspective. This principle is also necessary when majority students engage diversity.

When the first two stages are engaged and individuals have developed correct attitudes, knowledge, and comprehension, then internal and external outcomes are seen. Internal outcomes consist of an internal frame shift, where an individual has the ability to be adaptable, flexible, and empathize with different perspectives. External outcomes consist of positive intercultural interactions with appropriate behavior and communication. Deardorff's model of intercultural competence is an excellent point of reference for developing majority student diversity programming because it emphasizes the necessity for students to undergo a shift in their perspectives and knowledge towards the world, and utilizes self-reflection for this perspective shift to happen.

### ***Current Majority Student Programming***

Universities don't completely neglect majority student programming on diversity, however they lack a holistic model that brings students through the process found in the white identity development model or the model for intercultural competence. Often, when campus diversity programs exist for majority students, programs are generally externally focused. This means that majority students learn how other cultures are different and how to tolerate those differences. They learn how other individuals are different, but aren't educated to increase racial critical

consciousness; to understand their own culture and see where their background fits into the conversation of understanding others. As demonstrated in white identity development and cultural competence, self-reflection and understanding self-identity is a crucial piece to being able to engage externally.

Examples of these programs include events such as cultural food celebrations, international film festivals, or even programs focusing on an ethnic celebration month. Some universities point to mission trips or study abroad programs as a way students being equipped to be culturally competent and racially engaged. It is important to note, that without intentional education and dialog before, during, and after these trips, the necessary level of educational engagement is not being met to make these programs meaningful. If students aren't engaged in the processes suggested by the white identity development model, or the model for intercultural competence, the differing cultures they experience could actually enforce levels of cultural superiority or ethnocentrism. For mission trips especially, students should engage extensive training on their own background and privilege and learn how to interact with a diverse community following proper models. Otherwise it would be easy to have an attitude of cultural superiority and not bring out the value and worth in the people being served. The article *Diversity Training: Putting Theory into Practice*, explains that these programs aren't inherently bad, but alone without consistent engagement and reflection, they can make these diverse backgrounds exotic and different, which "others" and creates distance between groups instead of empathy and connectedness (Pendry, Driscoll, and Field 43).

Other universities do have intentional programming for engaging majority students in some aspects of culture, race, and diversity for majority students. Whitworth University, for example, holds a monthly discussion called Courageous Conversations, where students engage in

intentional conversation about challenging social issues. Topics covered include discussions surrounding the LGBTQ community, the Black Lives Matter movement, and reconciliation. Whitworth also has a student leadership position called Cultural Diversity Advocates (CDA). CDA's are student leaders who live in the dorms and help foster an environment of inclusion. They also hold diversity engagement programs throughout the semester.

Biola University, located in southern California, holds a two day conference called the Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation (SCORR). Students, staff, and faculty from Biola and surrounding schools come together learn about diversity within the body of Christ. Biola also has a scholarship program titled "Leaders Engaging and Advancing Diversity" where students are given a scholarship for demonstrating cultural humility and has learned from their own cultural background. Scholars participate in a weekly training and development course. These programs are impactful and are a starting place to engaging the student body on diversity issues. However, such programing should ensure that self-reflection is central in the training. If students are on the beginning stages of the white identity development model and aren't prepared to engage in difficult conversations surrounding race, strong levels of guilt could cause dissonance and disengagement from such topics (Pendry, Driscoll, and Field 31).

## **VII. Guidelines to Effective Majority Student Programing**

Despite the efforts of current majority student programing, there is a gap in the breadth and depth in engagement provided. In an article discussing the need for multicultural teaching, Gay and Kirkland write, "It is not enough to have courageous conversations about racism and social injustices, to appreciate cultural differences, and accept the need to be reflective in one's personal beliefs and practices. Teachers need to practice actually engaging in cultural critical consciousness and personal reflection" (186). Current programing tends to focus on courageous



conversations but lacks the true reflection on personal beliefs and practices. As identified in the white identity development model and the intercultural competency model, self-reflection is a crucial component that contributes to student's ability to successfully engage diversity and inclusion. An article focusing on increasing capacity for dialogue explains that self-awareness and self-reflection are critical pieces that will allow students to not simply externally engage topics surrounding diversity, but will transform and equip students to actively participate (Terhune 142). To assist in guiding what self-reflective cultural programming should look like, Pope and Reynolds describe characteristics that should be found in self-reflective multicultural awareness.

- A willingness to take risks and see risk taking as necessary for self-awareness
- A belief that understanding one's own culture heritage and worldview is the starting place for understanding others
- A willingness to self-examine values and assumptions and to make changes according to that examination
- A belief that change is necessary and positive
- An awareness of how one's attitudes and behaviors affect others"

(Arminio, Torres, and Pope 11).

Programming that is focused on building these characteristics self-awareness and critical racial development in majority students is desirable in theory, but actual implementation can be difficult. It is difficult to know what should be covered to increase students' self-reflection towards culture, race, and diversity. Programming should be purposeful in connecting majority students to the topic of diversity and culture as suggested by Diggles:

Campus programming should purposefully challenge students to engage in active consideration of race- their own as well as others. Pushing students to focus on their own personal experiences of racism and racial identity is cited as being an important competent to developing racial awareness. This type of identity work helps students become aware of their own role in the systems of race-based privilege and oppression, this deepening their awareness of how race shapes reality (38).

### ***Five Components to Reflective Diversity Engagement***

In desire to assist universities in effectively engaging the majority population, I propose a set of guidelines universities can use when creating majority student cultural programming. These guidelines are called, “Five Components to Reflective Diversity Engagement.” These components serve as a guide for the content that should be covered during programming. The “Five Components to Reflective Diversity Engagement include:

1. Spiritually Rooted
2. Reflective Identity
3. Culturally Competent
4. Historically Informed
4. Racially Aware

The goal in these components is to create a movement from cultural naivety and bring students through a process of true engagement led by self-reflection and awareness. This will equip students to not only be informed and better prepared engage in diversity on campus, but will also move students to become agents of racial and cultural reconciliation. These components are holistic and engage both the psychological and cognitive sides of the student (Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, and Shuford 8). Through these components, students will be engaged on what true engagement with the world looks like. They will be challenged to critically think about the following questions. What does deep love and understanding for one another look like? How can

we recognize and learn from differences? How can we get to a place where we value all people, even those who hold different world views, cultures, and perspectives? How can we advocate and stand up for those who are marginalized and oppressed? Engaging these questions takes intentionality and work. It is a difficult process and will be challenging. However, it is imperative for universities engage the majority population on diversity and inclusion so campus climates can be transformed and inclusion for minority students increases. An outline of the core principles of each component are explained below.

### ***Component One: Spirituality Rooted***

As a foundation to engage topics surrounding diversity, inclusion, race, and culture, students should be spiritually rooted in what scripture has to say on such topics. When asked to be self-reflective, students may find elements of their history, beliefs, or biases that they are uncomfortable with. When learning about racism and the hardships of others, students may have feelings of guilt or shame. This can cause students to pull away and disconnect from true engagement. But, when guided by spiritual principles, students can recognize that engaging these topics is a call of the bible. They can be empowered and strengthened by the spirit to have an open mind and be transformed in their ability to engage in diversity. As previously discussed, the Bible speaks to the call of pursuing neighbor-love and reconciliation. Students should engage what true-neighbor love means and what the process to reconciliation looks like. They should also engage how the bible celebrates diversity. When a student is rooted and committed to these principles, they have a moral obligation learn and be transformed and have an empowerment to think beyond self and deeply love another.

### ***Component Two: Reflective Identity***

The component of reflective identity is central to reflective diversity engagement. Because of this, this component is explained in further depth than the other four components. Identities are powerful. They shape the way individuals see themselves and how they see and interact with others. They are a foundation of worldviews. Identities are also often heavily shaped by the culture groups that each person is a part of. Humans need identity to survive and have a sense of belonging in the world. Because of this, a reflective identity is important in becoming agents of true engagement towards racial and social justice and reconciliation.

Identity understanding is the starting point to be able to engage diverse perspectives. Identity engagement must happen on multiple levels. First, students should be reflective about their personal background and the families they grew up in. Reflection on this level allows students to identify what some of their values are and where those values came from. This engagement of identity reflection is termed self-reflection. The personal background of individuals heavily shapes the way they see the world. In an interview with 10 students regarding racial identity development, students who had a better understanding of their background possessed a greater ability to understand the complexity of diversity and culture. Students reflected on how through personal reflection, students identified how their background and childhood influence their current identity and values. This process is also important to implement as a foundation and starting point in majority student diversity programming.

A second identity which much be engaged is cultural identity. A major barrier to engaging reconciliation and race topics between white and colored students is the differing levels of prior engagement of these issues. As discussed previously, students of color have a developed racial critical consciousness because they are affected by racism on a daily basis. White students,

on the other hand, lack racial critical consciousness because they haven't critically thought about their race or culture. To develop in this aspect, students must learn about their culture. They must engage in what it means to be white and the privilege associated with that. White privilege is very real. It is hard to navigate and evokes defensiveness. But through engaging history (as explained later) and through understanding culture, students can recognize what it means to be white and how their privilege affects their lives.

### ***Component Three: Culturally Competent***

In the third component, students must understand the elements that make up culture and be able to recognize and understand the differences between cultures. Understanding culture gives a better insight into the experiences of the other. This contributes to contextual knowing which "involves constructing one's perspective in the context of one's experiences, available information, and the experiences of others" (Arminio, Torres, and Pope 38). It gives context when seeking to understand differences and be inclusive. It allows students to recognize the perspective they come from and the biases that may be associated with that. When it is recognized that cultures have different practices and tendencies, individual cultural differences can be appreciated. In Ortiz and Rhoads (2000) model in cross-culture interactions, "People must first understand the nature of culture, learn about others' cultures, learn about one's own culture, and commit to social action to achieve true equity" (Arminio, Torres, and Pope 41). To seek to understand a culture is to seek to understand an individual.

### ***Component Four: Historically Informed***

Students need to be aware of historical realities so they can understand what happened in the past and start to put that into the conversation about how it affects current realities (Arminio, Torres, and Pope 34). This is essential when seeking to understand racism. For example, as

discussed previously, systematic racism is a result of the history and structure established within the founding of the United States. Looking at the past gives a deeper understanding as to why systematic racism currently discriminates against minorities. History also serves as a way to engage topics of racism. Through studying historical events, students can objectively observe what happened and then connect the situations to current events. In another situation, discussions utilizing with personal history stories allowed for empathy and perspective taking to form.

Arminio, Torres, and Pope found that “proven successful strategies for cultural training for staff members took place in two workshops, one that focused on teaching cultural awareness issues such as power and privilege, and a second one in which staff members exchanged stories of their families’ histories in the US” (24).

#### ***Component Five: Racially Aware***

In seeking to increase engagement and understanding surrounding diversity, culture, and race, it is essential for students to be racially aware. First, they must be aware of their own race and ethnicity. This is explored in the second component of reflective identity. Second, students need to understand the race and experiences of other cultures. This is explored in the third component of culturally competent. Third, students must engage in the understanding of racism. Racism is a difficult topic to engage because it is an emotionally charged word. As discussed previously, white individuals tend to get defensive when racism is discussed. Instead of viewing racism as a personal quality, racism should be recognized as a societal reality. Students should discuss the three elements of racism (a) individual racism (b) institutional racism, and (c) cultural racism, and be reflective as to how their background, bias, or perspectives contribute to racism. This component needs to be discussed after students deeply understand their own background so they are able to engage in such difficult conversations.

When these components are engaged in majority student diversity programing, students will have a solid foundation to engage complex issues surrounding diversity, as they have become self-reflective and have the capacity to engage such issues. As the student body increases their capacity to engage topics related to diversity, the campus climate will shift from a “chilly” environment, to a “warm” environment, where minority students feel an increasing sense of belonging.

### ***VIII. Conclusion***

The United States population is becoming increasingly diverse. This diversity brings opportunity for collaboration, growth, and innovation, but unfortunately, the climate in the USA is not inclusive to all. The racist component of the nation’s history still effects society today, and takes form predominantly as structural racism. Structural racism excludes, limits, and hinders the minority population. Unfortunately, the majority population lacks critical racial development to understand the racism present, and often contributes to discrimination and lack of understanding of others. The country is faced with much tension surrounding this exclusion, and must seek to bring inclusion for all individuals.

Higher Education is faced with a similar imperative. The increasingly diverse population results in an increase of diversity on university campuses. A diverse student population is desired, but due to a chilly campus climate, lack of support, and majority students who lack critical racial consciousness, minority students feel excluded. To resist structural inequalities towards minority students, universities must institutionalize efforts of diversity and inclusion, especially by increasing student programing for majority students.

Programing for majority students must be centered in self-reflection. Students must understand their own background so they can engage in the lives of others. As a guide,

universities should use the Five Components to Reflective Diversity Engagement, which covers topics of faith, identity, culture, history, and racism, through a self-reflective approach. When majority students are educated and engaged in conversations surrounding diversity, culture, and race, the campus climate will be transformed. Minority students will find belonging and feel understood, without having to fit into the mold accepted by the majority culture. Majority students will stand up for others and be driven by neighbor-love and seek reconciliation in relationships.

The movement to true inclusion on university campuses through the engagement of majority students also will transform society. Universities will graduate competent, culturally aware professionals, who have the heart and drive to seek inclusion for others. This is what the nation needs. Christian universities must rise to the occasion to model reconciliation and true inclusion as Christ desires, for all people. In an interview with the American Council on Education, Princeton Professor Marta Tienda passionately stated,

If we can't, on college campuses, teach and learn about differences and find it as a strength, then where? If not now, then when? And if not Higher Education leaders to lead the charge, to promote equity and inclusion on the campuses, to define it in any way possible, so we have students, in their curriculum, learning about its differences and it's possibilities, then we're not doing our job on campuses to really capitalize on diversity (Tienda).

Universities must rise up and stand for engaged diversity and true inclusion on their campuses, not to just remain viable, but to be agents to transform the nation. It is an imperative for Christian Universities to be a place of inclusion, stand for equality, and train students who are culturally aware, as this is the call of Christ. I pray universities will take this call seriously, and grounded in



their faith, engage the challenges ahead, to model inclusion and to train students to bring about the same in their lives.

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