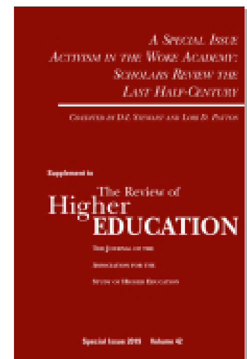
An Inconvenient Truth About "Progress": An Analysis of the Promises and Perils of Research on Campus Diversity Initiatives



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An Inconvenient Truth About "Progress": An Analysis of the Promises and Perils of Research on Campus Diversity Initiatives

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Abstract: Predominantly white institutions (PWIs) have increasingly implemented formalized diversity initiatives over the past 50 years as a response to ensuing federal legislation (e.g., 1965 Higher Education Act), student protests of the late 1960s, and the influx of Black students into PWIs. These initiatives were established to support students from historically and racially under-represented populations, while enhancing campus diversity. The purpose of this article is to provide a critical analysis of research focused on formalized

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diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice (DIEJ) initiatives that have been implemented in higher education from 1968 to 2018. Our findings illustrate that while there is some higher education scholarship exploring issues of DIEJ, the number and focus of articles that analyze specific initiatives is lacking at best, but has increased over the past 20 years, with most focusing on programmatic and curricular efforts.

Predominantly white institutions (PWIs) have increasingly implemented formalized diversity initiatives over the past 50 years as a response to ensuing federal legislation (e.g., 1965 Higher Education Act), student protests of the late 1960s, and the influx of Black students into PWIs. These initiatives were established to support students from historically and racially underrepresented populations, while enhancing campus diversity (Patton, 2006; Williamson, 1999; Young, 1986). The purpose of this article is to provide a critical analysis of research focused on formalized diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice (DIEJ) initiatives that have been implemented in higher education from 1968 to 2018. This analysis is one effort to challenge the higher education research community to prioritize research on DIEJ initiatives to inform institututional decision-making related to campus diversity issues. The analysis, focusing on a 50-year period will highlight research literature on various diversity initiatives (e.g., culture centers, diversity courses, multicultural affairs offices). In addition to our analysis of relevant research, we will discuss the need for expanded research on formalized DIEJ initiatives for prompting progress, while also acknowledging that these same initiatives have been imperiled due to the persistent and pervasive nature of institutional racism. This article reaches beyond (re)stating the problem of racial inequity on the college campus by disrupting the dominant ideology that higher education, through DIEJ initiatives and associated research has made progress. We grapple with the ways in which institutional leaders and higher education researchers perpetuate an inconvenient truth, that is, the existence of postsecondary prose "or, the ordinary, predictable, and taken for granted ways in which the academy functions as a bastion of racism/White supremacy" (Patton, 2016, p. 3).

To assert that DIEJ initiatives were willingly implemented in higher education would be an overstatement. Poussaint (1974) stated, "Many college officials were frightened by and ignorant of the new problems a significant increase in black enrollment would bring to the campuses . . . White administrators discovered that they felt they were in over their heads and in danger of drowning" (p. 9). In an early study of institutional responses to Black student enrollments, Gamson, Peterson, and Blackburn (1980) shared that few PWIs had planned interventions for students, and those who attempted to do so, had no way of preparing for consequences whether negative or positive.

The initial lack of response and support in the 1960s were met by student demands to hold institutional leaders accountable for addressing negative campus environments. For example, students demanded the establishment of culture centers and minority affairs offices as one solution (Patton, 2010; Stewart, 2011). In response, some campuses had a designated minority affairs office or created a position, with responsibilities for providing support to African American students. Sutton (1998) explained these positions and offices were used to restore campus order, offer specialized services, provide a place where African American students could express concerns, and to assist these students with their college adjustment and development. Following protests at San Francisco State College (now University) and demands for culturally relevant courses, the first Black studies program at a PWI was established and similar academic programs, majors, and courses emerged on campuses across the country (Rogers, 2012; Rojas, 2006).

By the 1980s and 1990s, institutions began to implement academic diversity requirements for all students on campus. Inspired by the ongoing multicultural education movement, which focused on curricular change, educational leaders decided that a requirement to engage with a diversity curriculum was the answer to educational and social injustice (Banks, 1994). Even with the prior implementation of diversity initiatives, students of color continued to experience hostile and unwelcoming campus environments (see Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Institutions acknowledged the need for "new practices" and the demand to meet "diversity imperatives," which inspired the rise of chief diversity officers (CDO) (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Williams (2005) contended that CDOs were often hired to create and lead the implementation of institutional diversity plans. The shift among colleges and universities in appointing these leaders was to foster greater diversity initiatives, to improve the campus racial climate, and to provide diversity education to the campus community. According to Williams (2005), "Without senior leadership that focuses on driving the wheel of change as a matter of first priority, campuses will continue to flounder in their diversity efforts" (p. 53).

Fifty years later, higher education remains in the midst of protests from students of color—a critical moment—that is eerily and recognizably similar to the past (Patton, 2015). Since the 1960s (and before), Black students and other racially minoritized groups have been affected by the lack of support and outright disregard for their experiences. Students engaged in the current era of protest would argue against notions of progress over the last 50 years as they continue to work collectively and strategize in hopes that their voices and perspectives will be acknowledged and addressed. Progress in the present context is therefore, relative.

1968—STUDENT ACTIVISM AND DEMANDS FOR CHANGE

The year 1968 was filled with pivotal moments that shaped society, and by default U.S. higher education. Numerous events, including the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., signaled a hotbed of activist organizing. Earlier in the decade, student activism was more heavily situated in the community and focused on larger social issues (AAUP, 1969), but toward the end of the decade, civil rights activism was nearing its height and making headway to various college campuses. College students were instrumental in various activist movements including the Free Speech and the Black Student Movements.

Student activism occurred well before 1968. For example, Howard University students engaged in sit-ins in the 1940s to challenge racial segregation in public spaces, though their efforts were short-lived due to interference by school administration (Bryant Brown, 2000). However, sit-ins would re-emerge as a central strategy for student protest and set the stage for other students to implement the tactic. The most noted sit-in occurred on February 1, 1960. After careful strategizing with their peers at Bennett College, four Black, first-year students from North Carolina A&T proceeded to a whites-only Woolworth's lunch counter to be served. Despite receiving no service, the students continued to return, along with more students to non-violently demand service. These same students were subjected to tremendous and inhumane attacks, in which patrons of the business spat on, shouted at, and physically assaulted them (Flowers, 2005; Michael Brown, 2018). The courage demonstrated by these students and captured by the media inspired widespread sit-ins (Franklin, 2003).

Instances of campus activism were often expressed, not only through sit-ins and marches, but also the issuing of demands. Student demands during the sixties often included recruitment of diverse faculty, staff, and students, and the creation of cultural spaces and houses, academic courses and programs, and scholarships to name a few (Hughes-Watkins, 2014; Walters & Smith, 1979; Williamson, 1999). For example, at Columbia University in 1968, the Student Afro-American Society (SAS) worked to address the institution's relationship with the surrounding Harlem community (Bradley, 2003; Rogers, 2012). SAS students disagreed with plans to build a an athletic facility in Morningside Park, which sat between the campus and the local, predominantly Black neighborhood. SAS, in partnership with Students for a Democratic Society, held protests that included occupying campus spaces for a week and a "six-week closure" of the university. Their demands focused on addressing "the suspension of several students for a demonstration held earlier that year, the school's contract with the U.S. Defense Department to research and develop war weapons, and the desire for a stronger voice in the decision-making processes of the university" (Bradley, 2003, p. 164). Their

efforts resulted in university officials' decision to forego plans to erect the gymnasium and reconsider how the institution would approach its expansion (Bradley, 2003).

At the University of North Carolina, the Black Student Movement (BSM), established in Fall 1968 issued a list of demands to then Chancellor Carlyle Sitterson on December 11th. The students demanded attention in the areas of admissions and the curriculum. Their admissions demands focused on greater financial aid and consideration of Black students for admissions based upon high school grades rather than the racially biased SAT. They also demanded a "Department of Afro-American Studies," outlining various courses and concentrations (The BSM's 23 Demands, n.d.). Students' demands for changes in the curriculum were dominant in the late 1960s and early 1970s as students desired to see the implementation of Black Studies courses, majors, and academic programs.

Rogers (2012) stated, "Black campus activism reached its pinnacle in reaction to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr . . . .His death more than any other historical incident, gave life to Black studies" (p. 26). The demand for Black Studies occurred at PWIs such as Yale and Columbia, as well as HBCUs such as Howard and Southern (Franklin, 2003; Joseph, 2003; Rogers 2012). Williamson (1999) explained that Black students at San Francisco State issued demands for Black Studies in 1966; demands that would ultimately come to fruition three years later. Over the following years, Black students at other campuses made similar demands, and in some cases institutions were proactive in establishing a Black Studies curriculum because they were "wary of student protests, succumbing to political pressure, and mindful of community backlash" (Williamson, 1999, p. 97). Although the swell of protests and demonstrations occurred in 1968–1970, resulting in demands for Black Studies curricular offerings, these programs would continue to grow over the following decades resulting in programs at 120 universities providing degrees in the field and another 100 offering degree concentrations.

Colleges and universities also established culture centers and minority affairs offices to deal with diversity issues on campus:

> Typically, these centers, or "Black houses," as many were called, were designated for use by Black students of the respective institutions, and often by Black nonstudent residents of the surrounding university communities. The primary purposes of the centers were to promote the exaltation and exploration of Black culture and the Black aesthetic, and to provide Black students and other Black campus personnel with a safe haven-a place where they could escape the pressures of university life and engage with other Blacks in mutually supportive peer groups. Black cultural centers at PWCUs became places where workshops, lectures, musical and dramatic performances, literary events, and dances were held, and where Black student organizations were headquartered. (Williamson, p. 99)

Entry to mid-management positions such as director of minority affairs, multicultural recruiter, coordinator of multicultural activities, and director of the Black/Latino/Asian center were institutional roles created to provide leadership and coordination of these newly formed offices (Poussaint, 1974). These roles typically operated as "stop-gap" measures to appease racially minoritized students and quell protests. Yet, they were rarely situated with appropriate funding and influence to institutional transformation (Poussaint, 1974).

IMPLEMENTATION AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF STUDENT DEMANDS OVER TIME

In an age of increasing campus diversity, it is common to hear about the establishment of diversity initiatives. Yet, staff and resources related to these campus entities experience significant budget cuts during tough financial times (Marcy, 2004). Although most postsecondary institutions espouse a commitment to diversity and inclusion in their mission and vision statements, when making tough fiscal decisions, key diversity efforts are often cut or minimized; suggesting a clear contradiction between institutional claims and institutional actions. This mismatch is grounded in erroneous assumptions about the initiatives themselves. For example, culture centers and multicultural affairs offices were established in response to student demands for a safe space on campus dating back to the 1960s. Shuford (2011) explained, "No special provisions were made to accommodate the new mix of diverse students on campuses" (p. 31). Yet, these initiatives are often treated as entities that operate at odds with the academic mission and either pegged as non-essential or perceived to only provide cultural and social programming; hence they lack substantive academic benefits (Patton, 2006, 2011). In addition, culture centers and multicultural affairs certainly exist, but are less likely to be on the radar of institutional leaders (Stewart & Bridges, 2011). Assumptions regarding self-segregation and racial balkanization have affected the sustainability of cultural spaces touting them as separatist and exclusive in nature, when the opposite is more accurate. Whether culture centers, multicultural affairs, or ethnic-themed housing, the reality is that concern regarding these initiatives promoting segregation are largely exaggerated and rooted in unsubstantiated assertions (Patton, Sharp, & Sánchez, 2017). Moreover, the literature available to illuminate the benefits of these spaces for student retention and success is extremely limited (Patton, 2010; Stewart, 2011).

The establishment and growing number of diversity initiatives can potentially play a major role in enhancing college student experiences, challenging the racist, oppressive, and discriminatory foundation of higher education,

and countering cultural hegemony. Moreover, they can and should make collegiate environments more welcoming for all students, particularly students of color. However, few empirical investigations provide insights into the proliferation and presence of diversity initiatives. Moreover, there has been limited investigation of the assumptions, myths, and perceptions regarding these roles and those who serve in these capacities. Additionally, neither the reasons underlying creation of such initiatives, nor the effectiveness and outcomes associated with having them have been explored in a robust way.

Limited information is available regarding the study of campus diversity initiatives designed to meet the demands of students. Institutions certainly implemented programs, but the extent to which these programs were empirically studied or investigated by higher education researchers is not known. Given that college students were heavily invested in activist movements, it seems plausible that scholars of the day might pursue efforts to learn more about the characteristics of these students, their involvement in social movements, and the demands they made with the expectation that their voices be heard. Such an assertion is not only plausible, but is supported with evidence (Cryns & Finn, 1973; Fendrich & Smith, 1980; Jackson, 1971). Still, little is known about the actual implementation of DIEJ initiatives whether students demanded them of their respective campus or not. Even less is known about how the implementation of such plans were and are studied and their implications for institutional decision-making.

Higher Education and Institutional Resistance

The lack of attention from institutions to student demands is documented in the literature; and so are the institutional responses. Scholars examining the history of postsecondary institutions have documented much about resistance on the part of institutional leaders, particularly during the tumultuous era of the 1960s. Clawson (2011) recounted the institutional response at the University of Florida noting that two of the institution's presidents, Wayne Reitz and Stephen C. O'Connell "relied on tokenism, empty promises, [and] slow movement to stall the integration of the University Florida's student body and faculty" (pp. 349–350). Although some administrators were knowingly complicit in delaying institutional responses, others were too consumed with power differentials to take students seriously. Harrison (1972) offered,

> Often the responses of those colleges which experienced student unrest for the first time were authoritative, impulsive, and nonrational, thus contributing further to disruptive activities. There were indications, too, that the administrators were reacting to the symptoms of student unrest rather than to the causes. (p. 115)

Higher education leaders have demonstrated a consistent investment in resisting transformation and organizational change.

As noted, many institutions hired minority affairs directors and created similar positions to establish leadership roles for people of color. Yet, some administrators rejected these positions "with prestigious and illustrious titles" indicating the roles were less than desirable (Poussaint, 1974, p. 8). One reason was that institutions had consistently moved slow until Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination in April 1968. Poussaint (1974) explained, "Universities which had been dragging their feet suddenly they were beating the bushes for black students and making 'deans' out of the first black with a degree they could get their hands on" (p. 9). Institutional efforts were not only slow and poorly implemented, they were also designed to place overwhelming responsibility on newly hired administrators of color to quell student dissent and keep students in line. Such "buffer jobs" were exploitive in nature, had limited power and influence on campus, lacked funding, and were expected to deal only with students of color (Poussaint, 1974). Although diversity initiatives were implemented; that such initiatives represent true progress is questionable and serves as the backdrop for this article.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, we highlight concepts that guided our presentation of relevant literature and subsequent analysis of the study data. These key concepts articulate a "two steps forward, one step backward" phenomenon for organizational change in higher education. This approach provided an avenue to grapple with the complexities of diversity initiatives on campus and existing research in this area.

The "Two Steps Forward, One Step Backward" Phenomenon

Institutional resistance to change, we argue occurs through collusion, retrenchment, and organizational inertia (Stainback, Tomaskovic-Devey, & Skaggs, 2010). Change that does occur is typically steeped in interest convergence politics, in which a minoritized group's interests align with benefits perceived to accrue to majoritarian groups (Bell, 1980). Although interest convergence sounds promising, Bell (1980) warned that the effects of interest convergence for white people far outweighed those for People of Color. Moreover, such alignments are neither benevolent nor altruistic. Alignment of interests exist only to the extent that the majoritarian group benefits. At any moment, white institutional leaders can and will abandon any convergence of interests they perceive to be no longer beneficial, whether such abandonment harms minoritized groups or not (Bell, 1980; Guinier, 2004).

Language matters, and it is important to clarify how we are using certain key terms to frame this study: collusion, retrenchment, and organizational

inertia. By *collusion*, we follow Stainback et al. (2010) in describing the mindset, attitude, and actions of majoritarian and minoritized peoples in organizations to support, legitimize, and validate oppressive systems and structures. *Retrenchment* is an institutional response to advances in minoritized group representation and influence (Stainback et al., 2010). Described by Harper (2012) regarding higher education scholarship, retrenchment seeks to conserve power and privilege in the hands of a few to control access to resources. *Organizational inertia* describes the various means by which organizations passively resist deep change (Stainback et al., 2010). Collusion and retrenchment are both active responses against transformative, revolutionary change. Organizational inertia is passive resistance that relies on lethargy as a bureaucratic tool.

Recently, multiple scholars in higher education have noted the two-steps-forward-one-step-back cycle of higher education institutions regarding issues of equity and justice (Harper, 2012; Patton, 2016; Patton, Harper, & Harris, 2015; Stewart, 2017, 2018). Although the appearance of incremental gains seems apparent, the operation of collusion, retrenchment, and inertia forces frustrate and stifle opportunities for institutional change. In the following analysis of relevant research, we discuss the *promise* of such initiatives for prompting progress toward eradicating racism and racial inequities on campus, while also acknowledging that these same initiatives have been im*peril*ed due to the persistent and pervasive nature of the aforementioned forces in maintaining institution sanctioned oppression.

Method

This study was guided by one major question: What types of specific DIEJ initiatives were highlighted in educational research between 1968–2018? We examined empirical articles in nine mainstream refereed educational research journals, including *American Educational Research Journal*, *Educational Researcher, Equity and Excellence in Higher Education, Journal of College Student Development*[1], *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, Journal of Higher Education*, *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, Review of Educational Research,* and *Review of Higher Education.* The articles served as the primary data sources for analysis. Our interest was on research related to concretely defined institutional policies and practices designed to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. As such, we did not include book

[1]Begun in 1959 as the *Journal of College Student Personnel*, the name changed in 1988 to the *Journal of College Student Development*. The institutional library provided access only to 1997 and ACPA provided access to 1990. Articles published from 1988 until 1990 were not included in this study due to limited access.

chapters, book reviews, or other types of works (e.g., essays and commentaries) published in refereed journals (See Table 1 & 2).

We conducted our initial search through institutional library databases. Because we were interested in the articles published since 1968 and institutional access might limit access to articles published in the early and most recent volumes, we extended our search to the respective journal's publisher database. For each journal, we conducted searches based on nine specific terms and relevant derivatives: (1) "diversity course(s)"; (2) "diversity initiative(s)"; (3) "ethnic studies"; (4) "faculty diversity"; (5) "multicultural centers," including "cultural" and "culture" centers"; (6) "Asian" and "Asian American"; (7) "Latino," "Latina," Latinx," and "Hispanic"; (8) "Black" and "African American'; (9) "Native," "Indigenous," and "American Indian."

Two authors conducted an initial search that yielded 2,510 returns. We followed three steps to narrow this number. First, we removed all returns that were not empirical articles. Second, we reviewed article titles and skimmed abstracts to remove returns that used the search term(s) but did not actually focus on the respective search term or a specific policy or program, such as empirical articles that used "diversity initiatives" as a rationale for service learning initiatives or studies about predictors of student outcomes, but did not study a specific service learning program as a DIEJ initiative. This second step yielded 73 articles. Finally, we reviewed abstracts and introductions in depth and sorted articles into three categories: conceptual or theoretical pieces, diversity initiative or policy as secondary to study focus, and specific initiative. For the purposes of this study, we focused on articles that centered a specific policy or program because these articles would best reflect the ways in which institutions actually implemented diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or justice efforts. This last step yielded 45 articles, which were included in our analysis (See Tables 1 & 2). The publication dates of these 45 articles are reported in Table 3.

Data Analysis

We focused our analysis on visibility within the selected journals. Visibility of scholarship about DEIJ initiatives was operationalized through the quantity of articles we located. Second, we read through the articles, paying specific attention to how scholars discuss the initiatives, the type of research questions they asked, the methodological approaches they took, and how they positioned their discussion of the initiative through a critical lens. Our assumption was that how scholars position or fail to position research has implications for collusion, retrenchment, and organizational inertia.

For coding purposes, we placed all 45 articles into a matrix in a shared Excel file. This matrix included the article citation and the following categories:

specific initiative, study assumptions, type of study (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods), research questions or research purpose, and main discussion points. After completing the matrix, we analyzed for patterns and themes, collapsing the specific initiatives into four categories: administration and leadership, curriculum, institutional policy, and student support services.

Limitations and Positionality

We did not search for all possible terms related to dimensions of equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice work (e.g., social class or gender identity). We chose to use search terms, such as "diversity course(s)" and "diversity initiative(s)" to capture articles about the aforementioned dimensions. However, there may be articles about institutional policy and programs relevant to our study we likely missed. Additionally, because language changes over time, we may have missed terms germane to a particular time period and predecessors of the search terms we employed. We attempted to mitigate this limitation by searching for variations in the racial and ethnic identity groups (e.g., search for both "Hispanic" and "Latinx"). Lastly, all of the articles were focused in the field of higher education and as a result, we likely missed scholarship that might have appeared in field-specific journals related to Black Studies, ethnic studies, or history.

The authors of this study have experienced the work involved with implementing DIEJ initiatives as campus practitioners and we each believe in the value of this work. However, we have also experienced the disheartening ways in which DIEJ initiatives receive fewer resources and are valued only to the extent that they enhance the reputation of a campus as one that values diversity. Moreover, we each have examined DIEJ initiatives empirically and are aware of the too limited knowledge base regarding such efforts. Collectively, these experiences brought us together to explore an area most deserving of attention in the literature and on college campuses.

DIEJ Initiatives in Empirical Literature

In the following sections, we provide a description of the types of DIEJ initiatives most often discussed in scholarship, the type of research used to conduct the study and offer examples of articles in each category. Our research question was: What types of specific DIEJ initiatives were highlighted in educational research between 1968–2018? We located 45 articles. Between 1968–1999 only nine articles were published. Sixteen were published between 2000–2009 and 20 articles appeared between 2010–2018. Among the 45 articles within our database, 21 were qualitative, 18 were quantitative, and six were mixed methods studies. Authors of these articles discussed four

main categories of DIEJ initiatives: student support services (e.g, diversity programs, racial and cultural awareness workshops, and cultural or advocacy centers); curricular initiatives (e.g., diversity-related courses and diversity requirements); administration and leadership initiatives (e.g., chief diversity officers and staff and faculty trainings); and, institutional policy initiatives (e.g., affirmative action and institution-wide diversity strategies). The majority of published studies were situated within the student support services and curricular initiatives categories.

Student Support Services

Among the 45 articles in our search, 14 focused on student support services, particularly in three areas: diversity programs, racial and cultural awareness workshops, and cultural or advocacy centers. A majority of the initiatives in this category were diversity programs, which consisted of established campus programs and provided academic support, co-curricular activities, and cultural awareness to all students. For example, one piece focused on an initiative designed to increase participation of students of color in teacher education programs. The racial and cultural awareness workshop initiatives focused on providing all students opportunities to engage in cross-cultural interactions with their peers. The last subtype of student support initiatives, cultural or advocacy centers were established on campuses to provide support and resources for all students on campus, but highlighted the culture or identity of particular groups.

The 14 articles were comprised of six qualitative, six quantitative, and two mixed methods studies, the majority of which focused on the impact or outcomes of these established programs on students including increased racial and cultural awareness, support for Students of Color in teacher education programs, and academic support for Students of Color. Although all of these articles described initiatives that were created to promote diversity on college campuses, the discussion typically focused on (white) students interacting and better understanding racially minoritized students at an individual level. With the exception of a few, rarely had authors offered a substantive explanation for the importance of the initiative. One such example was offered in an article by Rodriguez (1994) about a bilingual collegiate program established to support Hispanic[2] students at a PWI. Rodriguez explained that individual and institutional racism on college campuses was the reason why diversity initiatives were essential to support the education of all students, but especially Students of Color.

[2]Throughout this manuscript, we refer to the language used by the original authors. For example, more contemporary language refers to Latino and Hispanic students with a Latinx designation, but we did not change these terms because the articles are a reflection of the time in which they were written.

Curriculum

The second most common type of initiatives highlighted the curriculum, accounting for another third (14) of the articles included in this analysis. Articles that discussed undergraduate diversity-related courses (including diversity requirements, ethnic studies courses), curriculum efforts to support diversity STEM education, and graduate-level diversity courses and requirements were included in this category. Of the 14 articles in this category, five were qualitative and eight were quantitative, and one was mixed methods. The research questions primarily focused on students' experiences with, implementation of, or administrator perspectives of the initiative. Some of the articles dealt with an ethnic studies curriculum, social justice concentration in a graduate program, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) diversity initiatives. For example, Baber (2015) examined the perspectives of STEM diversity program administrators and described the necessity of supporting African American, Latino American, and Native American students in the national context of declining rates of STEM degree attainment. Baber sought to reveal "a clearer understanding of how embedded norms shape inequalities even in the context of increasing calls for diversity in STEM education" (p. 255).

Other articles in this category largely focused on diversity courses and their related outcomes, including commitment to social action, reduction of racial bias and prejudice, reducing heterosexism, impact on cognitive development, and infusing diversity into general education curriculum. One example in this sub-category was an article that examined the educational benefits of the curriculum beyond reducing racial bias. Chang (2001) situated the necessity of the study in a context that called for higher education to address concerns related to racial bias and prejudice that contributed to a continuing national racial divided, while also noting "the educational imperative of diversity-related efforts is highly contested" where "some nationally recognized scholars see no academic value in those initiatives and commonly view them as part of higher education's ideological project in sensitivity training" (p. 93).

Administration & Leadership

The third most common type of initiative discussed was related to administration and leadership, accounting for 12 of the articles included in the data. This category included five qualitative, five quantitative, and two mixed methods studies. The articles focused on diversity-related leadership roles (including chief diversity officers), trainings and courses for faculty and staff, construction of minority-serving institution identity, and administrative approaches to diversity and inclusion. An example of an article in this category was LePeau (2015), which focused on administration and leadership using

Milem, Chang, & antonio's (2005) framework for improving campus climates for diversity to examine partnerships between academic and student affairs to address diversity issues. LePeau described these partnerships in the context of student and academic affairs historically operating in siloes but "when an issue engulfs the campus, faculty in academic affairs and practitioners in student affairs bring different areas of expertise to the issue. Oftentimes, those issues that engulf the institution are related to diversity" (p. 97).

Other articles in the administration and leadership category focused on trainings and courses for faculty and staff, directors of LGBT resource centers and culture centers, and chief diversity officers. An example of an article in this sub-category is Choi-Pearson, Castillo, & Maples (2004), which explored the impact of diversity training, intergroup contact, and staff demographics on racial prejudice among student affairs professions. Choi-Pearson et al. situated the study in a context of an increasingly diverse student population, where Students of Color continue to experience racial prejudice. They asserted that while there existed literature on possible methods to create a more welcoming environment, the literature is not clear on which variables would have "the most impact in racial prejudice reduction. This knowledge could help student affairs professionals identify the most effective interventions for promoting change" (p. 132).

Institutional Policy

Roughly 17 percent (eight) of the articles in our search discussed institutional policies implemented to serve as diversity initiatives. Included in this group were institutional responses to the ban on affirmative action, institution-wide diversity efforts, and general institution diversity reports and policies. Articles in this group included six qualitative studies, one quantitative study, and one mixed methods study. One example of a study in this category was Iverson (2012), which explored university diversity action plans. Iverson examined the discourses contained in diversity images, problems, and solutions within these action plans and concluded by explaining, "the findings of this study point to the need to resist and contest dominant conceptions of diversity, as well as calls for inclusive, welcoming, and friendly campus communities" (p. 168). In one qualitative article, Trent et al. (2003) discussed multiple efforts that had been implemented at the institutional level and at the college level to address diversity initiatives and their shortcomings.

Cross-Analysis

Across the studies, regardless of methodological approach, most focused on the impact of the initiative or its effectiveness on students' and administrators' experiences with and/or perceptions of the initiative. Although the authors asked interesting and thoughtful questions in their exploration of the various initiatives, very few (4%) approached their study using a criti-

cal lens. Instead the discussion of the initiatives focused on cross-cultural understanding and dialogue. When detailing a campus' Diversity Week, Henley (1990) concluded her analysis of the program by stating that it is "especially important to help educate white students about diversity and to enable black students to feel more comfortable in the campus environment" (p. 317). Overall, the initiatives highlighted through research were geared toward benefitting all students. Whether through the implementation of the program or its impact, the goals of these initiatives were not geared toward systematically rooting out oppression, instead the focus was on interactions and cross-cultural relationships, which may certainly benefit individual people, but does little to shift systems. The authors of these 45 articles also framed the discussion around structural diversity as an explicit goal in various education contexts and emphasized the importance of having a graduate student body and faculty, as well as teacher education graduates that are reflective of the increasingly diverse population in the United States. However, these authors rarely addressed systemic inequities that influence the access of People of Color to those spaces. For example, in concluding their analysis of a center dedicated to recruiting and training teachers of color, Robinson, Paccione, and Rodriguez (2003) wrote:

> If teacher preparation is to realize a vision of equity, social justice, democratic practice, and value for diversity, teacher educators and teacher education programs must actively recruit, prepare, and support the next generation of teachers from racial and ethnic minority groups and view them as assets essential to the teaching profession and to society at large. (p. 211)

In this example, the authors inferred that having racially and ethnically diverse teachers contributed to realizing a vision of "equity" and "social justice." However, the authors suggested elements of a solution (e.g., recruitment, preparation, and support) to support that vision without a discussion of power and systemic inequities that may inhibit such structural diversity from already existing.

There were examples when authors employed a more critical approach to surface power and inequities. First, some authors employed critical frameworks aimed at illuminating the systemic power and oppression. For example, one author used a critical race theory framework to examine the Black students' perceptions of black culture centers (Patton, 2006). Second, other authors explicitly named when dominant paradigms were reinforced by the very initiatives intended to address inequities. For example, one author critiqued the use of institutional policy discourse that reinforced genderism because such discourse "promotes transgender people's appeal to, and dependence on, cisgender people (those whose assigned sex at birth, gender identity, and gender expression conform to *man* or *woman*)" (Dirks, 2016,

p. 380). In this example, the author made clear that the system of oppression (genderism) is reinforced in the discourse of policy intended to support transgender people. Lastly, other authors concluded that initiatives informed by equity must include acknowledgement and examination of power and privilege that maintains inequity. For example, Garces and Cogburn (2015) suggested that affirmative action bans may limit the consideration of race as an admissions factor, but the bans should "not result in rendering invisible the significance of race and structural racism on the lives of students or in preventing other efforts to ensure equitable access and outcomes for students of color" (p. 855). The authors urged institutional actors to action by actively addressing structural racism on college campuses.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore institutional responses to DIEJ issues in higher education spanning the last 50 years. If the tacit assumption that scholarship, policy, and practice mutually inform one another, then it would make sense that scholars would empirically examine practices and policies adopted by campuses as a critical aspect for understanding the presence of DIEJ initiatives. Similarly, institutional leaders and policymakers would rely on such research to draw conclusions about practices and policies and the extent to which they were/are effective and meaningful for addressing the needs and resulting demands of college students. This type of synergy is at the heart of what we explored related to research on DIEJ initiatives from 1968 to 2018.

Our findings illustrate that while there is some higher education scholarship exploring issues of DIEJ, the number and focus of articles that analyze specific initiatives is lacking at best. Of the total number of articles that our searches returned (n=2,510), under 2% of them analyzed a specific DEIJ initiative. The small number of articles could be the result of academic gate-keeping among editorial boards and journal editors who exercise power to determine what particular research is or is not relevant. Moroever, the limited number of articles could suggest that this research is being published elsewhere rather than higher education related journals. For example, studies associated with ethnic studies programs might appear in a relevant field-related journal rather than a higher education journal. Additionally, authors who study DIEJ initiatives may simply choose to publish elsewhere depending on their own perceptions of various journal venues and audiences. Still, it is clear that the "mainstream" journals used for this study do not have a strong representation of research on DIEJ initiatives. However, as indicated in Table 3, the number has risen since 1968, with the greatest increase occurring 2000–2018.

Furthermore, a majority of the articles included in this study did not reflect a critical paradigm when analyzing the particular initiative, instead focusing primarily on cross-cultural engagement and benefits of these initiatives for white students. As a whole, the initiatives highlighted in our analysis overwhelmingly focused on framing the value of diversity as an educational benefit and on understanding and dialoguing across difference. The overall data provide a sense of what initiatives exist, along with general descriptions and people's experiences with the initiative, but were limited in terms of pushing institutions to consciously work toward transformation on campus. The data were also limited in challenging and encouraging other researchers to take up the study of diversity initiatives as part of their agenda.

To identify so few studies focusing on DIEJ initiatives on college campuses is somewhat troubling, given that they are indeed regularly implemented at institutions, oftentimes as the result of student protest and demand. The concern is that institutional leaders may simply be operating in a way that makes the implementation of DIEJ initiatives nothing more than a performance of political correctness, rather than a deeply conscious effort to shift the campus climate and address injustices on campus. In this way, organizational inertia sets in, allowing institutions to appear active, yet the DIEJ initiatives are actually passive and not intended to upset the status quo. Our review of the limited literature made us wonder what evidence do institutional leaders actually have to indicate which DIEJ initiatives should be implemented on campus? Surely, they could not be relying on the limited literature contained in higher education journals. However, it seems plausible that if leaders wanted to gain knowledge about DIEJ initiatives, identifying relevant research could inform their decisions; yet, the higher education scholarship in this area is clearly limited. As a result, institutions most certainly continue implementation of DIEJ initiatives, but the extent to which they are grounded in evidence of their effectiveness is questionable given our findings. Without substantive data, institutions can continue to operate under a mindset of collusion, in which DIEJ initiatives are implemented, but only to the extent that they validate the current structures of domination on college campuses.

As a result of our analysis, we are concerned that the lack of research on specific initiatives is potentially supporting institutional resistance towards transformative change. If such initiatives are positioned as unworthy of study by scholars in the field, then institutional leaders might readily assume that these initiatives are equally undeserving of their genuine attention, except when campus tensions arise or students are making demands that grab leaders' attention. Among the data we analyzed, authors discussed the importance of specific DIEJ initiatives, but did not devote significant attention to critical analysis of systems of power and oppression. This too illustrates another example of collusion in that the framing of the research mirrors

institutional framings of DIEJ initiatives to aid institutions in continuing a historical pattern of ignoring DIEJ issues.

Among our findings, student support and curricular initiatives were additive in nature. Rather than shifting the current program structures to address inequities, institutions added initiatives to the existing student support and curricular programs. At first glance, new initiatives might appear to effectively counter existing programs that were deemed problematic on campus. However, without a deeper examination of existing programs, additive programs divert attention away from institutions addressing the root causes of oppression and inequities on campus. When authors fail to directly name structures and systems that uphold oppression, they contribute to the process of retrenchment where additive programs appear to be two steps forward while existing programs appear to be one step backward. Ultimately, the power to shift campus dynamics toward a more equitable environment remains situated with those who control access and resources.

Within our findings, there were fewer articles about administration, leadership, and institutional policy initiatives compared to articles on curriculum and student support initiatives. Although focusing on students and curriculum is critical, the lack of attention on administration, leadership, and policy may divert responsibility away from institutional leaders to conduct deeper examinations of how existing structures promote ongoing oppression that students experience and that is often embedded in the curriculum. Often, it seemed that authors supported organizational inertia by passively omitting the larger systemic context within which the initiatives live.

Most authors did not actively argue against the existence of power and oppression; the authors engaged in color-blind, cultural pluralism, diversity, and political correctness paradigms (Manning, 2009) and typically did not reference these larger systems in their articles. Yet, there were examples of authors who were able to focus on an initiative while naming and challenging these larger systems. For example, Harris and Patton (2016) examined the way that directors of Black culture centers at predominantly white institutions struggled and succeeded in addressing the intersectional identities of the students who frequent these centers. While the findings of this study indicated that not all directors were successful in acknowledging the intersectional identities of their students, Harris and Patton (2016) stated that directors of Black culture centers must "account for interlocking systems of domination when approaching the challenges within the Black culture center" (p. 346). The authors of such articles engaged paradigms that focused on the larger systemic issues that established a need for an initiative.

Ultimately, the most sobering aspect of the findings is that the initiatives that were studied did not significantly differ from initiatives students demanded 50 years prior. Collectively, the body of articles placed little to no

emphasis on the role DIEJ initiatives might play in transforming colleges and universities, with the exception of those focused on policy. Scholars have advocated for the intentional incorporation of DIEJ values into the central functions of an institution rather than prescribing them as a secondary function to reach a desired level of "diversity" (Ahmed, 2012). What was clear from our examination is that DIEJ initiatives serve a secondary function at institutions and within the study of higher education. This conundrum, we argue, is reflective of continued institutional collusion, retrenchment, and organizational inertia that preserves the status quo within higher education and subsequent research.

Recommendations

Higher education has and continues to remain at a crossroads between asserting a stance in favor of DIEJ and actually enacting that stance. If DIEJ initiatives are vital to the functioning of campuses, institutional leaders and decision-makers must be willing to make concerted efforts to address historically rooted issues of oppression and inequities. Sometimes, decisions to engage these issues are framed in an initial question, "What does the research say?" Such a question can only be answered when higher education scholars and researchers commit the time, energy, and effort to crafting research agendas devoted to responding to challenging research questions related to DIEJ broadly and specific initiatives that fall within this umbrella.

If higher education researchers believe in the implementation of DIEJ on campus, they can also play a vital role in studying related initiatives and asking questions that can inform their implementation. Many of the studies within our database focused on students and their experiences or administrators' perceptions, while others examined outcomes and cross-cultural engagement. More contemporary studies should be exploring which students participate in these initiatives and why? How or to what extent do particular initiatives promote retention and graduation? Beyond these traditional markers of student success, how or to what extent do particular initiatives facilitate other positive outcomes in students (e.g., heightened consciousness, self-efficacy, empathy, and compassion related to human difference)? How do institutions assess the impact and effectiveness of DIEJ initiatives? Do some initiatives work better than others depending on the campus context? What historical and contemporary factors contribute to the institutionalization of DIEJ initiatives? Longitudinally speaking, how do DIEJ initiatives contribute to campus transformation? Examination of these questions and several others can add value to the current body of literature because the reality is that we simply know too little to accurately state or empirically substantiate many existing DIEJ initiatives. To be sure, there is enough literature indicating the

value of DIEJ broadly speaking, but too little that explains the possibilities and limitations of specific campus initiatives.

In addition to incorporating the study of DIEJ as a central part of the larger higher education research agenda, we recommend that studies of DEIJ initiatives be situated in critical frameworks and paradigms in which researchers grapple with the challenging dynamics that make some institutions resistant to the possibility of real change that could be filtered through DIEJ initiatives, particularly those related to administration, leadership, and policy. In selecting critical frameworks, we encourage researchers to discuss historical and contemporarycontexts to situate the study of the initiative. Another value of framing this research using critical frameworks is that researchers openly and intentionally acknowledge the systems of power and oppression that exist within higher education and why these systems create the need for initiatives to be established in the first place. For example, Osei-Kofi, Shahjahan, and Patton (2010) studied the creation of a graduate concentration on social justice. The authors explicitly named that this initiative sought to respond to existing inequities in the social environment. Although the focus of the study was on the effectiveness of the initiative, the authors returned to the social justice-oriented purpose of the initiative.

We also recommend that researchers who study DIEJ initiatives explicitly name the paradox within their work; that is, DIEJ initiatives themselves, as well as the research process may insidiously operate to maintain existing systems of power and oppression. This approach allows for more complex discussions to emerge in scholarship and prohibits the framing of any one initiative as the solution for addressing systemic oppression.

Last, we recommend that scholars who choose to study DIEJ initiatives identify multiple strategies to make their research findings available. Although journals may be viewed as a logical choice, they do not and should not be the only choice for translating research to practice. Writing opinion editorials, presenting at practitioner conferences, and actually sharing findings with institutional leaders are all strategies to heighten the discourse on DIEJ initiatives and research about them.

In conclusion, DIEJ initiatives in our present context do not significantly differ from initiatives of the past. There is an increasing number of programs and efforts on college campuses today, but in general, they are implemented in response to the same needs expressed by students over the last 50 years. Students today, like in previous decades, want and deserve to attend college in an environment that is validating, supportive, and equitable from the time they enter campus until they successfully graduate.

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