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Trust, learning and dialogue

A portrait of leadership practice in higher education's social justice centers

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Shaun Randall Travers

Committee in charge:

California State University, San Marcos

Professor Delores B. Lindsey, Chair
Professor Anne René Elsbree

University of California, San Diego

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2009

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University Of California, San Diego
San Diego State University
California State University, San Marcos

2009

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all of those who embrace social justice and diversity. Our individual journeys will move our society towards a better world.

EPIGRAPH

A man told Picasso that he ought to make pictures of things the way they are - objective pictures. When Picasso said he did not understand, the man produced a picture of his wife from his wallet and said, "There, you see, that is a picture of how she really is." Picasso looked at it and said, "She's rather small, isn't she? And flat..."

~Jack Kornfield

To understand is almost the opposite of existing.

~ Georges Poulet

In theory
there is no difference
between theory
and practice.
In practice there is.

~ Yogi Berra

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VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Trust, learning and dialogue
A portrait of leadership in higher education's social justice centers

by

Shaun Randall Travers

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2009
San Diego State University, 2009
California State University, San Marcos, 2009

Professor Delores B. Lindsey, Chair

At the University of California, San Diego, three campus centers for social justice exist. The Cross-Cultural Center, Women's Center and Lesbian Gay Bisexual

Transgender Resource Center practice community building under the moniker Campus Community Centers. The empirical literature provides neither insight into collaborations for Center's such as these, nor leadership practices of Director's of these Centers. What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego? What do the stories of these relationships illustrate in terms of working together around identity and community? What barriers exist that challenge these relationships? In depth conversations and detailed stories reveal significant intimacies among these leaders.

Utilizing ethnographic portraiture, a composite of the leadership practice of the Directors of these Centers emerges. Intersections of privileged and oppressed identities reveal tender moments. The realities of navigating personal identity while having a shared organizational identity expose deep vulnerabilities. The study explores the first memory of the Director's connections, revealing little dichotomy between personal life and professional work. The stories of the earliest collaborative work of the three Centers ground the practice of the positional leaders. Powerful narratives of each Director's identity and community expose how those journeys influences the current relationships. Privilege, oppression and disparate resources provide safety and challenge, and they necessitate buy-in from all three Centers' employees.

Three findings emerge from the collective stories: trust, dialogue and learning. The communities and identities of the Directors inform the relationships. Taken together, trust, dialogue and learning cannot be separated, for they appear to rely on

each other in order to function. These findings paint a portrait of growth and development over time. Other similarly situated units may begin to see the subspecialty area of *campus community centers* as a community of practice. This recognition may spark a deep conversation at universities to organize around the practice of campus community centers to be intentionally interdependent. The strategies around trust, learning and dialogue revealed through this study imply a need for a long-term and high level commitment to relationships from the positional leaders involved.

Chapter I

The Orphan Story - An Allegory

Once there were three orphans in a big city. The orphans lived in boxes near each other, close enough to walk to each other's box, but not close enough to see each other all the time. One of the boxes was converted and refurbished (but a box none-the-less), one was previously-used and most dilapidated, and a third was carved out of old boxes, thrown together just to provide shelter. Each orphan lived alone.

And although each orphan liked their own box, it was lonely to be alone. One day the orphan from the newest box took a walk to another orphan's box. "Knock, knock, knock" said the orphan as she approached. The other orphan crawled out of her old box. "What are you doing here?" she asked. "You know we aren't supposed to play together!"

The first orphan said defiantly, "Why not?"

"What will the City Dwellers and Citizens say?" the second orphan responded. It was an unspoken but widely heard rumor that the whole city knew: The orphans were important, but they really shouldn't play together. They weren't designed to play together. They were designed to be alone.

"Who cares what all the City Dwellers say," the first orphan said. "I'm lonely and I want somebody to play with. Here, do you want to share some of my toys?"

Now, who doesn't want to have more toys to play with? The second orphan thought to herself, "Well, it does sound fun to me, and no one will really care, right? I mean, we're orphans anyway. And I'm the oldest orphan in the city. No one will say

anything to me. They are scared of me anyway.” And so the two went hand and hand down the street, lugging along their new-found shared toys.

A short while later, they came across the youngest orphan’s box. Now this orphan had just moved into the city. The other orphans knew he had moved in and had met him, but weren’t quite sure if they should play with him or not. He was by far the scariest orphan, different from the rest in ways people rarely talked about. Rumor had it that it was one of the mayor’s old boxes that this orphan lived in, but no one talked about it. It would be unseemly for the mayor to acknowledge such a lowly orphan, even by giving him an old box. And anyway, there was the unspoken but widely heard rumor that the whole city knew: the orphans were important, but they really shouldn’t play together.

But the first two orphans, toys in tow, had been around the city awhile, and they knew no one was going to say anything directly. “Knock, knock” they shouted loudly as they came up to the third box, newly defiant in their togetherness. The third orphan peered out. “Hey, y’all, what’s going on?” The first orphan, the brave one, said, “Wanna play? I brought some toys.” The third orphan looked quizzically. “Now, that is different,” he thought, “Everyone in the city says you aren’t supposed to share toys.” He looked skeptically at the other two. The second orphan said “C’mon, we can get away with it. I’m oldest, just blame it on me.”

“Okay,” responded the third orphan, knowing that if he got caught, he would blame it on the others. And off they went hand in hand in hand through the streets of the city.

On the first day, no one noticed the three orphans playing together. City Dwellers are much too busy in their own work and homes to be bothered by three orphans who live in boxes. Of course, there were some folks who knew the orphans and fed them occasionally, and others who asked them to do odd jobs, one's that they didn't want to do themselves. Some Citizens been watching out for them in the best way that they could. But, really, no one could afford to take care of orphans. Things were just too tight in the city. The orphans would have to survive somehow.

And day after day the orphans did. They played together. They traded toys; they even gave toys to each other "To keep, forever," they said to each other, as time and small treasures were passed between them. And slowly the City Dwellers and Citizens started to notice.

"I have no idea why they are even with each other" one City Dweller gossiped to another, "It is just unseemly for them to be cavorting 'round together, especially when everyone knows they are supposed to be apart."

"I don't even see that they have anything in common," said another, mean-spiritedly, "I mean sure, they are all orphans, but they are very... different... you know. And there are laws about those orphans, special laws. They'd better be careful."

One Citizen even loudly proclaimed "I fully support the youngest orphan," but secretly to himself thought, "But I really don't think he should be playing with the others like that."

After playing together for awhile, the orphans noticed how differently they were treated when they were together or apart. If they wandered the streets alone, individually, some of the City Dwellers and Citizens would talk to them, help them, and even show some care. And when they walked together, a whole different group of City Dwellers and Citizens would talk to them, nourish them, and take delight in the odd jobs they would do together, tasks that others didn't want to do themselves.

But there were always suspicion about these three orphans. "Who do they belong to?" City Dwellers would whisper behind closed doors. "Why do they play together?" Citizens would ask. "I'm glad they are doing those odd jobs, they are very important jobs, but why do they do them together?" asked another, as she went about her other, more important work. It was an unspoken, but widely heard rumor that the whole city knew: the orphans were important, but they really shouldn't play together.

One day the orphans were together, laughing and having fun doing one of the odd jobs that they often were asked to do by the City Dwellers to justify keeping them around. They had decided that they could not live together, as one always slept late, and another always talked out loud to herself, and the third was just... well, scary. They each liked to live alone and needed their own box. However, they had just come up with a new name, a family name that they would all use, when suddenly, a large, loud car approached. The orphans quickly stood, dusted off their poor clothes, and bowed before the Mayor's Viceroy as she emerged from a fine car. "What a motley crew you three are," she said in a rich, velvety voice that filled the orphans with both love and fear. "You," she said, gesturing lovingly and commandingly at the oldest

orphan. She trembled. The oldest orphan knew of the Mayor's Viceroy, had seen her before, and even imagined herself looking like her. "Yes, you, come here, my love." She took the oldest orphan's chin in her hand and studied her face. The Mayor's Viceroy said nothing, but thought, "You remind me of myself."

She glanced at the next orphan. "And you, the middle one, come here." The second orphan stepped forward, impetuous, defiant and yet desperately wanting to please this fine woman. The Viceroy took the middle orphan's chin in her hand. Again, she said nothing, but thought, "You also remind me of myself."

The third orphan she knew already. The Mayor had already specifically mentioned this child to the Viceroy, and personally arranged for one of the Mayor's old boxes to be provided for this third orphan to live in. She gestured to him, "Come here." The third orphan knew he was the youngest, the smallest and the scariest orphan of the bunch. She took the youngest orphan's chin in her hand without fear. Still she said nothing, but a third time thought, "You remind me of myself." She released him, and he toppled back to the huddle of his orphan friends.

And as she looked at all three of them, she noticed that all their toys spread out. They were jumbled together, mixed, and at first glance she couldn't tell one from the other. It was a mess, but a mess that bespoke the familiarity of old friends. It was obvious that they played well together. "Could that happen in this city?" she smiled to herself curiously. She had thought of a plan.

The orphans saw her gaze at their toys, and they knew with a command she could take them away. Even thrown about and in a tumble, the orphans thought the

toys were exactly where they were supposed to be: all mixed up, some broken, but universally well-loved (at least by the orphans). Fear and self doubt overcame the orphans. There was the unspoken but widely heard rumor that the whole city knew: the orphans were important, but they really shouldn't play together. What would the Mayor's Viceroy do now that she knew? "What are you..." the three orphans began in unison, then stumbled. She had cut them off with a look. "Don't ask questions you do not want the answers to," she said, and without another word she moved swiftly back into her car. The orphans were speechless. They had been seen, been touched and been spoken to by the Mayor's Viceroy. It was unheard of. They didn't know what to do.

The tension passed, and they went back to playing together at the odd jobs that they often were asked to do. It was what they knew. They were orphans, nothing more. Touched, for a brief moment, by the Mayor of the City's Viceroy, but still, every night, they trudged back their separate boxes.

A few weeks later, the orphans were summoned to City Hall. Hand in hand they walked through the streets of the city. The City Dwellers ignored them as they walked. None knew what was to happen to them, and few paid them any attention. There was an unspoken, but widely heard rumor that the whole city knew: the orphans were important, but they really shouldn't play together. But by this time they had been playing together for so long they were routinely ignored, except to be asked to do the odd jobs that no one else wanted to do.

They had come to the attention of the Mayor because of the Viceroy, but few had noticed. The orphans thought “Surely he will punish us.” Among the Citizens in the know, who sometimes talked to their favorite orphans, there had even been talk of moving them all into one large, slightly nicer box. That would be punishment, indeed, given the differences between the orphans.

They walked half way up the city hall steps and waited as they had been instructed. A grand fanfare played, the doors to City Hall opened, and the Mayor, accompanied by his Viceroy, stepped forward. The City Dwellers and Citizens of the city stopped and looked to see what was happening. Often the Mayor made proclamations, and everyone was interested in what he would say. However, in amazement, they saw the three orphans in the middle of the stairs. That was unheard of! The Mayor stood at the podium, with his viceroy by his side. A gracefully, knowing smile played across the Viceroy’s lips as she looked at the three orphans.

And a hush fell over the residents. The Mayor spoke. “I have heard,” began the Mayor, “that that there is an unspoken, but widely heard rumor that these three orphans are important, but that they really shouldn’t play together.” The orphans knew what was coming. Surely they would now be punished.

“Today I am adopting these three orphans,” proclaimed the mayor. “I shall move them out of their boxes and into three new homes,” he continued, to the shock of all who heard, “and I will personally have them as a part of my family, so all the city will know their importance to me and to this city.”

The orphans were dumbfounded. Being orphans no longer, they ran up the remaining stairs, embracing the Mayor's Viceroy, as she beamed at them. The Mayor kept his distance, as he always did, but the orphans, now adopted, clung to their newfound family. Everything had changed because of their adoption. They were homeless no more. An all new adventure would begin.

Introduction

This study begins with an allegory, a story of three orphans and their journey towards creating a newfound family. The study, by beginning in such a manner, prepares you the reader for a different kind of experience particularly in terms of research. This dissertation expanded my own understanding of academic study. I hope it expands yours, too. We began with an allegory, and if you would like to know what it means, you should jump to Appendix A now. However, the dissertation as a whole drops hints at what the allegory may mean. I have purposely put the explanation as an appendix, as a puzzle for the readers to unlock as the read. I would like to begin the more formal chapters with a premise.

Educational efforts must support all students equitably, especially students from marginalized and underrepresented communities. The changing United States demographics make the support especially necessary. Colleges and universities often do not reflect these changing national demographics. Small numbers of marginalized and underrepresented students succeed in higher education (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2006). These small numbers exists from the baccalaureate level through the highest levels of professional degrees and doctorates in an ever increasing way (NAEP, 2006). Colleges and universities have generally failed to be successful in responding to structural or proportional diversity (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999). While many examples of marginalization and underrepresentation are evident in today's schools and colleges, this study focuses on specific populations of women, people of color, people with sexual orientations other than heterosexual,

and those with transgender identities. Colleges and universities develop centers that address issues related to these communities separately (Longerbeam, Sedlacek, Balón, & Alimo, 2005). These centers address the need for educational efforts to support all students equitably.

Five chapters comprise this dissertation. The first chapter began with an allegorical story and goes on to provide the purpose of the study, a rationale, the problem statement and research questions. The first chapter also identifies key elements for understanding, and defines centers and social identities. The second chapter reviews the experiences that call for this exploration, grounds the study in the academic literature, and provides a number of conceptual frameworks for understanding these centers. The third chapter discusses the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter is comprised of stories and analysis. The fifth chapter presented conclusions, recommendations for further research and implications for practice.

Key Terms

Key terms and definitions used in this study, listed alphabetically, include:

Agents – groups that have privilege; a person can be referred to as an agent, or having agency in a social situation.

Campus Community Centers – an umbrella term for LGBT Centers, Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Centers collectively. When used, it implies a level of cooperation, coordinated work, and collegiality. It also implies separation within the connectedness.

Cisgender privilege- the privileged experience that people who are not transgender identified have as they operate within a gendered world.

Cross-Cultural Centers – Centers or offices on college campuses established to serve students from underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. People of color are perceived to be the constituents of Cross-Cultural Centers. All people, regardless of color, are served by Cross-Cultural Centers.

Gender – Culturally and socially constructed relationships between men, women and transgender people.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Centers – Centers or offices on college campuses that serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, staff, and faculty. Allies to these communities of people are also served, primarily through education.

LGBT – an acronym, as well as an umbrella term, for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Oppression – when one group has attained position and power over another, and uses that position and power to continue to secure its position in the social system.

Privilege – rights, abilities and access afforded one group that is denied or restricted from another group (or groups).

Queer – a progressive term adopted by many in the LGBT community to define the LGBT community without reference to sexual identity.

Race – A cultural and social construction based in ancestry and selected physical characteristics such as skin color, hair textures and eye shape.

Sex – Biological and anatomical characteristics attributed to males, females and intersex people.

Sexuality/Sexual identity – a person’s understanding and naming of their own gender and sexual orientation, most often lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual (or straight).

Social systems – patterns of social relationships among people, often categorized in broad groups like race, class, sexuality and gender.

Targets – groups that experience oppression; a person can be referred to as a target or being targeted in a social situation.

Women's Centers – Centers or offices on college campuses established to serve women and the needs of women that are not being met by the broader campus community. People of all genders, including men, are served by these Centers.

This study utilizes the term campus community centers to describe the Centers which build communities of women, people of color, and those with an LGBT identity. When referring to the specific University of California, San Diego collaborative organization, UC San Diego Campus Community Centers is used.

Understanding Centers

But what are these Centers, these Women’s Centers, Cross-Cultural Centers and LGBT Centers? For those unfamiliar with large college campuses, the Center structure may seem mysterious. Most college campuses are defined by two broad areas of concerns: Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Academic affairs include professional schools, like medicine or engineering, as well as departments within

academic divisions, for example history and biology. Typical Student Affairs operations on college campuses include student activity programming, student legal services, residence life, career services, health services, international centers, Greek affairs, and services for students with disabilities. Campus community centers fall under the broad umbrella profession of Student Affairs. Professionals administering these operations “possess a specialized understanding of students, their experience, and how the academic environment can enhance [students] development and learning” (Komives & Woodard, 1996, p. xvii).

On many large, research campuses, one or more of these types of campus community centers may have been established, including a physical structure, budget and staffing to serve constituent communities in a myriad of ways. These centers have been described as Multicultural Program Organizations (Longerbeam, et al, 2005). Multicultural Program Organizations are “units on campuses that have as their primary responsibility to engage differing constituencies of the campus community in services and educational interventions that, broadly defined, work to overcome systems of social oppression” (p. 89). The history and culture of the institution informs the nature of a center’s work. However, commonalities exist across all colleges and universities. Centers serve traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities. As each name implies, these centers encompass specific, constituent groups. Women’s Centers provide spaces of community and connection for women. Typically, people of color access Cross-Cultural Centers. Gay, lesbian and bisexual people, as well as those with transgender identities, connect most often with LGBT Centers.

For the individual student who has multiple marginalized identities (for example, being both gay and African American), centers on college campuses designed for this person often appear to be separate at best. Because a center's name indicates a targeted identity, it appears only that identity will be addressed in the space. In this case, the centers apparently compete for the student's attention. Should gay African American student frequent an LGBT Center? Or would she be more comfortable at a Cross-Cultural Center? Is this student's race or sexual identity more salient? Will this student's race make her a target at an LGBT Center? Or would her lesbian identity make her a target at a Cross-Cultural Center? Would both her lesbianism and her black skin be ignored at a Women's Center? The naming of centers superficially creates difficult choices for students of one identity over another and one community over another.

This necessary, yet problematic, center naming also allows for balkanization around only one marginalized identity at a time. This balkanization highlights privileged power structures in other identities. In other words, a white, gay, male student may seek out an LGBT Center on a college campus, and subsequently examine the way homophobia and heterosexism impacts his life around his marginalized gay identity. He would most likely experience support and validation for his gay identity. However, this same white, gay, male student frequenting the space may create an inhospitable environment around race and gender for others who frequent this hypothetical LGBT Center (people of color, transgender people, and women). A deeper examination of his gender or racial identity would not necessarily

be at the forefront of the LGBT Center's services, mission and culture, given the name. Centers that address race, gender, *or* sexuality may leave the intersections of race, gender *and* sexuality unexplored because of their intended constituency.

These simplistic presentations of specific campus community center work are often baseline assumptions made by those who frequent the spaces based on the name of the space entered. If one enters a college campus's Women's Center, one might expect it to be all about women, not about racial/ethnic issues or LGBT issues. This assumption, and subsequent actual experience with this hypothetical Women's Center, could then serve to separate students from access to all the supportive structures that are in place to ensure their success. A queer woman of color may feel particularly trifurcated in her identity as she accesses disconnected LGBT, Women's and Cross-Cultural Centers on a college campus. Her identity as a woman becomes most salient in this campus's Women's Center because the identity names the center. Whiteness and straightness continue to operate from places of unexplored privilege in this hypothetical Women's Center. Ability, socioeconomic status, religion, and other identities may also remain unexplored. Similar scenarios can be developed through other Centers on this hypothetical campus.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores the leadership practice at the intersection of the centers that support these students. It explores how campus community centers directors interact through the stories of the relationships of the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. The study assumes that it is critical that these centers

work together. Why? Because individual campus community centers that focus on only the community for which they are named (for example, LGBT Centers focusing only on the LGBT identity of the students they serve, to the exclusion of other identities) will not educate appropriately, adequately, or democratically the students who frequent them. The conceptual frameworks for this study support this assumption.

Understanding Social Systems

Weber (2001) provides a theoretical framework on intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality. This framework helps to guide this study. The next chapter reviews Weber's entire framework. However, a few key concepts lay the groundwork to the topic. Race, class, gender and sexuality are often linked to systems of oppression. Oppression exists "when one group has historically gained power and control over societal valued assets by exploiting the labor and lives of other groups and using those assets to secure its position of power into the future" (Weber, 2001, p. 17). Race, class, gender and sexuality also serve as *intersecting social systems*. For race, class, gender and sexuality, these social systems operate in a "complex, pervasive, variable, persistent, severe [and] hierarchical" way (p. 17).

The *structure* of UC San Diego Campus Community Centers, although located in different physical spaces and titled in three different ways (towards specific communities – a Women's Center, an LGBT Resource Center, and a Cross-Cultural Center), ties itself to three of these social systems (gender, sexuality and race). The *strategy* of UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers intentionally working

together subverts these social systems as oppressive. In other words, these social systems become systems of community building. This community building occurs across race, gender and sexuality, not reinforcing oppression between them.

Cooperation leads to power, which can serve to thwart the oppressive systems. The UC San Diego Campus Community Center's model challenges the alleged hierarchy of oppressions and addresses the competition for limited resources. The non-intuitive function of UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers strategically working together provides community building across oppressions.

A simple analysis of UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers might assume each of UC San Diego's Centers' approaches its work with the singular focus identified by its name. That is, the individual Centers work with isolated systems of oppression. For example, UC San Diego Women's Center would address issues related to gender, to the exclusion of sexual- and race-related issues. An understanding of UC San Diego's Campus Community Center work through that lens is one dimensional. It separates the work into the individual Centers as indicated by their names. Additionally, that analysis leads to change strategies that at best serve only the other privileged social identities within the group. If this were true, UC San Diego's Women's Center would primarily serve white women and straight women. In fact, constructing campus community center work differently creates different work for all types of campus community centers. UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers are an example. Those who want to activate, to celebrate difference and

recognize commonality, to build community, and to create change through and across differences can look to UC San Diego's example. This study explores that example.

The Key Role of LGBT Centers

Individual directors of campus community centers lead through their positions within these organizations. The stories of these directors at UC San Diego are explored with the understanding that the development of LGBT Centers has expanded the notions of diversity and social justice on college campuses. A review of the literature reveals that, prior to the development of LGBT Centers, little discussion of cross-issue organizing among Women's Centers and Cross-Cultural Centers existed (Davie, 2002; Hord, 2005; Kasper, 2004; Stennis-Williams, Terrell, & Haynes, 1998). Because of the distinctive role that center directors play, both as administrators and as community leaders within identity groups, these staff occupy unique positions to expand a campus's overall orientation towards diversity initiatives. This is specifically true given the mandate in many states for affirmative action for certain communities of color, and women in certain professions, but not for LGBT people. This broader expansion of the definition of diversity challenges center directors to work together. The creation of LGBT Centers spurs this need.

More than 60 campuses have established LGBT Centers in the last ten years (LGBT Consortium, 2006; Ritchie & Banning, 2001; Sanlo, 2000). The professional staffs of these centers engage in the practice of working on LGBT issues on campus. To what degree is that work informed by connection to other centers working with traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities? Few strategies of

successful collaboration have been rigorously investigated. Of the completed studies, none relate directly to the interdependent work illustrated by the University of California, San Diego Campus Community Centers (University of California, San Diego, 2007). As this Student Affairs field, i.e. LGBT Center work, evolves into a profession (Sanlo, 2000), more and more LGBT Center staff members seek evidence-based guidance in daily practice of working together.

However, baffling questions abound of where LGBT Center work, and the work of all campus community centers, falls into the field of Student Affairs. As Blimling (2000) contended, one of four communities of practice may come forward to understand this work within the field: student learning, student development, student administration or student services. Are centers established to support student learning in and/or out of the classroom? Should they be facilitating holistic student development? Is campus community center work simply about providing educational programs, panels and speakers as requested by the campus community? Or perhaps as Carpenter and Stimpson (2007) argued, traditional scholarship may not inform this profession of Student Affairs because of its unique nature as practice. These areas continue to be discussed and debated in the literature, and this study adds to the debate.

Why study the Directors of these Centers?

No empirical research exists on how such centers collaborate. The available research addresses one type of center specifically (i.e., a Women's Center, mono/multi/cross-Cultural Center, LGBT Center), and no studies focus on

collaborations with these sister organizations specifically. Two books provide direction to the work of LGBT Center Directors. *Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Colleges Students; A Handbook for Faculty and Administrators* (Sanlo, 1998) and *Our Place on Campus: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Services and Programs in Higher Education* (Sanlo, Rankin, & Schoenberg, 2002) serve Directors of LGBT Centers well. The titles provide accurate descriptors of the books' purpose and contents. Chapters written by scholars and practitioners in the field provide practical guidance and reference to this emerging area. A similar book guides practitioners in Women's Centers (Davie, 2002), and some limited work has been done on Cross-Cultural Centers (Hord, 2005). None of these books provide examples or narratives of collaborative work across campus community centers. However, Roper (2002) indicates ... "success as Student Affairs professionals is more closely tied to our ability to construct and manage essential relationships during our careers than to any other activity" (p. 11). A void in the research regarding the development of relationships in campus community centers work exists. This area will be discussed in detail as well in Chapter II.

At UC San Diego the Campus Community Centers appear to function together based on the relationship of the Directors. This appearance begs a number of key questions in order to explore the phenomenon. How has this relationship developed? What may it imply for other Centers similarly situated? Identity can separate communities in fractious and divisive ways. In contrast, the relationships and structures at UC San Diego appear to attempt a collaborative way of working together.

This collaborative model appears to work. The successful growth and development of the three UC San Diego Campus Community Centers on campus, through separate, yet parallel paths, is evidence of this model's collaborative successes.

Why is the lack of empirical research on campus community centers a problem?

In the broader writings on leadership and change, both in education and business, collaboration is seen as key. This collaboration has been articulated as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998), sharing leadership (Chrispeels, 2004), learning organizations (Senge, 2006) and systemic leadership (Allen & Cherrey, 2000). However, listening to and sharing stories at professional conferences this researcher has determined a collaborative construct seems to be missing within the relationships of many center directors. As noted previously (Roper 2002), relationships in Student Affairs provide the key to professional success in the Student Affairs field. Therefore, collaboration would be most successfully built on these relationships.

More importantly, there is no past scholarly research or practical writings on collaborations across campus community centers. On many campuses, identity-based politics serves to separate and further disenfranchise community members from underrepresented and unrecognized groups. The prior discussion on social identities highlights this. Leaders of campus community centers work at the nexus point of these identity politics. Individual leaders' negotiations of these complex identity

politics shape and determine the direction of entire organizations and communities. Center directors play a unique role, simultaneously administrators and community leaders within identity groups. As such, directors inhabit unique positions to frame a campus's overall orientation towards diversity initiatives. No shared stories of struggle, collaboration or collective experience are currently published.

By exploring the stories of the UC San Diego Campus Community Center Directors, other administrators in similar leadership positions can identify potential issues that may arise and can understand ways of negotiating these complex relationships. This study explores professional development as a natural by-product of this action research/story sharing. This study provides individuals interested in entering the profession models of successful collaboration. Senior Student Affairs Officers and others in the highest leadership roles on college campuses can encourage the implementation of some of the strategies the stories uncovers.

Research Questions

This study explored the UC San Diego Directors' role in the Campus Community Centers interactions through stories of the Directors' relationships. This study focused on the following questions:

What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego?

What do the stories of these relationships illustrate in terms of working together around identity and community?

What barriers exist that challenge these relationships?

The conversations and shared lore of the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers answer these questions. Prior to this study, these stories were not written down. They lived in the memories and lives of the directors. These stories, remembered, recorded and analyzed, create a portrait of the unique center structures at UC San Diego. Chapter III describes the methods for disciplined inquiry into these stories, including portraiture and autoethnography. This study has the potential to impact other similarly situated centers across campuses nationwide.

In conclusion, this introduction provided a framework for understanding the realities of collaboration across campus community centers. A definition of campus community centers was provided. A brief explanation of social systems around race, gender and sexuality as understood through the experiences of UC San Diego's Campus Community Center was articulated. The key role of LGBT Centers in expanding the definition of diversity was highlighted. The rationale for studying Directors was provided, and the basic research questions were presented. The next section presents conceptual frameworks and reviews the literature related to LGBT Center, Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Center development.

Chapter II

This chapter provides the conceptual frameworks that undergird the approach for this study. The conceptual frames include systemic leadership, communities of practice, cultural proficiency and identity. Communities of practice contextualize the current discussion regarding scholarship in Student Affairs. Student Affairs is an umbrella term for professions within institutions of higher education that include work related to Women's Centers, Cross-Cultural Centers and LGBT Centers.

Building on these conceptual frameworks, the review explores the writings on campus community centers. Scholarly literature neither uses the phrase campus community centers, nor the organizational construct under any other name. The term Multicultural Program Organizations (Longerbeam, Sedlacek, Balón & Alimo, 2005) is used as an umbrella term, but when used does not imply a connection between these types of centers. Therefore, this review covers studies on Women's Centers, Cross-Cultural Centers and LGBT Centers. As indicated previously, these centers comprise campus community centers. An analysis highlights similarities and differences within these bodies of literature. The multicultural student union provides an alternative view of the work typified by campus community centers.

Finally, the review introduces the experiential knowledge of the researcher. The entire process of the literature review funnels from the broader conceptual frameworks, through the literature, and into the lived experiences of the researcher. In this way, the literature review provides the broadest of understanding in the beginning,

examines that understanding through previously published empirical works, and finally informs the understanding through the lived experiences of the researcher.

Organizational Culture – Systemic Leadership

Many authors have explored organizational culture (Allen & Cherrey, 2000; Argyris, 1993; Senge, 2006). Both Argyris and Senge provided lenses primarily informed by the world of business. Allen and Cherrey grounded their organizational work in higher education in a framework entitled *Systemic Leadership*. A review of major concepts by all of these authors provides a framework for understanding organizational culture and systemic leadership which informs the current research.

Argyris (1993) examined organizations in the context of learning. Two concepts support Argyris's understanding of organizations: single-loop/double-loop learning and espoused theories/theories-in-practice. Single loop learning occurs as individuals within an organization perform an action, have a consequence, and then determine if the consequence matched the intended outcome of the action. If the outcome matches the intention, the action continues. If it does not, the action changes, the new consequence examined, and learning occurs regarding the new action. This process defines single loop learning.

Argyris (1993) defined double loop learning as an extension of single loop learning. In double loop learning, a similar start begins the process. An action is performed, and a consequence occurs. The consequence is then examined to determine if it matched the intended outcome. However, the key difference in double loop learning occurs in the next step. Single loop learning involves changing the

action; whereas, double loop learning involves changing the governing variables of the entire system. In a system of people, governing variables are the values and beliefs the people in the system bring to the organization. Changing these beliefs can be quite difficult. As Argyris indelicately put it, “Individuals are walking social structures who cannot undergo double-loop learning without reflecting on their actions” (1993, p. 36). Once the value and belief system has been changed, the change in action is a fundamental, sustainable change, and double loop learning has occurred. This set of values and beliefs is referred to as theories-in-use.

Theories-in-use drive organizations. Argyris (1993) described theories-in-use as the often unspoken and unexplored beliefs and assumptions individuals make regarding the world. Individuals who comprise organizations then base their actions on these theories-in-use. Their actions are always consistent with their theories-in-use. Espoused theories, a counter point to theories-in-use, are the rhetoric of an individual or organization. People and organizations say they believe, and then say they act on, espoused theories. Inconsistency between a way a person acts and the espoused theory warrants an examination into the true theory-in-use. These examinations, and subsequent change, typify double loop learning. Double-loop learning only occurs when the theories-in-use are addressed. Theories-in-use are the true governing variable of an organization, not the espoused theories. The discussion of single- and double-loop learning leads to another well known author, who, like Argyris, based much organization culture in a business frame.

While Argyris used the term theories-in-use, Senge (2006) described the same construct as an explored individual mental model. Mental models are part of a more complex theory. Senge is well-known for establishing systems thinking as a way of understanding organizational culture. Systems thinking is the fifth of five disciplines, building on the other four: personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision and team learning. Senge promoted systems thinking to create and enhance learning organizations. Although all of the five disciplines are necessary for a learning organization, systems thinking builds on the four other disciplines in structural ways. This structure positions systems thinking as vital to understanding organizational culture and change. Systems thinking positions the whole system as the proper unit of analysis when examining an organization. Key in Senge's understanding of organizations was that the disciplines, like the five he described, were individual disciplines. His understanding of the five disciplines as a systemic orientation to organizational learning provided the bridge from the individual to the organization.

Although Argyris (1993) and Senge (2006) utilized business as a primary frame of reference for understanding organizational culture, other authors grounded their theories of organizational culture in higher education. Allen and Cherrey (2000) explored systemic leadership as a way of understanding organizational culture. Similar to Senge's (2006) five disciplines, Allen and Cherrey described four new ways of working: relating, influencing change, learning, and leading. Together, these four new ways of working allow for *systemic leadership*, the fifth way of working and subsequently leading. The theories were based on experiences primarily in Student

Affairs units of higher education. This work was an important bridge from the business literature of Argyris and Senge to the Student Affairs practice of higher education. Allen and Cherrey examined Student Affairs organizational culture through two fundamental shifts. A fragmented world shifts to a networked world. An industrial world shifts to a knowledge-based world. From these shifts, new ways of working evolve. These new ways of working include ways of relating, influencing change, learning and leading. These two fundamental shifts, from a fragmented world to a networked world and from an industrial world to a knowledge-based world, provide a framework for understanding organization culture (Allen & Cherrey, 2000).

How then do organizations, and the people who are a part of them, make sense of these new ways of understanding organizational culture? Double-loop learning (Argyris, 1993), systems thinking (Senge, 2006) and systemic leadership (Allen & Cherrey, 2000) are highly complex, theoretical models of organizational cultures that provide a macro-perspective. Systemic leadership frames this study at the broadest level. Communities of practice provide a micro-perspective to understand the study.

Communities of Practice

Wenger (1998) first utilized the phrase *communities of practice*. Wenger defined the concept of a community of practice as the groups and organizations that individuals are a part of (a community) that has a mutual engagement on a joint enterprise with a repertoire of shared resources (a practice). Communities of practice provide meaning and identity to individuals. They also provide a social community through engagement and contribution to the organization. Communities of practice

embed in a social theory of learning that incorporate theories of social structures, identity, situated experience and practice (Wenger, 1998). Social structures, identity, situated experience and practice, as theoretical underpinnings, assist in understanding communities of practice as both related to the individual and to the group.

Blimling (2001) expanded on Wenger's notions of communities of practice and contextualized them into the practice of Student Affairs. Blimling described four major communities of practice. Each community is based in a scholarly tradition separate from, yet connected to, the others. These four communities of practice in Student Affairs include student learning, student administration, student services and student development. Each has its own set of metaphors, processes, outcomes, theories, models and assessments.

Blimling (2001) also noted that communities of practice expand from pre-existing networks within Student Affairs, as shown in Figure 1. The immediate office community comprises the first, and most intimate, community for practitioners. The practices in this community most likely inform the realities of day-to-day work. The next community of practice exists within the Student Affairs division at a particular institution. This division sets and defines an overall community of practice based on the orientations of all those employed at one institution. Subspecialty associations define the next community of practice. These subspecialty associations create knowledge communities across institutions that inform practice. Examples include residence life, financial aid, and admissions. The largest community of practice in Student Affairs functions within professional associations. These associations orient

themselves to one of the four major communities of practice in Student Affairs via their leadership. This orientation can change as leadership changes, but is informed by organizational histories and scholarly traditions.

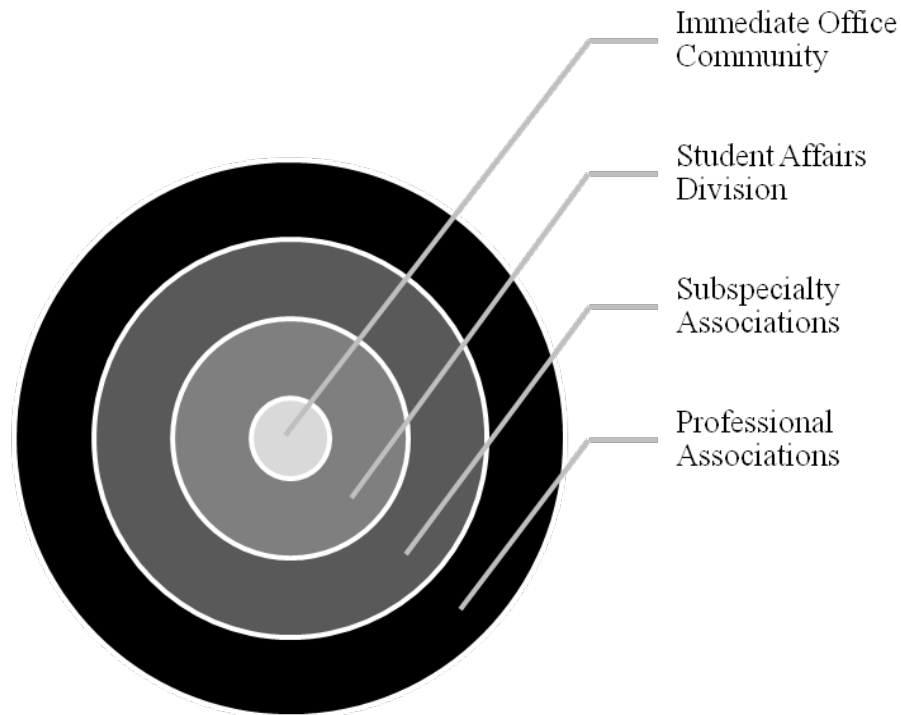


Figure 1. Blimling's (2001) description of pre-existing relationships in Student Affairs. Relationships of communities of practice to each other in Student Affairs practice expand from the most intimate to the broadest connections.

The communities of practice concepts inform the upcoming review of empirical literature related to campus community centers. No literature exists on the campus community centers as a structured collective. Additionally, few studies exist on the individual centers that make up the campus community centers. As Blimling (2001) indicated above, Student Affairs practice falls into four areas that assist in defining communities of practice. In general these four communities occur from the

inside out. That is, the first communities are created within specific colleges and universities, at the office and division level, and then extend out to subspecialty organizations and professional organizations. The results of this study negotiate the space between the office level and the subspecialty level of Blimling's communities of practice. Campus community centers exist on one campus. They exist as a burgeoning community of practice. By scholarly exploration and dissemination of the community of practice that exists at the campus community center level, other similarly situated units may begin to see the subspecialty area as a community of practice. This recognition may spark a deep conversation across universities to organize around the practice of campus community centers.

In summary, communities of practice complement the theories of organizational culture. Communities of practice ground professionals in the smaller perspective, while theories of organizational culture allow a birds-eye view of overall organizational practices. Together, communities of practice and theories of organizational culture inform an understanding of people in the complex social systems of the college and university. However, another way of understanding these systems exists.

Cultural Proficiency

Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell (2003) articulated a model of cultural proficiency to respond to environments shaped by diversity, as opposed to explain what diversity is or how to learn about new cultures. Given the orientations of campus community centers towards diversity, this framework appears particularly suited as a

lens of analysis. As a method of change, cultural proficiency strives to be effective for both individuals and organizations. Cultural proficiency outlines a number of tools which assist individuals and organizations in understanding their environment, including a continuum, essential elements, and barriers. Each tool helps conceptually frame the study.

Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell's (2003) cultural proficiency continuum positioned six points as markers for describing ways that people react to their environment, as shown in Figure 2. On the far left end is cultural destructiveness, which aims to eliminate others' cultures. Next to this is cultural incapacity, which recognizes other cultures, but believes the home culture is superior. The two middle points include cultural blindness and cultural precompetence. Cultural blindness recognizes other cultures but pretends not to (i.e., the blindness), whereas cultural precompetence recognizes other cultures, but responds inadequately to them. On the other end of the spectrum comes both cultural competence and cultural proficiency, both intimately related. The first assesses behaviors that utilize the five essential elements (discussed below), both seeing cultural difference and understanding the importance of these differences. The final point on the continuum, cultural proficiency, assumes both competence and a level of experienced skill in the essential elements.



Figure 2. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum. Each point on the continuum indicates unique ways of seeing and responding to difference.

Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell (2003) provided five standards for all individuals and organizations, which they term *essential elements*. They include the ability to assess cultures appropriately, value the diversity that those different cultures bring, manage the differences of the cultures, adapt to these differences, and then institutionalize these adaptations in individual behavior and organizational practice. Another way of naming these elements rotate around the word difference.

Name the difference: Assess culture

Claim the differences: Value diversity

Reframe the differences: Manage the dynamic of differences

Train about differences: Adapt to diversity

Change for the difference: Institutionalize cultural knowledge (p. 6)

A final construct provided through Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell's (2003) cultural proficiency model and expanded in Terrell and Lindsey's (2009) update of the model are the barriers. The authors articulated three major barriers: the (a) presumption of entitlement, the (b) unawareness of the need to adapt/resistance to change, and (c) systems of oppression. The presumption of entitlement and systems of oppression are related to concepts of power within social systems, privilege and

oppression which are key terms in this study. Entitlement stems from unexamined privilege. This unexamined life goes hand in hand with unawareness. Two cornerstones of cultural proficiency are the need to adapt given the diversity with which one is presented, and the resistance to change given the diversity with which one is presented. These two cornerstones apply to both individual and to organizations. A lack of awareness of this need to adapt (and the subsequent resistance to change) will stop organizations and individuals in their tracks. However, the cultural proficiency model does not provide a strong theoretical stance of the complex social systems related to identity and community. For that position, another framework is needed.

Race, Gender and Sexuality

Like cultural proficiency, Weber (2002) provided a conceptual framework for understanding the experiences of both individuals and organizations in social systems. This framework positions the current study in an understanding of five key themes related to examinations of race, gender and sexuality. Weber included class in the framework as well, but is intentionally omitted here given the structure of the campus community centers under exploration. These five themes in turn assume a reference point for understanding all social life, and specifically to this study: the stories of campus community centers. The five themes regarding race, class, gender and sexuality are (a) stories are historically and geographically/globally contextual; (b) race, class, gender and sexuality are socially constructed; (c) power relationships function within race, class, gender and sexuality; (d) macro/social structure and

micro/social psychological levels are at play; (e) and race, class, gender and sexuality are expressed simultaneously. The descriptions of the five themes that follow are based in Weber's (2002) explanation of these constructs.

When considering race, class, sexuality and gender, examinations must be *historically and geographically/globally contextual*. Analysis focuses on time, place and interactions that are specific to a moment. Analysis is not transferable to other moments. At the same time, placing these moments into a broader historical understanding of social systems and patterns of oppression and privilege provides context. Without attending to the history and the geographic/global positioning of a moment, understanding and interpretation becomes so narrow so as to be provincial.

Concurrently, race, class, gender and sexuality are *socially constructed*. The concepts change according to the desires of those groups that operate within their boundaries. Those with privilege have a particular ability to manipulate these constructions. The meaning of race, class, gender and sexuality can and does change over time. The social systems from which race, class, gender and sexuality are derived are patterns of human relationships, in the aggregate, constructed over time.

These human relationships are *power relationships*. They are not gradients on a scale that is without value. Race, class, gender and sexuality have clear markers of dominance and subordination. Power relationships are dynamic, and change over time as social systems address issues related to fairness and justice. These are power relationships within social systems of race, sexuality, class and gender. They are not personal power relationships, although the personal certainly comes into play.

Macro/social structure and micro/social psychological levels operate in the power relationships. At the macro/social structural level, the broad social forces that shape an event are often difficult to discern. More easily understood is the micro/social psychological level. The daily interactions and stories of relationships among individuals and organizations reveal the micro/social psychological level. These complex interactions are often simplistically analyzed through one lens: race, class, sexuality *or* gender.

A single lens does not provide adequate analysis. Race, class, gender and sexuality *express simultaneously* in all moments. They connect to each other and exist inseparably. Often the attempt is made at both the social institutional level and at the personal level to only attend to one piece of the social system. This leads to continued privileging of unspoken identities, with the oppressed identity in the foreground.

To reiterate, Weber's (2002) five themes serve as a theoretical structure relating to race, class, gender and sexuality. The themes provide a conceptual framework to understand both individual experiences and organizations. The themes, in order (a) historically and geographically/globally contextual, (b) socially constructed, (c) power relationships, (d) macro/social structure and micro/social psychological levels, (e) and simultaneously expression. These five themes also frame the broad understanding of campus community centers.

Campus Community Centers

No literature on campus community centers exists, as it is neither a term widely used nor a concept promulgated at institutions of higher education.

Multicultural Program Organizations (Longerbeam et al, 2005) come closest to describing the organizations under an umbrella term. The term's definition, however, is in contrast to the working definition utilized in this study. For this study, Campus Community Centers describes LGBT Centers, Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Centers collectively. When used, it implies a level of cooperation, coordinated work, and collegiality. It also implies separation within the connectedness. Multicultural Program Organizations (Longerbeam et al., 2005) are "units on campuses that have as their primary responsibility to engage differing constituencies of the campus community in services and educational interventions that, broadly defined, work to overcome systems of social oppression" (p. 89). Campus Community Centers imply collaboration. Multicultural Program Organizations do not. Multicultural Program Organizations simply serves as an umbrella term.

However, the study which operationally defined Multicultural Program Organizations identified a number of elements that inform this study. In 2005, Longerbeam et al. published a study of three research universities' Multicultural Program Organizations. Utilizing an assessment instrument that included both scaled and open-ended questions, the study examined the organizational climate of the Multicultural Program Organizations. The researchers found that "...the people, the collaboration and trust, the interactions and rich discussions, collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs, and the collegiality among coworkers" were among the best things about working at a Multicultural Program Organizations. At the same time, three themes emerged about the environment in Multicultural Program

Organizations, including a reluctance to acknowledge prejudice, limits on socializing outside of work, and disempowerment of support and student staff. These themes have particular implications for this study and will be revisited in Chapter V.

When examining the three bodies of literature on Women's Centers, Cross-Cultural Centers and LGBT Centers (the centers that create the organization called the campus community centers), it is important to note the often unspoken assumption made regarding these centers. Women's Centers, by definition, address issues of sexism. LGBT Centers address issues of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism and cisgender privilege. As noted in the introduction, cisgender privilege is a relatively new term describing the privileged experience that people who are not transgender identified have as they operate within a gendered world. For this study, homophobia will be consciously utilized as an umbrella term to encompass all of these constructs (homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism and cisgender privilege). Cross-Cultural Centers address issues related to racism. These unspoken assumptions cloud the singular lens through which these Centers are most often examined. A fractured and complex lens, which examines racism, sexism and homophobia in all of these spaces, is therefore called upon. Weber's (2002) conceptual framework described above provides this lens.

Women's Centers.

Women's Centers exist on over 400 college and university campuses (Davie, 2002). The flourishing of most Centers occurred in the 1970's, and Women's Centers

are still being established. However, there is little empirical research that addresses the work of Women's Center's in university settings (Kasper, 2004).

Byrne (2000) provided one of the key pieces of literature. The most practical aspect of this research is its use of case study. An examination of the Women's Center at Wright State University provided insight into the role of campus-based Women's Centers. Through this case study, the connection between the academic discipline of Women's Studies and the work of Women's Centers was clearly linked. Byrne then argued for this case study analysis as a model Center structure that others may replicate. The use of this qualitative method of inquiry foreshadows the handbook of Davie (2002).

The book *University and College Women's Centers* (Davie, 2002) provided practical direction to Directors of Women's Centers across the nation. The primary method for chapter development is informal (that is, non-empirical) case study. The book's status as the only available text guiding practice for Women's Center Directors warrants a deeper examination. This examination reveals an interesting phenomenon in terms of articulated connections between LGBT Centers and Cross-Cultural Centers.

University and College Women's Centers (Davie, 2002) presented twenty-one chapters separated into seven sections. One chapter addressed Women's Center responses to racism, and one chapter addressed lesbian and bisexual women. Both fall under the section entitled "Challenges on Campus" (p. iv). Although both chapters clearly articulated successful collaborative work across issues of race and sexuality,

they did separate from the other nineteen chapters, separate from each other, and in a framework that at best names this work as challenging. This separation, although perhaps structurally necessary in such a comprehensive work, further placed the connections between racism, sexism and homophobia as secondary to the primary work of Women's Centers.

Cross-Cultural Centers.

An analysis of Cross-Cultural Centers literature uncovers the most complex and varied history of all campus community centers. Black Cultural Centers were the first manifestations of a movement towards racial consciousness on college and university campuses in the 1960's and 1970's (Hord, 2005; Princes, 1994). Since then, over 400 ethnic-specific, here referred to as mono-cultural centers, and/or multi- or cross-cultural enters have developed throughout higher education (Hord, 2005). Like the Women's Centers mentioned above, very little empirical investigation has been completed. Also like the work on Women's Centers, a limited number of case studies inform the practice of directors of Cross-Cultural Centers (Stennis-Williams, Terrell, & Haynes, 1998). Even the histories of these Centers have been passed down through oral tradition, with no published accounts of their inceptions (Hefner, 2002). Hord (2005) and others mentioned that most Black Cultural Centers grew out of student protest, as a reaction to a predominately white campuses where violence and harassment were present.

As with Women's Centers, one book addresses the needs of directors and staff of cross-cultural centers. However, the book focuses on black cultural centers

specifically. Entitled *Black Cultural Centers: Politics of Survival and Identity* (Hord, 2005), the name positions the book as a treatment on the fears of staff of these black cultural centers. Identity and politics run throughout the chapters, and each chapter presented a different argument for the continued, valued existence for black cultural centers on college campuses. The most interesting tension exists between the black cultural center movement and the multicultural center movement. Both pilloried and praised, multicultural centers are repeatedly presented as key to the survival, or lack thereof, of black cultural centers (Hord, 2005).

Throughout the Hord (2005) text, and among the few scholarly works published (Hefner, 2002; Princes, 1994; Stennis-Williams, Terrell, & Haynes, 1998) little mention is made of issues related to gender or sexuality. Bankole (2005) reviewed the activities of black cultural centers. In a comprehensive list based on self-reports and interviews over a number of years, over 100 items were named. Close scrutiny for words like, gender, sexuality, women, men, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, same-gender loving, sex, sexual health, etc. revealed nothing in the centers' activities.

The primary connection discussed among black cultural centers appears to be inter-ethnically. Many of these centers struggle to find their role with an increasingly racially diverse campus environment (Hefner, 2002). The connections to other centers, like Women's Centers or LGBT Centers, was non-existent in the literature.

LGBT Centers.

An exhaustive review of the research and scholarship on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Centers in higher education yields only two empirical studies (Ritchie & Banning, 2001; Sanlo, 2000). Indeed, scholars lament the lack of research on LGBT college students in general (Bieschke, Eberz, & Wilson, 2000; Croteau & Talbot, 2000; Rankin, 2003; Sanlo, 2004) at best referencing a “modest body of scholarship” (Renn & Bilodeau, 2005, p. 342). Absent empirical investigation, university leaders rely on intuition, emotion and popular knowledge when addressing concerns regarding sexual orientation and gender identity across campus life.

In 1992, fifteen LGBT Centers were staffed on college campuses; in 1996 thirty such places had been established (Gose, 1996). In 1998 Matthew Shepard, a young college student, was brutally beaten and died on a Wyoming fence post near his campus. Subsequently, there was a rise of LGBT campus activism. Now over 100 staffed LGBT Centers exist on college campuses throughout the nation (LGBT Consortium, 2006). This timing may speak volumes about the nature of university leaders’ response to the needs of LGBT people. Reactions to this violence, including the desire to avoid such occurrences on local campuses, may have fueled the creation of many LGBT Centers.

The documented call to create LGBT Center’s is twofold. The first relates to violence and harassment. Researchers, who were not specifically investigating LGBT people, still documented harassment and violence towards, and suicide within, the LGBT higher education community (Carr & Ward, 2006). Carr and Ward

recommended the creation and strengthening of LGBT Centers on campuses in response to this violence. The second, broader layer of the call comes from within the LGBT higher education community. Nationwide, LGBT Center work links philosophically with many campus social justice movements (D'Augelli, 1989; Sanlo, Rankin, & Schoenberg, 2002).

Like Cross-Cultural Centers and Women's Centers, one of the two empirical works available is a case study. Ritchie and Banning (2001) provided a qualitative study of establishment experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender campus support offices. Similar to the Byrne (2000) article regarding the establishment of the Women's Center at Wright State University, the piece detailed a case study approach to understanding the birth of eight LGBT Centers across the nation. In contrast, Sanlo (2000) completed a quantitative study, surveying LGBT Centers across the nation in search of comparative data on the staff's education, salary, and operating budgets. LGBT Centers were described as a new and emerging field, distinct in nature and quality in the field of Student Affairs. No reference in either piece is made to Cross-Cultural Centers or Women's Centers.

The presence of violence and harassment, as well as the desire for inclusion and justice, precludes the creation of many campus community centers, as has been shown by the review of Women's and Cross-Cultural Centers. As the analysis of the scant literature indicates, LGBT Centers most often exist to reduce violence and harassment, and as an effort to provide inclusion and promote social justice towards

LGBT people. Connections between the three types of centers are unknown in the empirical literature.

Similarities and differences.

A number of similarities can be seen in a review of the literature on the three types of Centers that comprise campus community centers. All are relatively recent phenomenon on college campuses. Communities of practice, rather than volumes of scholarship, inform these centers. Thus, the ever-present informal case study elucidates the work more than empirical research.

In this situation, the term case study is not being used to describe the disciplined, strenuous scholarly case study, but the kind of informal case study described by Brown, Hinton and Howard-Hamilton (2007). Case studies in this context substitute for theory-to-practice situations that real life, professional work provide to practitioners. These case studies provide information for learning purposes that allow the reader to imagine a case and possible ways of addressing the case as a teaching and learning tool. Graduate courses most often use these types of case studies.

Interestingly, the differences are few. It appears that LGBT Centers have documented their history in the scholarly press better than any of the other centers (Ritchie & Banning, 2001; Sanlo, 2000). Perhaps their recent emergence on the scene explains this. However, it may also be because of the glaring absence of mono- and cross-cultural center establishment stories. By documenting the establishment of LGBT Centers, the question posed by the title of Hefner's (2002) article *Black*

Cultural Centers: Standing on Shaky Ground? may be answered in the sanctioned and accepted way – scholarly writing. Women’s Center’s have more clearly recorded some history through case study.

One last difference should be mentioned. Among the literature of the three types of centers reviewed, there were varying levels of connections to the others. Cross-Cultural Centers seemed to have the least visible connections in the literature to other centers. Women’s Center scholarship positioned these connections as challenges. LGBT Centers mentioned a philosophical connection to other social justice movements, but did not provide extensive treatment of the intersections of race, sexuality and gender. These connections and disconnections, visible and invisible, speak volumes to the need for the present study.

Alternative views: the multicultural student union.

An article by Malaney, Gilman and O’Connor (1997) described a quantitative survey to determine the student opinion towards creating a multicultural student union on a particular campus. As is the tradition with other areas that rely on the case study as a teaching tool, this scholarly work on multicultural student unions highlights two such units in the review of the literature. Both of these units appeared to construe the term multicultural narrowly, as gender and sexuality were not mentioned in the programmatic offerings or in populations of students they were reaching. Multicultural student unions were described as places that “provide the *challenge* of a culturally diverse environment” (Malaney, Gilman, & O’Connor, 1997, p. 174) (*italics added for emphasis*). Already positioning cultural diversity as a challenge, these

organizations had evolved out of traditional student unions, which provide a place for all students to come together, unwind, participate in activities, and create a relaxing environment (Fagan, 1989).

The article duly reports the results, and the responses overwhelmingly showed support for the change (Malaney, Gilman, & O'Connor, 1997). However, the study ends with an interesting coda. The study was to determine if the current student union should become a multicultural student union, and it showed that student opinion supported it. Due to changes in campus leadership and budget cuts, the traditional student union was maintained.

The multicultural student union, as a concept, provides an insight into a different way of addressing issues related to sexuality, gender and race on college campuses. The case studies provided two examples of success, although no empirical literature supported these assertions. As an alternative to campus community centers, the idea of integrating cultural diversity into existing spaces and offices seems to have had only a moment in the literature. The scholarly work on LGBT Centers, Cross-Cultural Centers and Women's Centers, although sparse as well, seems to indicate a more common approach.

In reviewing the literature, the broadest lens has situated the argument in specific conceptual frameworks relating to organizational culture, communities of practice, cultural proficiency and understandings of race, class, gender and sexuality. As the lens became more focused, specific bodies of empirical literature were reviewed regarding Cross-Cultural Centers, Women's Centers and LGBT Centers. In

the next section, a conscious change of voice will occur, as the author situates the study in lived experiences as recommended by Maxwell (1996).

Experiential Knowledge

I have been the Director of the LGBT Resource Center at the University of California, San Diego since May of 2001. My earliest experiences with the Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Center came during my group interview with the selection committee for my current position. Both the Director of the Women's Center and the Director of the Cross-Cultural Center were present at the interview, and the interview itself was conducted in the Women's Center. From these first moments, UC San Diego felt different than any other institution with which I had experience. Issues of race, gender and sexuality seemed to be positioned similarly, and not in juxtaposition.

The LGBT Center I inherited from previous short-term and part-time Directors faced a number of realities. The students of color had recently started their own group, Queer People of Color, and there was tension between this group and an older student organization, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Association. There was also gendered history of the four previous part-time and short-term Directors. These former Directors all identified as women.

Issues of race, ethnicity and gender were salient for me from the interview into the first day and through the years as the Center has expanded. These issues were also salient for the majority of students who frequented the Center. Based on these experiences, I bring many assumptions about the importance of race and gender to the work of an LGBT Center. I believe that these issues are of utmost consequence to

daily work. To ignore issues of race and gender while still doing LGBT work increases the hegemonic power structures that pervade society and popular media regarding specific communities that are often marginalized and underrepresented in higher education. In other words, my experience indicates that if an LGBT Center Director is not actively engaged in work around issues of race and gender, an assumption by the institution will be that LGBT Center work is about white, gay men. If I were a woman, the assumption would be that the work was about white, lesbian women (and gay men).

I am aware that experiences regarding intersections of race, gender and sexuality drive me to investigate this work more deeply. These experiences, although often complex and emotionally charged, bring out the best in me, and in the students and colleagues with whom I work. I believe it is the only way to do the work in a socially just manner.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to understand UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers.

What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego?

What do the stories of these relationships illustrate in terms of working together around identity and community?

What barriers exist that challenge these relationships? In Chapter III, the methods for answering these questions will be addressed.

Chapter III

This chapter describes the methods used to address the research questions.

Portraiture and autoethnography are reviewed. Both methods are discussed, as well as the rationale for combining the methods into a unique methodology to best answer the research questions. Next, the critical epistemological stance of the researcher is discussed, with specific attention drawn to issues of power, relationship and identity as they pertain to the methodology. Specific methods of data collection, drawing from traditions of narrative inquiry and case study, are reviewed. Setting and participants are described. The plan for analysis is presented, including thematic analysis, re-storying and portraiture. In conclusion, the autoethnographic portraiture process is again discussed.

Methodology – Autoethnographic Portraiture

In 1983, Lawrence-Lightfoot's groundbreaking book, *The Good High School*, received an award from American Education Research Association utilizing an innovative methodology: portraiture. Portraiture as a methodology builds on many qualitative data collection methods utilized in case studies (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003) and narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007; Waterhouse, 2007). However, portraiture is an evolving qualitative method which utilizes the researcher as a "researcher-artist, portraitist and artist-researcher" (Waterhouse, 2007, p. 277). Portraiture employs observation, interview and document analysis, as do many qualitative inquiries. However, a unique feature of portraiture is its depth and breadth, where studies often read as stories, describing in thick, rich detail settings, relationships and organizational

structures. *The Good High School* (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983) has been described as “powerful, informative, literary, artistic, and interesting” (Bolin, 1984). Analysis within portraiture reveals as much about the researcher as it does regarding the phenomenon under study. Portraits are stories, and portraiture is empirical story telling.

This research also utilizes an autoethnographic method. As previously stated, Chavez, Guido-DiBrito and Mallory (2003) noted “autobiography, autoethnography, narrative and storytelling [have] gained legitimacy as collection tools in educational environs for creating new knowledge by incorporating personal knowledge into research.” (p. 453). Portraiture lends itself to this autoethnographic role through its emphasis on the participants and portraitist concurrently through the data collection and analysis.

Autoethnographic portraiture blends these two methodologies. “The portraiture methodology is used when a researcher wishes to produce a full picture of an event or person that tells as much about the subject as it does about the researcher, or portraitist” (Chapman, 2007, p. 157). Because I am one of the Directors of the University of California, San Diego Campus Community Centers, an organization that is the focus of my study, this aspect of the portraiture methodology is quite relevant. Concurrently, my embedded role practically demands autoethnography. A deep, intentional and disciplined inquiry into my own stories is required. I am going to be involved as a participant observer, first described in detail by Spradley (1980). Participant observers must address issues related to their bias, their conflicts of interest

and their instrumental role in data collection. As extensively described by Richardson (2003) observation notes, methodological notes, theoretical notes and personal notes will all be utilized within the data collection and analysis process. See Appendix B for an example of a data collection form for these field notes. These extensive field notes will allow for a full portrait to emerge, acknowledging both my participant observer role and portraitist-researcher role. They also provide the raw material for the autoethnographic aspects of the portrait.

Ellis (2004) described a number of unique features of an autoethnographic project that separate it from other forms of qualitative inquiry. In general, authors use the first person and considers themselves the object of the research. This can be seen already within the context of this study at the end of Chapter II, in the section entitled experiential knowledge. Autoethnographies focus on an extended case over a long period of time. They describe the author's culture through the reflected experiences of the author in their own culture. Additionally, this methodology utilizes the elements of literature, including plot, character and setting. Autoethnographies expose inner thoughts and highlight emotional experiences. Additionally, "a reflexive connection exists between the lives of the participants and researchers that must be explored" (Ellis, 2004, p. 30). In other words, the relationships with others are of utmost research interest in an autoethnographic study. Finally, the writer and the readers' relationship is one of involvement and participation. In other words, as the voice consciously switches, you, the reader, are right now being considered, by me, the writer, and what impact this statement will make on you as you read it.

Autoethnography assumes a distinct and real relationship between the reader and author, where the reader becomes participatory in the process through critical self-reflection.

Although not described as autoethnography, the text from which the cultural proficiency model (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009) is drawn utilized similar methodologies. Cultural proficiency is one of four conceptual frameworks for this study. Throughout the book *Cultural Proficiency: The Personal Journey Begins Within*, Terrell and Lindsey (2009) share their personal experiences. The authors used their “stories as vignettes to illustrate and amplify your [the reader’s] growing awareness of and facility with equity issues” (p. 3). Autoethnography, although a more disciplined approach, similarly positions the stories of the author as central to exploring and understanding the culture and case in question.

Autoethnography and portraiture fully capture the essence of the primary methodology of this study. Autoethnographic portraiture combines the artistic, empirical and self-conscious roles of portraiture with the intensively reflexive and culturally narrative traditions of autoethnography. The study produces an autoethnographic organizational portrait of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. This methodology, pairing the constructs of autoethnography with the concepts of portraiture, effectively answered my research questions. Given the social justice mission of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers and the minimal writings of the types of centers which come together to form campus community centers, the autoethnographic elements are particularly relevant. As Tierney (1998)

asserted, "autoethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders" (p. 66). The challenge for this research was to be a good artist, a good researcher, and self-reflective. The painting of the portrait of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers, as told through the shared stories of the Directors of these Centers and channeled through the writing of one Director, was challenging.

Criticisms exist regarding both portraiture and autoethnography as methodologies. Autoethnography has been described as narcissistic and self-indulgent, as well as unverifiable (Holt, 2003). Portraiture has been critiqued for "reducing the potential multiplicity and diversity of simultaneous truths to a singular story line, [which] no matter how compelling or interesting, may be the most important disfigurement of the ensuing portrait placed on the verbal canvas" (English, 2000, p. 26). English's primary argument is that the methodology ultimately is a return to a positivistic approach, and in turn to "one single, grand, encompassing truth" (p. 23) that is a concrete reality established by the researcher. The criticism extends from Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis (1997) understanding of the portraitist as creating only one portrait from the data. In other words, the intimate involvement of the researcher in the portraiture method is also its chief criticism. The portraitist creates only one portrait, only one truth, from the data analysis. Although the attempt is for a full and complete truth, it is only the portraitist's truth, and it is

positioned as unassailable. A similar criticism exists regarding autoethnographies (Josselson, 1993).

When considering self narratives, which are the cornerstones of autoethnographies, Josselson (1993) asked “Is just a good story enough? What must be added to a story to make it scholarship? How do we derive concepts from stories and then use these concepts to understand people?” (p. xi). By utilizing the portraiture method, the perspectives of two other participants are “added to the story” to make it scholarship. The resulting investigation is neither fundamentally an autoethnography, nor a portrait as conceived by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis (1997). It is an autoethnographic portrait, a portrait of the Directors of the Campus Community Centers, of which the artist is one of the Directors. Portraiture adds the science to the art that is autoethnography, although portraiture spans the boundary of art and science itself. However, in utilizing the portraiture method, the criticisms of self-indulgence and narcissism are addressed through the intimate participation of other sitters in the portrait. Epistemology is also relevant to addressing these critiques.

Addressing Criticism through Epistemological Perspectives

Hollingsworth and Dybdahl (2007) succinctly described three epistemological frameworks. They are positivistic, constructivist and critical. Each of these epistemological perspectives creates theoretical positions for the researcher on power relationships and identity. These epistemologies subsequently inform methodological choices for researchers.

Positivistic and constructivist epistemologies could both frame the research. The positivistic viewpoint positions truth as knowable, and as such the researcher controls the content of the investigation, never considering identity, power or relationships in the design or construction. The relationships tend to be brief, and the power remains with the researcher (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). The constructivist viewpoint positions truth as socially constructed. The researcher and narrators are in relationship, and together they provide perspective balance to the truth that is told. The researcher still has much power in the relationship, and usually controls the topics of conversation (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007).

However, epistemologically this research design stems from a critical perspective of knowledge. This perspective is informed by the power understandings originally described by Foucault (1980) and subsequently utilized by feminist theorists, critical race researchers, and queer theorists. The critical perspective assumes that there is no stable truth to be known and that the understandings of any events are necessarily situated in history and politics related to power. Power shifts between story tellers and the researcher. The identity of the researcher is always considered in the design. The power tensions are made explicit and are mitigated by a commitment to a long term relationship (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007).

With this critical perspective in mind, the researcher in this context is a mid-30's, white, male-bodied, male-identified, cisgender, bisexual, middle class man raised in a small, nuclear family with strong Christian values and traditional Midwestern sensibilities. Given the agency of being white, cisgender and male-bodied, the power

inherent in these identities must be named. This is especially true in the context of this study, as it involved shared conversations with only two others with fundamentally different identities. The Directors of the Cross-Cultural Center and the Women's Center are both female-bodied and women of color identified. The epistemological understanding of how this power may manifest itself should be taken into consideration by the reader of this study.

Analysis of the stories of how a well-functioning team negotiates the problem space of identity indicated above gives voice to strategies for working together. Appreciative inquiry frames the investigation in what works well, while addressing the future of change for even more successful collaboration. Appreciative inquiry as articulated by Watkins and Cooperrider (2000) "seeks what is 'right' in an organization" (p. 6).

I will address the criticisms of the portraiture and autoethnographic method by taking this critical, not positivistic, epistemological stand on knowledge. Epistemologically, the critical stance expects a different truth if another researcher were to return to the data. Again, the critical perspective also assumes that there is no stable truth to be known (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). The understandings of any events are necessarily situated in history and politics related to power. Power shifts between story tellers and the researcher/portraitist. The identity of the researcher is always considered in the design. The power tensions are made explicit, and are mitigated by a commitment to a long term relationship (Hollingsworth &

Dybdahl, 2007). My long term relationship with my fellow Campus Community Center Directors mitigates my power as the researcher/portraitist/ autoethnographer.

The very distinct data analysis technique of re-storying, which will be discussed below, opens up the process to participant review and multiple realities. I will not create the only truth, i.e., the only portrait, but a truth that evolves with the participants. Another researcher could return to the paints, i.e., the field notes, journals and transcripts. This researcher/portraitist could paint a portrait that could possibly be similar. However, reflexivity must be considered with a new portraitist, as well as the unique autoethnographic details that the methodology requires. Reflexivity within the scope of this methodology addresses reliability. “Reflexivity is the art of reviewing one’s own assumptions, biases and values, and reflecting almost continuously on the effect of these on one’s observations and evaluations” (Waterhouse, 2007, p. 282). Considering the reflexivity required of the researcher in qualitative inquiry, a portrait created by another researcher would most likely reveal different truths. Given that this is autoethnographic portraiture, the reflexivity is essential to the narratives, as they are derived from the point of view of the researcher.

Reflexivity addresses reliability. Validity must be addressed as well. In quantitative studies, validity attempts to describe how closely an empirical instrument measures what it is supposed to be measure. The use and nature of the term validity in qualitative research are controversial and many (Lather, 1993, Winter, 2000). Issues of validity will be addressed through triangulation with the participant data. In other words, not only are the participants in constant reflection on the narrative construction

via the re-storying data analysis technique, they are also examining and reexamining the stories from a personal perspective. “In portraiture, our ability to provoke readers, participants, and ourselves into reevaluating our respective points of view is a small but meaningful form of social justice” (Chapman, 2007, p. 159). Given the Campus Community Centers missions and purposes, this methodology is in tune with the overall commitments of the Centers themselves. “Validity in portraiture is defined in terms of the resonance, credibility and authenticity of the finished portrait” (Waterhouse, 2007, p. 281). These three markers were met through the reflection of the participants on the portrait created of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. Questions of resonance, credibility and authenticity were asked of every story, and all were drafted, edited and re-written to ensure validity with the participants.

This study also pushes the boundaries of traditional inquiry via autoethnographic portraiture. The study’s excess of personal voice relies more on “transgressive validity” (Lather, 1993, p. 685) in its methodological generations. This type of validity “works at the edges of what is currently available in moving toward a science with more to answer to in terms of the complexities of language and the world” (p.673). In other words, validity for this study is offered as more of a problem than a solution regarding the production of legitimate knowledge. Grounded in practice and discourse, the study positions validity as both possible and impossible due to the complexities of the world in which it is situated. The study transgresses validity to ensure that it is valid.

Site and Context

Data was collected at the Campus Community Centers at the University of California, San Diego. The University of California, San Diego is a large, urban research I campus that is a part of broader, state-wide nine school university system. The University of California, San Diego is one of the premier institutions in the nation in support of the LGBT community (Windmeyer, 2006). While generally characterized as one of the least racially diverse UC campuses in the system, UC San Diego has supported the establishment of three separate centers that address issues related to social justice (UCSD, 2007).

Each of the three Campus Community Centers has a unique history. The Cross-Cultural Center was established in 1995. Affectionately referred to as *The Cross*, it was born out of student and faculty activism that included such spectacular acts as shutting down the Interstate 5 freeway that sides a part of the campus, resulting in multiple student arrests and subsequent prosecution. The Women's Center was established in 1996. Its roots also are in student activism, most dramatically the 24-hour-a-day establishment of a tent facility in the heart of campus to serve as a Women's Resource Center in the glaring absence of the University's establishment of a permanent physical space. The LGBT Resource Center was established in 1999. Through the multi-year commitment of a few key staff and faculty beginning in 1992, numerous written reports were submitted to the Chancellor, UCSD's highest ranking official. The Center was established not through protest, but through continued

anecdotal documentation of the negative campus climate and the need for community space.

Access to these spaces was arranged by the Directors, who were the participants in the study. They have full responsibility for the spaces, and had the ability to manipulate their time to accommodate the research schedule. The supervisor of these staff members, which is common between all three, was informed of the study and potential subsequent outcomes to ensure support of the research.

Participants

The three Campus Community Center Directors were the participants in the study. The Director of the Women's Center has the longest history at UC San Diego. She was an undergraduate student, and now is active in the staff alumni association. She began her tenure in the Women's Center as the Assistant Director in 2000, and became first the acting, and subsequently permanent, Director of the Women's Center in 2003. The Director of the Cross-Cultural Center began as the founding director of the Cross-Cultural Center in 1997, and has the longest tenure as a Director of the three participants. The Director of the LGBT Resource Center began in May of 2001. All of the participants were doctoral students in a joint doctoral educational leadership program at the time of the study. The joint doctoral program brings together the three regional state universities in San Diego County: the University of California, San Diego; the California State University, San Marcos; and San Diego State University.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in the spring of 2007 that informs this research design. The purpose of the pilot study was to gain skills in working with interviews, as well as explore practice, identity and collaborations among directors of campus community centers. In this case study, directors from different University of California campuses were contacted. One Director of Women's Center, one Director of a Cross-Cultural Center and one Director of an LGBT Resource Center were chosen. These Directors were chosen specifically because they would give insight into the experiences of working across campus community centers. Each of these Directors had made strides in working with their respective other Directors of the two parallel Centers. In other words, the Director of the Cross-Cultural Center had made significant connection to the Director of the Women's Center and Director of the LGBT Center on their specific UC campus. The other Directors had made similar forays. These Directors were chosen because they had the potential to be most similar to the positions and relationships that are in place at the University of California, San Diego. They also provided more evidence of the experiences of working together across campus community centers.

The Center Directors were interviewed separately over the phone regarding identity, collaboration and practice over the course of three weeks. Each interview was transcribed. The interview protocols changed with each interview, as new, more articulate questions were created based on the narrative (or lack thereof) of the prior interview. This study was designed with a constructivist epistemology in place, although it was not articulated at the time. The outcome of this pilot was the

refinement of the ontological perspective, epistemological point of view, research methods and questions that were utilized to generate the narratives of the Campus Community Centers at the University of California, San Diego. No major constructs of practices of working together arose from this pilot. However, the research did provide ample opportunity to practice the skills of writing narratives and stories from the transcribed interviews of the participants. These skills were important as the data analysis for this study began.

Data Collection Techniques

Shared story-telling (conversation), a technique endemic to narrative inquiry, is the primary method for data collection. Research as action utilizes the research space as professional development. McNiff (2007) described this linkage as

...a form of research that enables practitioner researchers to tell their own stories of how they have taken action to improve their situations by improving their learning. They explain how reflecting on their action can lead to new learning, which can inform future learning and action. Their stories compromise their descriptions and explanations of practice.... (p. 308).

In addition, my own stories are woven into and are a part of the conversation. This stance stems from emerging research trends that allow for the autobiographical narrative (Chavez, Guido-DiBrito, & Mallory, 2003; Ellis, 2004).

In March of 2008, the Directors of the Campus Community Centers came together to share stories over six sessions. These stories were shared bi-weekly between the end of March and the middle of June, 2008. Each story-sharing session

was one to two hours in length. The story-telling sessions were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. The transcriptions were shared the following week to ensure accuracy of the transcription, to edit any areas of concern, and to further add detail to the narrative(s) that were recalled on review of the transcript. The Directors were also encouraged to journal reflections from these conversations and shared story telling. Only the researcher produced reflective journals. These journals came in the form of field notes and reflections.

The story-telling happened near the beginning of the work day, usually between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Wednesdays. The last session was held in the home of the researcher in the afternoon. Setting is important to elicit the best atmosphere for the depth of sharing necessary (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). The room was private, away from distractions like phones, computers and staff that may interrupt with the business of the day. There were coffee and snacks each morning, and at the last session there was a happy hour immediately following the data collection. The stories were part of an ongoing dialogue that has occurred for the last three years among these three professionals. A review of this dialogue is important.

Every other week since 2002, the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers have come together for conversation regarding the joint work of their respective Centers. The initial meetings emerged out of a desire for a joint venture in education entitled the Chancellor's Undergraduate Diversity Leadership Institute. This institute played a key role, as the narratives reveal, in the relationships of the Directors. However, the primary focus of this meeting has continued to be one

of joint connection and relationship building. In early 2007, the meetings became weekly. This was due to the volume of work required of full time staff and full time doctoral students involved in numerous joint projects in work and study.

However, the process of the research provided more focus and structure to the dialogues. It was a gathering of friends and of professionals. The focus of the gatherings was on story-telling. Other projects and tasks were worked on in different settings, or immediately before and after the research conversations. I was a facilitator/participant, as I am the Director of the LGBT Resource Center. I am also the autoethnographer/portraitist in this case. My identity informed the process, as has been noted earlier, but the transparency of this power relationship mitigated this power. However, particular attention should be paid to this unique role I am occupying in the research.

Doing this Work as Indigenous Work

In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) discussed a number of topics that pertain to my positionality in this study. One of the most relevant issues was discussed in terms of consent. Tuhiwai Smith described consent not as just a signature on a form, but consent as a continuing process. “Consent indicates trust and the assumption is that the trust will not only be reciprocated but constantly negotiated...” (p. 136). Given my unique role with my colleagues, as both a participant and an observer, this perspective on consent troubles the typical Institutional Review Board (IRB) assumptions around consent negotiation. The IRB consent forms are specifically written to allow for the withdrawal of consent

at any time. However, the forms neither capture the trust relationship that is implied, nor what withdrawal of consent would mean in terms of this trust. As Tuhiwai Smith indicated, consent implied trust. This trust is both reciprocal and negotiated throughout the course of data collection. Because I am both researcher and colleague in these data collection interactions, that trust can be mitigated not just by the researcher-participant relationship, but also by the colleague-to-colleague relationship, the relationship between long-time intimates, and the formal relationship as comparable Center Director to comparable Center Director. These four relationships deserve more reflection and explanation.

The researcher-participant relationship assumes a natural power-over relationship. Although the other participants are also involved in their own research agendas related to the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers, in this context they trust me as the researcher collecting *the* stories, *their* stories, *our* stories of connection, leadership and community. Each story will reveal its own depth of trust in the relationship between the story-teller and the recorder. In the moment of the telling, the trust will be negotiated, through word-choice and through potential reaction. What stories can the three of us not tell to each other? What pain cannot be revealed because the trust is not deep enough? Would that story be easier to relate to an outsider? Or is the trust deep enough to be allowed, even though the points of contact in the relationship are many?

The colleague-to-colleague relationship has built a significant amount of trust over the years. Because we are analogues to each other in many ways throughout the

university environment, our ability to share deeply with each other regarding perspectives, frustrations and success has been high. This colleague-to-colleague relationship may provide solid ground to ask the hard questions of each other regarding our stories of creation and connection. However, it is the long-time intimate relationship that may allow us to go deeper than a mere collegiality would allow. We have seen each other through personal relationships, through illness, through tears and through joy. Although first predicated on a work relationship, the intimacy has increased over the years to more fully encompass our lives.

There are still very real differences that manifest themselves as we explore our relationship as comparable Center Directors. We each approach our work quite differently. Some is due to fundamental issues of size, structure and resources of our individual Centers. Some is based on our own history within the institution, our education, and our professional experience. Some is related to our own identity as Director of an area where communities experience significant oppression on a societal level. Will we be willing to take the risk of comparing, contrasting and story-telling that may reveal both subtle and dramatic differences in our Center lives separate from the Camps Community Center collaborative? Can the very real comparisons that may reveal stark contrasts be spoken aloud? How can consent be continued to be navigated? The trust inherent in what consent implies may very well be the bedrock on which the strength of this research resides. The stories of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers may be only heard through a truly trusting relationship embedded in informed consent.

In addition, my position as an insider researcher must be considered and examined. As Tuhiwai Smith indicated, most methodologies assume an outsider status, although some qualitative research makes an insider methodology more acceptable. Portraiture lends itself to an insider orientation, autoethnography demands it, and both position the researcher's reflexivity as integral to the quality of the work created. The indigenous nature of my insider role confounds this outsider/insider binary in portraiture. The definitive authors on portraiture, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann Davis (1997) did not address this in discussions of the methodology. Both insider and outsider researchers must have reflexivity in their research. The methodology for this study assumes a high degree of reflexivity revealed through a methodology that includes a process of numerous reflexive notes. However, the important concept that Tuhiwai Smith named is the indigenous "insiders have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day-to-day basis for ever more, and so do their families and communities" (p. 137). I have multiples level of relationships with the participants, as indicated above. These relationships will continue beyond the data collection and analysis period. The consent given by the participants assumes an ongoing relationship far past the research itself. This is especially trustworthy given that consent was granted to use actual names, not pseudonyms, and the stories are situated in their actual setting, UC San Diego, not a hypothetical analogue.

The story-sharing was guided by questions each session. These questions evolved throughout the study, but attempted to narrow the conversation to narratives

of the how and the why of working together as campus community centers. Appendix C illustrates the discussion questions for each session.

Analysis - Constructing Stories

McCormack's (2004) process of storying served as the primary analytic tool. Two stages are used for this storying. The first constructs stories and the second composes a shared personal experience narrative. For this study, the second stage created an organizational experience narrative: a portrait of the UCSD Campus Community Centers. The entire process was iterative, with the participants deeply involved in the process of writing, analysis and interpretation. Because I am both a participant and the researcher in this context, this method of analysis is particularly suited. It also allowed for autoethnographic storying.

In stage one of McCormack's (2004) process, the researcher reads the transcript and constructs a middle story. Five tasks are necessary within this step. The researcher first reconnects with the conversation through active listening of the recording. Then the researcher locates the narrative process (the story or stories) within the transcript of the conversation. In the third step, the researcher writes rich, well-constructed stories which are then returned to the participants for comment and feedback. The researcher considers the participants' comments, and then drafts the final interpretive story. The interpretation includes agreed upon story titles from the participants, a temporal ordering of all the stories, and the text of the stories. These are then redrafted by viewing the transcript through multiple lenses: language, context and moments. This concludes the initial step in the first stage.

The second step in McCormack's (2004) first stage completes the story by adding a beginning and an ending. The researcher composes an orientation for the story and finalizes the title. The researcher adds a coda at this point, which closes the story. Visual form and textual strategies enhance the presentation of the stories. The researcher again shares the stories with the participants, and their reflections provide further validity. This informs an epilogue to this story.

Stage two in McCormack's (2004) process of storying stories composes the organizational experience narrative, which comprises Chapter IV. All of the interpretive stories analyzed in stage one were temporally ordered in a single document, which forms the organizational experience narrative. In other words, completion of stage two creates an autoethnographic portrait. The researcher shared this organizational portrait with the participants and they commented on the work. The second step brought the research full circle, and Chapter V reflects on the story in light of the research questions. This final process relates to the overall portrait of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers that is constructed. This process of portraiture is explained in detail by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) as

... A method framed by the traditions and values of the phenomenological paradigm, sharing many of the techniques, standards and goals of ethnography. But it pushes against the constraints of those traditions and practices in its explicit effort to combine empirical and aesthetic description, in its focus on the convergence of narrative and analysis, in its goal of speaking to broader audiences beyond the

academy (thus linking inquiry to public discourse and social transformation)...and in its explicit recognition of the use of self as the primary research instrument for documenting and interpreting the perspectives and experiences of the people and the cultures being studied. (p. 14)

The final product that emerged from the data collection and analysis is an autoethnographic portrait of the Campus Community Centers. The autoethnographic nature of the piece, as Tierney (1998) asserted, “confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders” (p. 66). This autoethnographic portrait is an intentionally accessible, aesthetic piece of empirical investigation. Hopefully, the portrait will resonate with many readers, across many disciplines and in the general public, as a way of understanding the complexities of working together in community.

Thematic Analysis

These narratives were analyzed. They are the data which comprise the portrait. The analysis drew themes from the stories about the relationships. The research was anchored in the lived experiences of the participants. Although the analysis necessarily reduced the data into broad themes via the constructed narratives, the reduction attempted to enhance the power that comes from the stories.

The design of the research serves as a type of action research. As Creswell (2005) indicated “action research provides an opportunity for educators to reflect on

their own practices” (p. 550.) Action research is research posed as a way of addressing a practical problem within in specific context. Professional development in Student Affairs should attend to relationships (Roper, 2002). This research nurtured to the campus community centers directors’ relationships. The process of story-telling, member checking, and analysis, as part of the autoethnographic portraiture research design, attended to the associations of the Directors in ways never before experienced. This research process solved the problem (in this case, professional development) demanded by Creswell’s (2005) action research definition.

Limitations

This study utilized one University setting with a unique organizational structure to explore the impact of three social justice leaders working together. The study focused on only the stories of the positional leaders, and did not consider other full time professional staff or student staff that also work at these Centers. The study neither considered the perspectives of the constituents of these Centers, nor the upper administration and managements views. It focused only on the positional leaders, and only from one perspective: their collaborative work to create the Campus Community Centers.

The study relied on the three participant's degree of intimacy to validate the analysis. This study did not measure the impact of the collaborative nature of these Centers on the communities that they serve. The study did not examine the impact these Centers have on the overall campus climate, orientation towards social justice, or success in achieving diversity goals. The participants were selected because of their positions and their willingness to be reflective, vulnerable, and honest.

The findings of the study apply to the unique organizational structure and relationships that have attended to this model. Others, similarly situated, may find that the transferability or generalizability of these findings to be limited. The study did not intend to uncover general principles of relationships to replicate in other situations. Instead, the study hopefully highlights a successful collaborative model and the elements necessary at one institution to make the model functional.

Conclusion

These first three chapters were presented in a traditional format. The attending traditions and norms of empirical review are made explicit so as to ensure to the reader that the author is qualified and competent to engage in this study. Given the nature of autoethnographic portraiture as a methodology, the subsequent chapters takes on a non-traditional format, while still adhering to, and communicating, a rigorous, empirical investigation.

Overall, the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers presented a rich, unstudied organizational structure. Though not a traditional qualitative approach, this study represents an emergent, flexible research design to explore the organization. Ideally the study will inform a broad audience, both familiar and unfamiliar with the constituent Centers that compose UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. By making explicit stories of working and personal relationships of the directors of the centers, a powerful organizational portrait will be revealed.

Chapter IV

This chapter provides the data analysis via stories. The chapter opens by reviewing the purpose of the study and research questions. It then presents an autoethnographic organizational portrait of the University of California, San Diego Campus Community Centers and presents the major findings. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the entire autoethnographic organizational portrait in light on the conceptual frameworks.

The purpose of this study was to explore the intersection of the Centers on college campuses that support traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities. The study explores the stories of the relationships of the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. Three research questions drove the study.

What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego?

What do the stories of these relationships illustrate in terms of working together around identity and community?

What barriers exist that challenge these relationships?

By analyzing the stories, three major themes were discovered: trust, dialogue and learning. These three themes relate to the first two research questions in the affirmative, and to the final research question in the negative. In other words, trust dialogue and learning epitomized the nature of the relationships, and illustrated the elements necessary to work together around identity and community. The barriers that

challenge the relationships include a lack of trust, a dearth of dialogue and an avoidance of learning. Each story captures the moments of dialogue, learning and trust in a different way. Additionally, each story can be read on its own, as analysis is provided after each one. Or they can be read in one sitting, painting a fuller portrait, although with repeating colors and textures that will be noticed. In total, the stories combine to create an autoethnographic organization portrait of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. Table 1 lists the titles of the stories and briefly describes the content.

Table 1. Story Titles and Descriptions

Story title	Description
In the beginning	Captures the first memory of our connections; breaks down the dichotomy of personal and professional.
Three journeys to the work	Reviews the journey of identity and community of each director, and how that influences the current relationships.
We know this	Explores the understanding of community and identity intersectionality.
She's not gay	Discusses the realities of navigating personal identity while having a shared organization identity/community.
Trust	Reviews the navigation of privilege, oppression and disparate resources and articulates a major finding of the study.
How the Campus Community Centers were named	Reviews the earliest collaborative work of the three Centers and the necessary buy-in from all three Centers' employees.
CUDLI	Describes our most tangible collaboration, highlights the struggle of describing/sustaining the work together.

A Journey of Identity

Before beginning the stories, the unique position I inhabited in the research should be reviewed. All good qualitative research, especially areas that are attuned to the ethnographic tradition, addresses issues of reflexivity (Denzin, 1997). Reflexivity means that “the researchers reflect on their own biases, values, and assumptions and actively write them into the research” (Creswell, 2005, p. 50). In Lindsey, Nuri Robin and Terrell’s 2003 work *Cultural Proficiency*, a similar idea is presented entitled the inside-out approach. It is a method for assessing one’s own culture in preparation for deeply understanding others, and is an essential element of the model. The inside-out approach poses a number of questions. Who am I in relation to Edwina, the Director of the Cross-Cultural Center, and to Emelyn, the Director of the Women’s Center? To them together? To us as a collective? This interdependence with my work and my colleagues requires deep self reflection. In chapter three, the critical epistemological stance was described, and a brief outline of the researcher’s identity was presented. However, in preparation for analysis, a more thorough, reflexive statement is necessary.

My name is Shaun Travers, and my journey related to identity and community stemmed first out of my sense of being different. This difference, I was to discover later in my life, was primarily about my sexual identity. However, early on the difference manifested itself through gender expressions and interactions with diverse communities that defied the norms of my family. These forays into exploring identity through lenses of race, gender, and sexuality have become repeating patterns in my

life. Other areas, too, have been explored, especially related to citizenship, religion, class, cisgender privilege, and ability. Tentative reflections on other social identities have occurred throughout my journey.

Still, race, sexuality and gender have continued to be in the forefront of my own journey through identity. The last seven years at UC San Diego have brought these three identities into stark relief. This relief is illuminated by the light shining forth from the three Campus Community Centers. It is a light that can lay bare one's soul for examination by the communities to which a person is committed.

I am white, I am male-bodied and male-identitied, and I am bisexual. I directly serve the LGBT community, a constituency that names itself primarily through its sexual identity. I concurrently serve communities that understand themselves through race and gender. Most of the time all of the identities and more combine to form the rich, complex human beings that make up the constituents of the Campus Community Centers. At the same time, I feel both driven away from and towards communities that do not identify themselves via these social groups, as they often have institutional and structural power that the communities to which I am committed need access.

As I have journeyed through my identities, I have struggled with guilt associated with my identities for which I am granted unearned privilege, and which affords me agency. These are primarily my male and white identities. This research has taken me back and forth through different points in my identity development, from

the earliest days at UC San Diego to the present moment, from my childhood to my adulthood, and everywhere in between.

Reflecting on the research journey, I see the white and male guilt that have been a strong part of how I initially, and in some ways still, navigate the communities that are dear to me. However, the stories in this chapter are not reflective of where I am at today. The stories do not reflect how others experience my commitment to social justice work and my commitment to specific communities. I am more self-critical in my own reflections on race and gender than is perhaps due. It stems from the guilt of privilege. Some of the stories can be read with an eye that sees my identities, and the associated guilt with the privileged ones, as getting in the way of the work.

In my daily practice I work hard to not let that happen, and acknowledge it when it does. My colleagues experience a self-reflective person regarding social identities, power and privilege. At least they share that sentiment with me. I still have room to grow and develop in these areas, as all people do. However, the research peers deeply into me as a researcher, and this exploration reveals more about me on some levels than is comfortable. My white, male guilt bubbles up in ways it has not in quite a long time, especially as I reflect on decisions and experiences of the past.

That discomfort has concurrently led to an appreciation of where I am at today. I have learned to work through discomfort, to lean into it, in order to get to the other side of the pain associated with this kind of work. I can and do acknowledge my positional and structural power associated with both what I do (as a Director) and who

I am (as a white male). The navigation of my social group identities, in the constructs of the relationships I have with my peer Directors and the other staff with whom I work is something of which I am quite proud.

I bring to this work the assumptions of how important it is to do this kind of work (work related to social justice, social identity, power, privilege and oppression) for any organization or individual. I value the struggle and the community that it creates. I believe that the journey through this is as valid as the destination that is sought: a socially just world. The journey and the destination go hand in hand.

This reflexivity affects these stories, as well as the conclusions I draw from them. By sharing this, a richer portrait is created. The portrait has a detail that can reveal as much about this researcher as about the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers and the three Directors associated with them. The portrait begins with introductions.

Cast of Characters

Edwina – The Director of UC San Diego’s Cross-Cultural Center, who began as the founding director of the Cross-Cultural Center in 1997, and has the longest tenure as a Director of the three characters. Edwina is African American, in her early forties and a single, straight woman with no children. She does not have vision in her left eye to speak of, and therefore misses non-verbal cues from anyone sitting on her left side.

Emelyn – The Director of the Women’s Center, who has the longest history at UC San Diego. She was an undergraduate student from 1990-1995. She began her

tenure in the Women's Center as the Assistant Director in 2000 and became first the acting, and subsequently permanent, Director of the Women's Center in 2003.

Emelyn is Pinay (a term of empowerment and identity reclamation used by Filipina women), straight-identified, in a long-term partnership with Paul, a white man. She is diabetic, self-described as "fat" and an activist with GABRIELA Network, a Philippine-US women's solidarity mass organization.

Shaun – The Director of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center, I began in May of 2001 and have the shortest tenure at UC San Diego. I am a white, bisexual man and in an open, long-term committed relationship to a white man, James. I have served on the Board of Directors at the San Diego LGBT Community Center for 4 years. I recently resigned from this position in order to see a therapist and work on myself and my relationship with my partner. I am also conducting the study from which this story is drawn.

All of the characters are currently doctoral students in a joint educational leadership program, which leads to a doctorate in education.

Campus Community Centers – an idea, a concept, and an ongoing collective movement at UC San Diego which positions the Cross-Cultural Center, Women's Center and LGBT Resource Center as a collective, as equal partners in a journey towards a more socially just campus climate, although they each have separate spaces, separate staffs and separate budgets.

An Introduction to the First Story – 'In the Beginning'

The view of systemic leadership provided by Allen & Cherrey (2000) articulates the need for powerful collaborations as a key capacity for systemic leadership in a networked knowledge era. “On an individual level, the capacity of collaboration requires *the development of trusting and trustworthy relationships formed in the context of authenticity*” (italics in original, p. 113). The story below captures the authenticity of the three Director’s relationships, as well as the trusting and trustworthy nature of the relationships.

In the Beginning

I knew I was in trouble because we were having too much fun. Edwina, Emelyn and I were in our first session together, gathered around a small table, in a small room with a large task in front of us. The Women’s Center was filled with light, laughter and energy on this bright, spring morning, and the room that we were in was set away from the commotion, but still affected by its energy.

We had come together to attempt to understand the Campus Community Centers through the stories of the three of us, the three Directors of the Campus Community Centers. Not just understand the organization in a surface sort of way (the Women’s Center, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center, and the Cross-Cultural Center are collectively known as the Campus Community Centers), but in a deeper way that uncovered the nature of the relationships, what it meant for our leadership given our identities and communities, and what barriers challenged our relationships. Our first conversation began to plumb the depths of those relationships. But it didn’t really seem all that serious.

Here I was, Shaun, the Director of the LGBT Resource Center and the person leading the research, having a blast, laughing with my colleagues after we shared story after story about us coming together in a myriad of ways. I was nervous going into the meeting. I felt like I needed to be a “researcher.” You know, cold, sedate, white lab coat, maybe even take out my contacts and wear glasses that day? I even followed the script to make sure I said the right things. But once the script got out of the way, it really flowed. I guess it was because Edwina, the Director of the Cross-Cultural Center and Emelyn, the Director of the Women’s Center, are more than just my colleagues. They are my friends. We started with descriptors of what it is like to work together and create the entity that is the Campus Community Centers. My pre-determined questions attempted to reveal a split between the personal and the professional. The dichotomous nature of the question made it impossible to answer. And laughter ensued as we attempted to answer an unanswerable question.

I started with the third question, “Part of what I was interested in, what does that,” the *that* being working together closely with two other people as the Campus Community Centers, “mean for our personal interactions?” There is a pause. I thought the question was simple enough, but maybe it wasn’t. It seemed to be based in a logical thing to me. A binary, a whole having two equal halves. We use the language all of the time: black/white, gay/straight, male/female. Why was there such a long pause in the answer to this question?

Emelyn attempted a tentative clarifier, “Outside of work you mean?” Oh, wow. Even though I know it instantly, I realize that I have set up, through how I

asked my questions, a distinction that actually does not apply all that well to the relationship that has developed between the three of us. I know this, but it is so simple to fall into these binary traps with the Western training that my education has provided me. I quickly recover, because the nature of the work we all do on a regular basis breaks down those false dichotomies quickly.

“Well, the question that comes after this is, what does it mean for our professional interactions and that might be too false a separation, so maybe what I am asking is, what does it mean for our interactions? However we code them.” And that seems to make sense even as I say it. Separating the personal from the professional in this work is impossible. Because, as early feminist theory taught all three of us at some point, the personal is political. And in the line of work that we are in, the personal is the professional as well. We do intensely personal social justice work. Our profession resonates with and causes discord with our identities, depending on the moment and the situation. Emelyn confirms it with her next thought, “Yeah, that's hard for me to separate those because of our first interaction with you. ‘Hey let's ask Shaun to go to a movie,’ right?”

Edwina chimes in, her memory sharp of this first experience. “*A. I. Artificial Intelligence*. It was a Saturday, we had done some tabling.” How embarrassing that one of our strongest memories of initial connection is around a movie that turned out to be so horrible. I remember all of us leaving the theatre after over two hours of interesting, yet ultimately not good movie-watching, bonded by the pain of sitting through it all.

Emelyn continues, “Which set up this kind of, I don't know, this blur of personal and professional from the very beginning.” It is a blur that is defining in our work. As our conversation progresses, I realize just how comfortable I am with these two women. And they are comfortable with me. Why is that? It is so much of our shared histories. I know one of my memories is very painful, indeed. September 11th.

I respond to the *A. I.* reference, trying to fix on the next moment that drew me to Emelyn or Edwina, and I hit upon it. We saw *A. I.* in the summer of 2001. The movie reference “leads me very quickly to being able to go to the Women's Center on September 11 and be able to sit with you and fold paper, which is also kind of personal and professional...” I pause for a moment, wrapped up in a sudden sense of intensity, because that always happens with me when I mention September 11th. “I mean you know because that day was such a fucked up day.”

And it was, because I had woken up to it, with my alarm clock set to wake up to the news, and me in my drowsiness, noticing that someone had broken into the regular report, and the panic in their voice. I remember jumping up, going to the TV, wondering what was happening. I still made it to work, but I was alone... “But closing the LGBT Resource Office at the time and going and sitting there with you and those little chairs folding Women’s Center newsletters, which for me was the first time.... I mean, I remember *A. I.*, but that's the first time I remember you” I said referring to Emelyn. “If that makes sense, like I remembered you, distinctly you, and remember being with you at that time, at that point.” It is a hard memory to recall, but I know it is important for me to share out loud.

We have many shared experiences like this, where we lean on each other for support. My memory tends to be very poor, and one of the reasons I am so excited to do this type of research is to stir up the old images that I hope still bang around in my head. I also know that stories remembered with friends can both veer from the truth and be more truthful all at the same time. September 11th is a dramatic memory for me, and so it is easy for me to recall, and Emelyn was such a calming influence for me as we sat in children's chairs in the Women's Center, folding newsletters as the towers collapsed. We listened to the radio as it was happening, not talking, just finding comfort in that simple act of being and doing with another person. I had been alone at the LGBT Resource Office. It was called an office when I began my first year... it was a slow, political transgression to becoming a Center. The Women's Center was a place of community for me in that terrible time. Edwina's memories of first connections with Emelyn are less distinct. She had paused as I reference September 11th, recalling her own intense feelings stemming from that date. The Cross-Cultural Center has been on retreat, and she and the staff had attended to the emotions of a dozen undergraduate interns on that day. But she continues on with her own story.

"I don't know if I have a specific moment of recollection, but I know it's a very interesting blur," she says with a sly glance to Emelyn. I don't get it at first, but a moment later Emelyn, in her characteristic bombastic voice which happens whenever she is excited, bellows, "Because I lived with you," and we all burst into outrageous laughter. "For four months," Emelyn practically shouts as the laughter continues.

At this point, even though we had just moments before been in our own contemplation of September 11th, we have jumped to a common place of joy and humor for all three of us. We are talking on top of each other at this point, with my “I’m so glad you said that,” on top of Edwina’s “and I thought it was going to kill her.” We get along amazingly well, and easy jibes come quickly off everyone’s tongues when there is an opportunity.

But my comment about Emelyn living with Edwina, my comment of “I’m so glad you said that,” is reflective of something certainly on my mind in this first session of data collection. One of my major concerns with initially doing the research is that our unique relationships are so bound up by unusual circumstances as to be irrelevant for peers to try and learn something from. I mean, who on earth has a colleague that is living with them for the first four months of their professional work at a University? Emelyn moved in with Edwina the day before she started at the Women’s Center. And Edwina and Emelyn are nothing alike in terms of their personal habits around living spaces. To even imagine these two friends having *that* intimacy is mind-boggling to me. I can certainly imagine Edwina contemplating murder as she navigated Emelyn in her home. However, Edwina quickly leads us to what probably is the heart of our connections...

“And so I don’t... I don’t have such a specific instance. It’s kind of funny, I’m pretty much of a loner, which no one will ever believe...but there’s also very specific friendships that I mark through work and personal so... I think that you” she says, looking right at me, “and Emelyn, in that case, I mark through personal and

professional as friendships, and checking in, and how are people doing. You are probably some of the closest people that I know in San Diego. Yes.”

Edwina rushed most of this out. She said it quickly, almost apprehensively. Rarely do we give voice to the intimacy of our relationship. I think we may assume it of each other, but we don’t say it very often. Most likely it has to do with the false dichotomies I was thinking about earlier. Such solid, powerful relationships to work place colleagues feel inappropriate. There is personal, and there is professional, and never the twain shall meet. But for us, they have met many times. In fact, in some instances they have lived together.

Edwina rounds out this particular section with a statement that seems to sum up some of what doing social justice work on a university campus is like. “There is a kind of camaraderie against the University while still being a part of the University.” It rings so true, and Emelyn responds “Oh, wow,” as I add an emphatic “Yes.” Part of what draws us together is that we are a part of a much larger system that we also feel like we are against. I think it has to do with the nature of social justice work within a larger bureaucracy. Much of the work that we do is in opposition to the prevailing norms of the campus. And that is what makes it so difficult to be a part of the campus. And it is also what makes it so important for us to lean on each other, as opposed to fight against each other. But the fighting is another story.

Half way through this first session, we take a short break and begin talking about mealy fruit. Emelyn has bitten into a peach and made the dourest expression imaginable. Knowingly, Edwina and I both ask in unison, “Is it mealy?” and Emelyn

squints her eyes and tilts her head back as if to say “What the hell are you talking about?” Emelyn is unfamiliar with the term mealy, and Edwina and I try and describe what we are talking about. It is like a different language, trying to describe what we mean by mealy to a person who has just had a mealy bite but has never had a word to describe it. We all laugh as Emelyn spits her nastiness into a napkin. And then from there we go into a conversation about those infomercials trying to get you to buy the special bags that make fruit and vegetables stay fresh. Suddenly, we all feel the moment end, and the clock running, and my research needing to be done.

It’s a good beginning, our conversation around the false dichotomy of personal and professional/with the University, against the University. In this kind of work, the personal is professional is personal. We are with and against and with the University. It is all happening at the same time, not in a black and white fashion, but in Edwina’s blur of remembering and not remembering. It is a feeling of connection. It is a good beginning.

In the beginning - an analysis within the conceptual frameworks.

The story above gives rise to the connections and collaborations of the three Camus Community Center Directors. The view of systemic leadership provided by Allen and Cherrey (2000) articulates the need for powerful collaborations as a key capacity for systemic leadership in a networked knowledge era. “On an individual level, the capacity of collaboration requires *the development of trusting and trustworthy relationships formed in the context of authenticity*” (italics in original, p. 113). The authenticity required to be present, even silently, around the trauma of

September 11th forged the basis on one of the connections between the three directors. The intimacy of living with another person forged a second. There are many, many stories of authentic, trusting relationships built between the three directors that were revealed through the data. These first mark beginning moments, but these moments are ongoing in the daily practice of being a Center Director.

We are constantly learning from each other regarding our practice and our identity, as described by the work of Wenger (1998). Wenger's positioning of identity and practice as melded with the social learning theory of communities of practice affirms the type of work in which the Directors are engaged. In the work of Campus Community Center directors, practice and identity are uniquely melded. This learning is ongoing, rigorous, and based in the trust of authentic relationships (Allen & Cherrey, 2000) which more accurately portray via their concept of collaboration.

In terms of cultural proficiency (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2003), this collaboration can be seen within the second essential element: Valuing diversity. Through an intense appreciation of each other's differences a mutual respect is built through trust. The "blur of personal and professional" that Emelyn refers to speaks to stepping outside of the monocultural business environment of the university into the richer, more complex interpersonal environment of interactions. In these earliest recollections respect builds. The stories of connection value the diversity that each director brings.

Three Journeys to the Work

“Well, this isn’t where I thought we were going to go first,” I thought to myself, feeling a little afraid and excited, all at the same time. It was the first day of data collection, and on my very first statement, I already felt like we were going off on a tangent far afield from what I was hoping to uncover in my research. I had began by stating what I thought were simple demographics about myself.

“My title is currently LGBT Resource Center Director and I have been in my position for seven years,” I said, trying to remember exactly when I began. It seems like yesterday and yet so long ago. “And when I think about the field of work and the field...” I paused, trying to decide what I was talking about. Already with a simple introduction I had confused myself regarding what I was talking about. Doing research as a participant in the research was going to be harder than I thought. I hurried on after a pause, “I think of social justice, the kind of work that I’m getting paid for, then I’ve been in it for nine years because there were two years at Texas A&M where I was really doing social justice work. So that’s kind of me.” And then I thought to myself, “Well, that was better than nothing, and I didn’t talk for too long.”

Edwina jumped in right after I stopped talking. “That’s interesting,” she said in such a way that I immediately wanted to follow up with one burning question... why? She knew my history. But Edwina continued, “I’ve been at the Cross-Cultural Center for 12 years and came as the first full-time staff person. It’s interesting that you actually pull it back that way” she said, and I really didn’t understand what she meant. In what way had I pulled what back? I’d have to wait for my answers, though. I needed to focus. Edwina continued, “Because if I think about how long I’ve been in

higher education, or when I went back into higher education from college, it's probably over 20 years.” Emelyn and I both exchanged glances, echoing each other’s amazement in our expressions. “Because I was working in the office of multicultural affairs at the University of Oregon, and in multicultural recruitment, and have always sort of worked from a social justice paradigm.”

That certainly caused me to pause. Had I worked from a social justice paradigm, as Edwina had just mentioned, before being employed to work on women’s issues or LGBT issues? I’d never given it much thought before this moment. Our present paradigm, jointly articulated, is grounded in a shared belief that ending one oppression requires ending all oppressions. The framework assumes the need for interactive learning, self-awareness, leadership, and dialogue. It also challenges traditional notions of diversity, which are often identity-based. I certainly have not had that paradigm before my work here at UC San Diego.

“When did I work in Oregon?” Edwina asked herself out loud. “In ‘90. So what's that, 18 years?” she again asks, answering her own questions. “That’s how long I’ve been doing this kind of work. And when I went to work in the Women's Center, and they had a social justice framework even then. I hope we’ll get a chance to talk about some of those differences.” I am thinking to myself, “What differences?” but Edwina continues, “I’ve been here for 12 years so that’s almost 20 years in education.”

There is a pause for a moment, and then Emelyn says “Wow” and almost on top of her I utter the same, “Wow.” 20 years is a long time, and rarely do we

remember that Edwina is older than both of us. Edwina looks expectantly at Emelyn, as it is clearly her turn in our trio of introductions.

“I am the director of the Women's Center, and I don't know anything outside of higher ed,” Emelyn begins. I know I am the same way, and it is one of the things that I know gives me a unique lens in which I examine my work. Emelyn continues to describe her journey. “I went from undergrad to ‘boom,’ the resident director at the living learning Center at SDSU. And while I was in graduate school there I was working in residence life.” Both Emelyn and I have a residence life background, whereas Edwina took a number of years off from higher education work as a buyer for JC Penney’s department stores. We all three have exceeded the five-year mark at UC San Diego, and have been working together now for over half a decade. “I’ve been at the Women's Center here at UCSD for eight years, and in my current position as director for six years. And think I’ve always kind of framed my work around social justice.”

Already I was getting concerned that I was losing the conversation. Didn’t they know we had a really short time, and that I had to get to my first question? We are diverging from my well-planned script! All I had really planned was a few words of introduction, and here they were discussing frameworks of social justice in their prior work. I had just wanted to introduce ourselves to each other. The role of researcher is new for me, so I want to be good at it, and I am not sure exactly what good looks like. “Oh well,” I said to myself, “Maybe this is what is supposed to

happen.” I have learned from working with my colleagues to be comfortable with ambiguity.

“I’ve always kind of framed my work around social justice,” Emelyn continued. “Even within residence life, and so if I go back and trying to remember some of the things that I tried to implement as a resident director, I remember being very conscious about not doing programs that cost people money.” Emelyn had been a resident director for almost the same amount of time that I had. I don’t know that I had ever thought about programs costing money. It was outside of my experience. Maybe our backgrounds weren’t as similar as I thought. Emelyn continued, “So none of my RA’s did things like ski trips and weekends away and those kind of things. And I wanted to be conscious of, ‘Everybody had to be able to go without worrying about affording it.’”

Edwina is listening intently, as she often is interested in our residence life experience. Being in the broader field of Student affairs in higher education, you rarely come across professionals who have not lived in a residence hall at some point in their professional career. It is the stereotypical door that many young professionals walk through in order to begin their careers. However, Edwina worked in admissions to begin with, and although she lived in the residence halls for a short time during her undergraduate years, her professional experience has always been outside of residence hall environments.

Emelyn continued to reflect on her experience in residence life. “My bulletin boards were always kind of... They were very multi-culti. I go back and look at that

now and I was like ‘Oh yeah that was really multi-culti.’” We all three knew what she was describing, and talked over one another in laughter.

Edwina: The little people and the dresses on.

Emelyn: you know, the symbols

Shaun: Everybody was holding hands.

Emelyn: the rainbow flags and that kind of stuff

We all laughed. The word “multi-culti” is shorthand for multicultural. In our conversations together, we often use it to discuss colleagues in and around higher education who approach the work from a paradigm far different than ours. “Multi-culti” is related to another one of our descriptors, “food and fiesta.” Both connote a way of promoting diversity that is different than our social justice paradigm. “Multi-culti” most often refers to higher educational service units that support specific racial, ethnic and cultural groups, or all racial, ethnic and cultural groups. “Food and fiesta” is our descriptor for the methods that multi-culti organizations most often employ. They are surface-level celebrations of a group, most often held during that groups history/honor/heritage month. Although honorable in intention, from our perspective these “multi-culti, food and fiesta” programs often fall short of what is needed to truly address social inequities on college campuses.

Emelyn and Edwina’s experiences with social justice made me think.

Although on one hand I was worried that I had not even asked my first question, I was actually excited about where this was going. And a little bit apprehensive.

“See, it’s interesting,” I began, “My history is not framed like that all when I think about it. Even though I was in residence life, when I think of my journey on social justice work and the paid journey.... I did not think my residence life work at all as social justice work.” I paused. “Even though some of the things, the same things that you mentioned may have been true some of the bulletin boards that I did, but it was not framed from a social justice perspective. It was very much thinking about it as Student Affairs work.” I paused again. “I mean, I really didn’t in any way.” I didn’t think of Student Affairs work as social justice work, but clearly, my two colleagues did. Or at least that is what I thought I was hearing.

Edwina started to push me, “Well it is an interesting question I wanted to ask you because as you’re telling your story I was wondering back to sort of, where did this sort of come up for me? And I was going to ask you about the kind of things were involved in high school, because I remember very interestingly being involved in like Black Student Union on my high school campus, but I was also president of my girls club. But it was really weird because I heard my sister say recently that that was a club in our high school that black people couldn’t join when she was in high school some years ago. So in reflecting I was like ‘When did this all start for me? And how did I even know what to do with it?’”

I am excited, as I start to hear stories emerge from our conversations. This is exactly the “data” my research was supposed to produce. I am thinking “Where did I start to think about social justice work?” And at the same time, Emelyn is really resonating with Edwina. She says “MmmHmmm,” as Edwina continues.

“I think it was really like high school/first years of college and I wouldn't call it social justice but I was always...because I was in a very multicultural environment in my high school, it just seemed normal to me, and it seemed very odd to me to be in spaces that weren't looking at bigger issues that were different.”

That sparked something for Emelyn. “I came from an all girls' high school in a predominantly Chicana/Latina neighborhood. I think about 70% of my high school was Latina women. And in my junior and senior years there was this kind of turmoil going around in the diocese where they were closing down schools that were too small to sustain itself. And so that started me on my journey of fighting against ‘The Man,’ you know, ‘How dare you close this down, because we're bunch of women of color?’ And I didn't term in that way at the time, but that's when I was involved in my first protest and my first lobbying activity at City Hall and trying to get our building established as a historical landmark in Los Angeles and those kind of things, and I guess it kind of moved into college where I was very much a student activist.”

At this point I am thinking to myself “Wow, I was never involved in anything like that! Protesting at City Hall?!?” No, my experience with social justice didn't stem from that kind of incident at all.

Emelyn continued her journey from high school to college. “I was the chair of the SAAC (the Student Affirmative Action Committee), and then at the same time I was involved in SAAC I became an RA and so I kind of infused the notion of my work as an RA in residence life as my work as a student activist. And that's how I kind of found my way to thinking of my residence life piece as a social justice piece

for me. And then it really kind of solidified it when I did my master's thesis and I did it on RA attitudes on LGBT issues and how that affected living climates."

I nod in agreement, a softly spoken "Uh huh" as I considered the implications of Emelyn's study. I think to myself "I need to go and read that sometime," as Emelyn continues.

"And that topic came about because my original topic was architecture and living climate. But that particular year that I was choosing my topic was a really homophobic year in my residence hall. I remember you know, my beautiful bulletin boards, and every week somebody would tear down the rainbow flag. And so I had a stack of rainbow flags in the back desk ready to go up if it came down. And that's how I got to see how that would relate to my schoolwork."

Emelyn finished, and I am amazed. I have worked with these two women for years, and at this moment I don't see as many connections with my story and their two stories. Maybe it was because my professional work was more around my sexual orientation identity? Our journeys to the work we do today, the kind of social justice work that takes up our professional life, these journeys feels so different to me.

"It's interesting," I say, and then speak what I know may be the truth for me. "And I wonder if this has to do with power and privilege I have as a white male, because my journey into social justice was so much a part of my sexual orientation identity."

But Edwina and Emelyn are both straight, which is a privileged social identity. They have not had the oppression of their sexual identity as a part of their journey,

although Emelyn early on has done work on LGBT issues in her academic career.

And I am white. I have not had the oppression of my racial identity as a part of my journey, and have not done a lot of work around race in terms of my academic career.

But what are my early memories around race? I began to tell one of my stories I rarely share with others.

“When I think back to my earliest memories about my own experiences around race... I remember when two black sisters started in the fourth grade at our all-white school in the tiny town along the way. Becky and Carolyn White. In my fifth year, or in fifth grade. I started, as much as you can do in fifth grade ‘dating’ Becky, which basically means, you know, you know in the playground...”

“Holding hands,” Edwina said, filling in the details that were racing through my mind as if she were watching my memory unfold before her.

“...and swinging together,” I continued, “But I hadn’t really thought about it much. But as y’all had talked... That for me was fundamentally... For my family and my community where I was at, an individual act. And a lot of the things I think about for my journey were individual things, not community broader based things, and so you know, my identity could be hidden more easily, I could exist in the world as a queer person without people seeing it per se,” and I paused, lost in my own jumble of thoughts. “Anyway, it really got me to thinking about the journey.”

I am not as articulate as I hoped. Both Edwina and Emelyn’s early experiences are about action and defiance in community terms, and mine is more about a personal act of defiance against my community and what I have been taught is acceptable.

Different identities, and how we have experienced the oppression of those identities, certainly have affected each of us. I can try and hide my sexual orientation. Emelyn and Edwina cannot hide their skin. Does that create a hierarchy of oppressions among us as we interact? Or does it create different ways that we experience oppression, directly from external communities, or internalized from the lessons we've learned?

"What's your master's thesis in?" Edwina asks me. "Because my masters situation is similar to Emelyn's where I was the director of the Women's Center. At that point I went in as a womanist not a feminist. I went in with background in women's empowerment, but not feminist theory and ideology." I resonate with Edwina, reflecting on my own work with women's development programs, and taking Women's Studies 101 my first year in the job, just to understand the theories.

"And it was probably the toughest job I ever had because I was black," Edwina says, connecting her work and identity, as we all so often do. "So I was doing all the stuff with black people, but they wouldn't come to the Women's Center. And then I was in the Women's Center and an ally, and so the LGBT women didn't like me. And there were all these older women in transition and who didn't like the LGBT women. And then there were women who were into women's safety and health. It was in was in some ways torture. We started a women of color group called 'We Wear The Masks,' because in one place we were all about race and the other space was all about women and they never talked to each other..." The litany is familiar to both Emelyn and I, as we both nod our heads in agreement. The diversity apparent in any one Center is amazing, and navigating that diversity takes skill and support.

Edwina continues, “So there is this huge conflagration, it’s the only word I can use. And I am trying to figure out for myself, ‘How do I work in this environment?’ It’s one of those environments... The organizational environment was so toxic that people actually... They had to close it down for two years and reconstitute it. So I wanted to figure out with my Master’s work what happened, so that I could understand my identity and the work I was even trying to do.” At this point I realize that both Edwina and Emelyn have completed academic work in their Master’s program to try comprehending and describing their work environments.

“So my masters ended up being an organizational question about what happened to the Center. What happened with these groups of women who couldn’t be together? That sort of led me to do work that I was interested in. Kind of like you said, Emelyn, it was really kind of environmental. I really have to understand this and I am not going survive if I don’t.” Edwina pauses and all eyes turn to me.

“So I’m wondering, Shaun, what your master’s is in and how does that relate?” In other words, she was asking if my academic work was a way to survive, to understand my work environment. I am amazed at Edwina making the connections between her and Emelyn’s graduate work and my story about my earliest memories on race relations, and how everything is mixed, jumbled yet important to our work and identity. I feel the connections immediately, but pause. I know my experiences are different.

“My master’s is crazy practical in some ways,” I began. “In terms of my thesis there was a program that was in its third year called the diversity advocate program.

They took the concept of RA's and added a second staff person on every floor called the DA, the diversity advocate, that was simply in charge of programming around diversity. And diversity work on paper was broad-based, but in practice it was about race and ethnicity. And so what we did was an assessment of the diversity advocate program, and it was through a perceptual lens. That was the name of the article that came out of it. 'The Diversity Advocate Program: Through a Perceptual Lens,' and we did a focus groups of residents in the halls and what were their perceptions of the DA program. And it was just horrible [the DA Program], but it was very much from the outside. Again, this idea of my own identity...."

I am struggling at this point, as I feel shame about how I approached my Master's thesis, because at the time I had not examined my white identity. I have never critically explored this point in my life in terms of our current social justice lens. The reflection is difficult as I struggle to critique the way I have *done diversity* in the past without being reflexive of my own identity. I don't really want to reveal to my colleagues the details. But it is important. "It was very much..." and I pause again. Can I really name it? I can. I am safe with Edwina and Emelyn. They trust me.

"There were three white people that were doing this research together and we went in, and we 'assessed' this diversity advocate program. You know, and so we..." I stop again. Edwina is smiling and laughing, which puts me at ease. Three white people assessing the diversity program... Good grief! As I reflect on the moment in time, I am ashamed that we never named the privilege and power that came from our identities as we assessed the program. Yet it makes me smile, and Edwina shares the

humor of it all. At the time, I would never have known to critique how I was *doing diversity*. How embarrassing. But I continue on.

“And so it's interesting,” I say, even though the word interesting is code for me. I really want to say, in retrospect, reprehensible, but I continue with the code. “It's interesting how even in that relationship very much was...” again I pause. Many things are happening for me at once. Embarrassment and shame, but also a deeper understanding of my own journey, where I have come from and how different that is from where I am today. A smile comes to my face. This research will really change things...

“And I've never thought of it in that way until just now. Because of your question. But that was kind of the capstone work of my master's thesis, was looking at diversity, but looking at it like ‘Oh there it is. It's not me, it's separate from me and there it is.’ And I was assessing it.” I stopped. My experience in my master's thesis was not drawn from an internal sense of trying to understand my environment, as Edwina and Emelyn had just described. I was struggling to capture what the experience was like back then, and given how difficult it is for me to remember the details, I know it was not that impactful.

“Look at all the natives.” Emelyn sums up the perspective nicely, with a wit I often admire. We all laugh, and there was a break in the tension. I could admire her wit in the moment, as she gave voice to how white people assessed the diversity program, and my active participation as a white researcher in that study, with no reflection or critique of my racial positioning. I know so much more now, and in the

moment I am both emotionally in the past and present, experiencing some embarrassment at this piece of my history, and laughing at it at the same time. “Look at all the natives.”

“In some ways, in some ways,” I say. “It was very bizarre to think about it that way.”

Edwina is looking at me a little differently. It makes me nervous. “At the time...” she begins, and then pauses. “In looking hindsight...” she starts again, and then pauses a second time. “You might admit, it was very bizarre to do it. I was curious to what your thinking was? When you went in and did it?” Edwina is being as gentle as she can. I have just revealed a cardinal sin of the communities with whom I work, and we have shared a laugh, but it still has piqued her curiosity. For too long we have been examined from the outside, judged from those with power and authority over us. And here I was, confessing my past collusion with the powers that often dismiss our work out of hand. We were learning about each other in some very intimate ways, and Edwina’s curiosity sparked my continued reflection.

“It was a commitment to diversity,” I said, trying to think back to long-distant memories and the impetus for my master’s research. “We had been asked to go in by the residence life department because they really wanted an assessment of it. They wanted to run focus group to see how the program was going and it was right in tune with what we were committed to. So, I mean, we were committed to social justice, if that makes sense....” As I said it, it doesn’t make much sense whatsoever. Not with the definition of social justice that I have come to understand. I continued, explaining

my experiences with my master's thesis, remembering with humor and embarrassment how disconnected things were back then. Telling Edwina and Emelyn about this work acknowledged it as a precursor to my own work with them. Their master's thesis had been reflective of their own journeys and responses to work environments. Mine had been an opportunity to assess a diversity program. It felt different, yet connected. In the mid 90's I had no understanding of the intersecting work around race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender. Unlike my colleagues, my academic work was distant from what was happening to me as a person in graduate school. Yet, we all did do academic work related to issues of diversity and social justice

"You know, as you were talking," Emelyn began, and I braced myself for the comment I thought for sure was coming about our different journeys. But I was saved by her self reflection. "I'm thinking back to some very individual and personal things that led me to some of the things that I brought with me into residence life, which was my first career in Student Affairs. I remember the things that my RA did that I couldn't afford to go to and it made me very bitter that I couldn't go on these trips that she was planning because I just didn't have the money. And one incident in particular, really just stuck in my craw. I don't know if that's the right terminology?" Edwina and I both smile and nod, understanding the sentiment.

"I remember struggling over my major. I was in computer science at the time and I wasn't happy with it and I was just struggling with the isolation of it all. And I went to my RA to talk about it and she was just very, 'Well it's your life, and it's your decision and you have to do what makes you happy', and that just pissed me off. It

just pissed me off to no end, because I just thought ‘How dare you? Do you have any idea what my relationship with my family is? I come from an Asian-American background and you know, everything is a family decision, and I just can’t up and change my major without consulting and thinking about how this is going to affect my family. What kind of path I am going to take? I have to make a living afterwards, I have to help out my family...’” Emelyn’s words come out in torrents as she rekindles the fire of anger long extinguished.

“And I remember bringing that to my RA interview. When I was asked ‘What I wanted to bring to [the position]?’ I talked about how this was very painful experience for me. And I would never want that to happen to anybody else, so that’s what I want to bring to my residents. And I think that kind of started me on my path. I don’t know, vigilante RA-ism.”

We all laugh out loud with Emelyn’s created word. There is a natural pause in the conversation. I glance down at my notes. I have gotten away from my own reflections as I became wrapped up in Emelyn’s story. I am proud that I have moved far beyond the place I was in 1995 around social justice and diversity, and rarely do I go back to those memories or emotions. I am amazed at how quickly the stories bring up my past white, male guilt, which now-a-days I recognize and address differently. But I am thinking of myself more as a researcher now. We have not even got to the first official question. Already I see the power of this work. The coming together of three colleagues to share their journeys, together and separately, around diversity and social justice and the three journey’s to the work. I have a feeling I am going to love

this research process. Later that day, I reflect in my own journal, “I experienced lots of joy and connection. I truly value that space with my colleagues and friends. It was a good discussion that helps me understand who I am in the world and in my work.”

Three journeys to the work - an analysis within the conceptual frameworks.

Weber’s (2002) conceptual framework around social identities provides the background for an analysis of this story. Weber understands race, class, gender and sexuality as expressing simultaneously in all situations. The story above, through the asking a simple introduction, opens the window to a conversation around multiple issues of identity, growth and change. The near-instantaneous leap within the story to work around gender, race and sexuality affirms the framework as one that informs the community of practice (Wenger, 1998) that is the directors of the Campus Community Centers.

Although we as directors have only recently learned about the works of Weber via my own use of her framework, our practice of social justice work in higher education over the years displays the five constructs Weber outlines in the conceptual framework. According to Weber (2002) stories are historically and geographically/globally contextual – the details of Emelyn’s experience at her high school reflect a moment in time that shaped her, as does my holding hands on the playground with a black girl and Edwina’s joining the all white girls club. Weber indicated that race, class, gender and sexuality are socially constructed. Edwina didn’t know until her sister told her that it was an all white girls club. Emelyn’s RA assumed that class was not an issue for her residents. The conceptual framework indicates

power relationships function within race, class, gender and sexuality. I never questioned my white identity as a researcher during my master's thesis. Similarly Emelyn was able to research homophobia in her residence halls as a straight woman without the same impact as if she had been lesbian identified. Macro/social structure and micro/social psychological levels are at play. Edwina helped to create a support group for herself within the structure of the University "we wear the masks." Emelyn used her experience with her RA in her RA interview. Finally, Weber notes that race, class, gender and sexuality are expressed simultaneously. Emelyn's high school experiences are a mix of targeted social identities. Shaun's unexamined whiteness is in the context of his growing queer identity. Edwina juggles all these identities in the conflagration that is her work at the University of Oregon's Women's Center. Weber's conceptual framework helps to understand all the social systems, and how they play out in the work of social justice.

The complex histories of coming to the work can be examined through all of these lenses. Both Edwina and Emelyn ground their master's work in struggling to understand the environments in which they find themselves, examining it from the inside. The story of Shaun's thesis is different, stemming from a commitment to diversity, but examining it from the outside looking in. However, all of the early academic work of the three directors foreshadows their current positions as Directors in spaces committed to social justice. The pieces of the three journeys are part of both the *communities* they were a part of and the *identities* they experienced. As these two elements are combined, significant social learning comes out of the dialogue. Our

experiences have shaped and defined us, but unshared, they remain apart from the collective. In sharing, in learning from each other in this social way, a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) is nurtured.

Cultural proficiency (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2003) has five essential elements which provide standards for both individual behavior and organizational practices. As the stories of the Directors early academic work were shared, a deeper sense of who we were and where we came from was developed between the three Directors. As Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell (2003) indicated regarding the element *Adapt to Diversity*, “when engaging in a long-term committed relationship, the partners implicitly promise to change” (p. 116). The Directors’ ability to adapt to the diversity that each brings to the collective reflects an understanding of where we have come from, and the unforeseen future of where we are going. Change has been, and will continue to be, a part of our collective journey.

We Know This

The three of us, Edwina, with the short, black-and-grey hair, Emelyn with the long black ribbons down her back, and me with my traditional military cut so as to hide the grey... we are an odd trio. We know this. Haircuts aside, there is much that differentiates us, in our identities, in our communities, and in our work habits. At the same time, there is much that brings us together. As the Directors of the three Campus Community Centers at UC San Diego (the Women’s Center directed by Emelyn, the Cross-Cultural Center directed by Edwina, and the LGBT Resource Center directed by me, Shaun) we have a collective supervisor, and we have a common budget officer.

We have also chosen to come together in a doctoral program, going so far as to jointly apply in an all-three-or-nothing application that somehow passed muster. We even have come together to fulfill one of our trio's (my) research agenda. We know much about each other, both our commonalities and our differences. It brings us together, and holds us together. But on this particular morning, tension is pulling us apart.

We are all frustrated by how to describe our work together. It is our second conversation in the research series. We have been talking for a while, and have been trying to get to the big story of what the Campus Community Centers are all about. The first try at it was a traditional *grand tour* question. First what does the grand tour question mean?

The Directors of the Campus Community Centers have two shared understandings of the grand tour question. The first: It is a basic technique at getting at understanding a culture from a very large perspective. In some ways, it is like showing a tourist around town when they only have a short time in the city. You give them a grand tour, so they get a sense of things, but you rarely go into specifics, as there is not time. The tourist will relax and get a sense of the city via the grand tour, then explore what they are most interested in anyway once they have the grand tour. From a research perspective, the grand tour relaxes the interviewees and motivates them to talk, preparing them for more focused questions. Theoretically, the question is easy to understand, and causes "the participants to reflect on experiences they can easily discuss" (Creswell, 2005, p. 223).

The second shared understanding regarding questions comes from a class where we learned the value of asking the right question, in the right way, at the right time. The well asked question can move an organization or an individual exponentially farther ahead in their thinking and understanding regarding an experience, an organization or a process (D. Lindsey, personal communication, February 3, 2007).

We have learned much, collectively, about each other, and about the process of asking questions, of interviewing via our classes. And we have come to the agreement that one of the most powerful things the three of us have done on our journey to create the Campus Community Centers was to begin school together. The disciplined, intense focus around leadership and research has caused us to reflect and refine our practice on a regular basis. We ground our practice in theory that previously we would have been unexposed to us, at least collectively. And it is the collective exposure that has given us the shared language to be able to discuss what we do and how we do it. The *grand tour* question was simply phrased, yet nuanced in its asking.

Edwina and Emelyn, without any preparation, knew exactly what I was asking with the *grand tour* question. And our answers, while interesting, yielded very little about how we functioned within our leadership capacity. They didn't get to the heart of my research questions at all. Instead, they brought us to our oft-spoken mantra of our work. "We build community." The responses described the physical spaces that we provide. They are unique spaces, not service oriented, but community oriented. Our leadership studies taught us to say they are *transformational*, not *transactional* (Burns, 1978), and we go on to espouse the power (and tension) created by having

spaces that create intangible moments of transformation. So what do we do, what is the answer to the grand tour question? “We build community.”

And so I assumed Edwina and Emelyn also knew that I was desperately trying to ask a well-asked question with my next one, because we hadn’t really gotten anywhere new with the first question.

I started tentatively, after a natural pause in our conversation. “Are there stories that we don’t tell very often? Or is there a story we don’t tell very often? Or are there stories we don’t tell very often about the Campus Community Centers?” I asked. “Good grief” I think silently to myself, “was that a well-asked question? Or just three jumbled up together? Will this get more than a photographer’s view of our spaces? Can we go beyond the platitudes of ‘We build community’ to something more juicy?” Believe it or not, I prepare for each session by calming my mind, by reflecting on my goals as a researcher, by studying a guide (Center for Cognitive Coaching, 2008) that helps me plan the conversation and attempts to put me in an *observer* state of mind. However, usually within moments of starting these research conversations, my composure is out the door, my self-doubts return anew, and I just pray that the script in front of me can get me through. And so I hope desperately that this was a well-asked question.

A long pause ensued, where we all looked away from each other, lost for a moment in our own thoughts. The grand tour question we had just answered produced some reflections on how folks use our spaces, got us to a shared Center’s truism *we build community*, but this was a new tack. Edwina turned, and captured Emelyn and

my attention with a nod of her head. She raises her eyes at me with a knowing look, a conspiratorial smile glances at Emelyn next. “I think there are stories we tell to each other. I think about the times that, that we've sat and have those real hard conversations about who's shinier at the moment.”

“Shinier at the moment...” Because we have all certainly shined. The LGBT Resource Center is the largest at any public institution in the nation. The Cross-Cultural Center has been host to some of the most powerful cross-connections of activism and academics at UC San Diego. The Women's Center has brought the likes of Anita Hill and Angela Davis to our campus. And as each of our Center's shine individually, the other two Centers must deal, in a very real way, with the comparisons that are brought to bear from those committed to each of our individual spaces. All of us have been asked hard questions around “Why aren't you doing it like the fill-in-the-blank-with-the-shinier-Center o-the-day?” This constant comparing and contrasting causes us to tell stories *only* to each other. We trust each other.

Edwina's thought continues, “Because I don't know if we ever tell the campus the idea that we know we're treated differently, and it's not a surprise. And we're *not* walking around *not* talking about it.” In other words, we are intentional about having these difficult conversations.

We are treated differently in many, many aspects. We talk about these aspects a lot. Although we are able to say this even in these first weeks of our deepening conversation around working together, it is only after almost two months have gone by that we deeply articulate the pain that this causes. But that is another story. It is a

story about trust. This story revolves around something else, a conclusion that we have all come to regarding the Campus Community Centers. But I shouldn't jump ahead...

Emelyn had a different take on answering my question regarding "Are there stories that we don't tell very often? Or is there a story we don't tell very often? Or are there stories we don't tell very often about the Campus Community Centers?"

As soon as Edwina has concluded, Emelyn jumps in with her perspective. "I think that there are stories that we edit." And we certainly do. Emelyn goes onto share a powerful story, deeply ingrained in issues of racism, sexism and social justice. And like the dire prediction that preceded her response to my questions, "I think that there are stories that we edit," she asked later that I edit the story out. It is too close, too personal, too connected with other people intimate to the Campus Community Centers that cannot provide the consent necessary to include in this research. This editing is actually indicative of the trust that our communities have with us as Directors. These difficult conversations can happen in our spaces, and there is trust that we will not tell these stories of dealing with deep, historical pain. We provide trusted space for the communities our Centers, as well as the immediate staff with whom we work, that help people develop their own identity and strengthen the community. We edit our stories of the dialogue in these spaces, because in the editing we provide the space for people to grow. Our leadership is granted to us by those who place their trust in us. We provide room within that trust for the pain necessary to heal, grow and develop.

However, I was looking to find out an actual story that we don't tell very often and that we could also tell without editing. What I was getting were the types of stories that we tell, not an actual story. We don't tell stories to other folks about how we deal with the comparisons and the contrasting opinions regarding our spaces, activities and leadership styles. We also edit stories about how painful and difficult is it to work across oppressions, for example racism in the Women's Center, or homophobia in the Cross-Cultural Center, or sexism in the LGBT Resource Center.

The more we talk around the stories that we don't tell very often, the closer we come to a realization. Edwina gets to a powerful observation about what our untold story may be through the experiences of our students. She noted, "I'm wondering as part of the story that we don't tell that... maybe we can tell it as part of the Campus Community Centers. Because what I often hear in *that*..."

The *that* she is referring to is the powerful directions the students who frequent our space can pull our communities. Moments before both Emelyn and I have shared some very intense stories of addressing race in our respective Center's as students struggle with the structures of systemic power and privilege that we all must learn to navigate.

Edwina continues with "...*that* is a person's personal struggle with racism becoming a public struggle for the community, without the students understanding that it's a projection of their own personal story."

It is a confusing concept, but one that both Emelyn and I get quickly, with a smiling, awkward interruption by me of Edwina's train of thought, "I am soooooo

resonating with this...” but I quickly fall back into theoretical constructs that our studies have taught us, words like “sphere” and “negotiation” as well as truisms (at least in the feminist movement) that “the personal is political.” They all jumble as words out of my mouth, disconnected from what the real simple truth we are trying to get at through this vein of the conversation.

We struggle with framing it, with saying it succinctly. But we can feel the excitement in the room. This train of thought is starting to resonate with all three of us. We struggle, trying to get to a succinct way of saying our truth. This struggle speaks to how difficult it can be to navigate in, through and around issues of systemic power, privilege and oppression in Centers. This is especially true for the Directors, as the people that are in leadership positions in these Centers. Add to the mix the people that frequent the Centers and their own work around these social systems, and it can become quite obscured and difficult. How do we describe our work together?

Finally, Edwina hits the nail on the head, with a descriptor that seems to make most sense. Edwina speaks faster and faster, sometimes so much that it is hard to understand, but we all feel the energy and we all are with her, and suddenly she slows down, and says slowly, clearly, and very angrily, as if towards so many people who just don’t understand when we see them trying to treat us differently, “By the way, our communities have struggled, they have fought, they've been pitted against each other.” At this point Edwina slows down dramatically, and it is so clear, so articulate, it cuts straight to the heart of it all.

“And

we

know

this...”

We know the histories of our communities; we know the background of the social justice movements, the civil rights movements, the women’s movement, and the connections between them, even when one group claims disconnections from the others. We know the connections, and we will not let the false, the misguided, the struggle that folks have with each identity and community that frequent pull us apart, as the leaders of the Center, from the collective power of all of our movements together. We know the connections, we believe them to be true and powerful, and we will not deny their existence, even if it may make a short term gain for one of our communities.

“We

know

this!”

Emelyn bursts out laughing, “Right.” It makes so much sense! I am with her in the moment, too. It seems to answer the question. What story do we not tell very often? Even though we have danced around it, struggled to get it out, been obfuscating it with diatribes, theories and examples. But it really is that simple. “And we know this....”

“Maybe,” I say, trying to bring it all together, “maybe the story we don’t *tell* as often is...” and I stop. I am not sure how to own my discomfort. At this moment I am

recognizing that we do not share stories of understanding this collective knowledge very well. And so I struggle, and ground my next sentiment in a hoped-for observation from the outside, “But maybe we do tell [our story] by our existence.” Perhaps the existence of the Campus Community Centers and the daring that it took to from the entity that is the Campus Community Centers speaks for itself?

I know it is not enough, and I struggle in my embarrassment that something so simple could be so profound. And so I say, “The directors have had some really hard conversations.” The questions that I asked to get to this place, to this simple yet powerful admission, were not well asked. But they were heard well, from people that care about me as a researcher, from two people that have shared my pain, my joy, my laughter and my mistakes. “The directors have had some really hard conversations.”

And we have. We have come together, the three of us, many times to be angry at the system, angry at each other and angry at the communities we serve as we struggle with the complexities of identity and community. And we realize we will be pitted against each other, that we will expected to compete for limited resources, to tear each other apart. We know this.

As this question winds down, our conversations go back to the difficulties, the intimacies and the stories in our spaces around oppression and power. We laugh, we try to help each other, we try to unpack this hard work that we do. But the three of us, we are solid, we get it, and the fact that we are not supposed to get along this well, that we are supposed to compete, to pit one oppression over another...

“We know this.”

It is the story we don't tell very often, but a powerful one...

We know this - an analysis within the conceptual frameworks.

Cultural proficiency (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2003) provides two possible ways of analyzing *We Know This* through its five essential elements: Assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. In this story, both managing the dynamics of difference and institutionalizing cultural knowledge both have a place in the analysis.

The element of managing the dynamics of difference is grounded in the understanding that "historical distrust" (p. 116) has an effect on present-day interactions. Edwina's articulation "We know this" bespeaks the shared knowledge the three directors have of this historical distrust, and the necessity of managing the dynamics of this. Concurrently, the revelation that the story documents, the burst of Emelyn's laughter and Shaun's mirth as Edwina says "We know this" reflects an institutionalization of the knowledge about the Campus Community Centers as an organization, at least at the Director level. Both elements reflect a standard of behavior for both the individuals involved in the Campus Community Centers, and the organization itself.

Weber's (2002) conceptual framework around social identities provides another background for this analysis. Weber's five themes regarding race, class, gender and sexuality are (1) stories are historically and geographically/globally contextual; (2) race, class, gender and sexuality are socially constructed; (3) power

relationships function within race, class, gender and sexuality ; (4) macro/social structure and micro/social psychological levels are at play; (5) and race, class, gender and sexuality are expressed simultaneously. Weber's framework assumes that for individuals and communities to truly understand their experiences, they must be conscious of all of these dynamics simultaneously. The power of the three Campus Community Center Directors coming together is that we know these things are all functioning in our spaces, and that we talk about it, explicitly. Many of the edited stories that are missing from the narrative above are the minute details of the very hard realities of working together. The stories can't be shared in the wider arena because of the intimacy we have with those we serve. We are trusted not to tell these stories. It would be a disservice, and unethical, to share their stories without consent. But as Weber indicates, an understanding of the operations of the social systems provides a background for dialogue and conversation that brings the Center Directors together not draws them apart.

An introduction – 'She's Not Gay'.

It was my first day with all of my data collected, and I couldn't figure out exactly how the analysis was going to work. Then I began reading "The ethnographic I" by Ellis (2004), and that night I had trouble falling asleep. As I read Ellis, the analysis, which is actually story-telling, started to fall into place in my head. And I knew one of the stories was incredibly powerful, because after over 100 pages of transcribed text, it was a story that hung in my head, and the first one I wanted to

attempt. And so I went back the next day and read the transcripts and my notes again...

She's Not Gay

"If this conversation is ever going to get real, it should happen with this question," I thought to myself. We had been sitting together in that tiny Women's Center room for almost half of the interview, surrounded by half-eaten sweets, too much coffee, and two (yes, I am paranoid) digital audio recorders. They captured not just our conversation, but as I learned during the transcription, they captured every time a mug touched the table, CLUNK. I was such a novice researcher. What did I get myself into?

There is a pause in the conversation. Although the stories were interesting, in the back of my mind all I could think was, "Do they really trust me enough? Can this whole process of uncovering the narratives of constructing the Campus Community Centers actually work? What the hell am I doing?" It was already the third of six sessions, and I had so many self-doubts about how I was going to really do this study. I had self-doubts about everything right now, actually. James still wasn't spending nights at the condo. I doubted my ability to even be in a relationship. The last thing I needed was to fail in my relationship AND in my researcher role. So I relied on the skills I knew I had, like I had the last two interview sessions, like I did in life. I just followed the script, plowing through the questions, even though it seemed that maybe I wasn't uncovering anything. I continued to the question, the one I hoped would make a break-through.

Shaun to Edwina and Emelyn: “How have you (pointing to Edwina) and you (pointing to Emelyn) and me (pointing a finger back to myself, although I never answered my questions first) navigated our own identity and our own communities in the broader campus community? Given our connections to the other two centers, if that analogy that you (pointing to Edwina) just put out there is real? Now, what does that mean?”

Edwina’s analogy I refer to above was one she had been utilizing in her own dissertation. It compared our Centers to harbors. I’d heard it many times. Many, many times. Too many times, in fact. The problem with studying people you know so well, who are also working on their own studies, is that we seem to all just bend our thoughts towards our own work. I find myself doing it after every data collection session, scrambling quickly back to my computer as soon as our conversation is over to write justifications and connections to a conceptual framework that, I have discovered, I will shove ANY story into so I can make my dissertation look scholarly, disciplined AND the oh-so-important passable to my committee. I mean, c’mon, I hear Emelyn bend her thoughts to her conceptual framework every time we talk. “And that is third space!” she’ll exclaim, attributing it to every moment of not knowing something, or knowing something, or discovering something. What the hell is going on in her work, or my work, or Edwina’s work? I don’t know if any of us know, but we talk about it all the time and maybe that is enough. Maybe that is what researchers do. And I was trying to be a researcher.

Just prior to the pause, Edwina had again made the analogy of our Centers as harbors, where people find themselves enough to feel like they can journey/bridge/venture to another place to grow.

And so my question about identity. *How have you navigated identity and community in the broader campus community given the connections to the other two Centers?* Edwina begins tentatively, after the pause, “I will tell you a story that’s a very interesting story, because I don’t think I do it well. You can probably tell that I don’t think I’d do it well.” There is an expectant moment, where Emelyn and I look curiously at Edwina. “I was nervous about observing in the LGBT Resource Center.” Edwina’s study involved observation at each of our Centers, and she had just been at the LGBT Resource Center.

Nervous? Now that really does surprise me. I rarely think of Edwina as being nervous about anything. I have known her for a long time, and she isn’t the nervous type. She is a proud T on the Myers Briggs scale (Thinking), and constantly reminds Emelyn and I of our “F-ness” (our Feelings). She has the ability to be comfortable in the most uncomfortable of situations because she, in general, isn’t making decisions based on feelings in the way Emelyn or I do... with our boss in meetings, in front of large groups of angry people, talking to all-knowledgeable ethnic studies faculty... Rarely have I ever thought of Edwina as nervous and certainly not nervous in the LGBT Resource Center. She is a T, she just thinks her way through it. And I mean, that is *my* home, my Center, my harbor that I journey/bridge/venture from as I do social justice work. Why would she be nervous?

“Not because I didn't think people would say anything or that I wouldn't feel welcome, but I don't spend enough time to know the mores.”

Mores (n.d.): (mô'r'āz', -ēz, mōr'-) plural noun

The accepted traditional customs and usages of a particular social group.

Moral attitudes.

Manners; ways.

Edwina knows more about the LGBT community than many folks in the LGBT community. Well, at least she knows more about power, privilege and oppression than most folks in the LGBT community, and that is where the real social justice work is important. I was dumbfounded as she said it, and I didn't believe it. My guess was that her comment reflected deep-seated homophobia. I couldn't believe she was even implying “I, Edwina, am homophobic,” even in this clouded, fancy-word way, this owning up to being uncomfortable in our space. Mores? Didn't she know that I would assume it was actually homophobia, possibly internalized. For a brief second I thought “Is she a lesbian? Wait, I know she's not a lesbian. Is she really homophobic? Has Edwina really ever thought about being a lesbian? Do other people assume she's a lesbian?”

And I had my answer in the next breath. “There's also some tension on being the director for Women's Center and having short hair. So everybody thought I was a lesbian...”

So she had thought about it. But first, I should explain “the director for Women's Center” comment. Ah, our connections. Emelyn had mentioned it earlier in

this particular conversation, and Edwina has pointed it out a number of times over the years. The three directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers have all, at one time or another, directed women's development programs, either as a Director of a Women's Center (in Edwina's case at University of Oregon and Emelyn's situation currently as the UC San Diego Women's Center Director) or as a coordinator of Gender Issues Education Services, the title of my own position at Texas A&M University. That job was the doorway which eventually led me to my current position as UC San Diego's LGBT Director. Our histories with Women's Center work serve as a basis for much of our understanding of how our social justice work should be done. Some might call it a collective, feminist perspective.

So Edwina experienced homophobia "...everybody thought I was a lesbian ..." at the Women's Center she directed, because she had short hair, was a black woman, and was... well, Director of a Women's Center. Ah, sexism is alive and well...

"And people still do (think I am a lesbian) and people still ask because I don't date because there's no one to date in San Diego..."

"Oh yes," I think, "San Diego is not a harbor or haven for the black community, especially a black woman interested in dating other black men." UC San Diego has particular trouble attracting, recruiting, and retaining black folks, be they faculty, staff or students. I know Edwina's commitment to UC San Diego certainly must go deeper than her racial/ethnic identity, or she would never be here, because Edwina has said it more than once.

“There’s no one to date in San Diego. So, I personally have a really hard time navigating and negotiating...”

Edwina pauses. Emelyn reaches for the last bite of muffin. I scribble something that I later can’t read on my note pad. I feel it. I think we all feel it. It is hard to be in each other’s spaces, because of the identities that we have, because of the identities that we don’t have, and because of the labels people put on our spaces... Cross-Cultural Center equals brown people working on racism, Women’s Center equals women who are feminists, LGBT Resource Center equals gay people who are, well, gay... If I am entering a Center and I am not this-equals-this, then when I walk in I probably “have a really hard time navigating and negotiating...”

Edwina continued, “You remember when I called you when the marriage act passed and I said ‘Should the Cross-Cultural Center staff come?’ because honoring individual community spaces and wanting to be an ally, and it is a constant struggle for me. I don’t actually care what people think my sexuality is anymore, but that was a just like 20 minutes ago, but that’s just like a couple of years. And I think that you all have helped me come to that, I think.”

Time expands and compresses as we try to explain how and why we navigate identity and community. The learning appears ongoing. When did learning about navigating LGBT identity and spaces happen for Edwina? 15 years ago when she was read as a lesbian because she directed a Women’s Center, was black and had short hair? Twenty minutes ago as she was struggling with her presence in the LGBT Resource Center doing research? Two years ago as she hears the pain of, and tries to

ally with, a community again screaming out as same-sex marriages are nullified by an appeals court? Edwina is struggling with her identity and the LGBT Resource Center, and right now she is sharing with me her fear, her discomfort, and her difficulty in navigating our space. Learning is constant for us, and it is also social (Wenger, 1998). “I think that you all have helped me come to that,” Edwina says, regarding what other people think of her sexuality. I feel the same way. She has helped me through so much. I am proud to have her as a friend and colleague. And I don’t care what people think about me being in the Women’s Center or Cross-Cultural Center anymore, but I, too, have a really hard time being me in certain spaces.

Then Edwina continues her thought regarding identity and community with a phrase that breaks my heart. “My family. Everybody thinks I’m gay. It’s funny, and it’s still difficult, because I don’t know how to navigate that.”

I don’t either. As I sit here and write my analysis and reflect on the importance of what Edwina just shared, I jump to the day before.

I sit in my mom and dad’s church, where I spent all of my high school years. I attend every time I see my parents, and I love and I hate it. In the bulletin is an announcement of “a discussion of the draft sexuality statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and I think to myself “Shit, I was on that committee in 1993 when I was at California Lutheran University, and even back then we were begging to be accepted. 15 years later it is still a draft and LGBT people are still disrespected?!? Why do I still go to church with mom and dad?”

And in the car, as we drive to lunch after church, just my mom and me, mom shares that she “is thinking of going” to the four week sexuality discussion, because “you know I have a unique perspective” (wow, I am unique now) and “some people wouldn’t even talk to you at church if they knew about... about... you know,” Mom ends, without really ending. Yep, I know. We still can’t really talk about it, me and my Mom. And she can’t talk about it at church, at least not without a lot of fear. I am proud of mom for even thinking about going, and I am so sad that she doesn’t have the language to talk to me, and I don’t have the guts to hurt her by educating her about the language, what I believe in, and what she can do to support me. So she tries her best, and I try my best and we both get hurt a lot.

And all these years later, being out, being employed full time as an LGBT Director, I am just like Edwina. “...My family. Everybody thinks I’m gay. It’s funny, and it’s still difficult, because I don’t know how to navigate that.”

I could have said those same words. Just change the word “thinks” to “knows.” It’s funny, and it’s still difficult, because I don’t know how to navigate it either, but I am trying. But I do know one thing. Edwina is not gay. But she is trying to navigate our Campus Community Centers idea/concept/connection, even as hard as it is. It is one of the reasons I love her, and that I love Emelyn. We are all trying, really, really hard to make this Campus Community Centers thing work. Even when we are not gay... or brown... or a woman.

She is not gay - an analysis within the conceptual frameworks.

The story above illustrates how the work of the Campus Community Center Directors can be understood through the theory of social learning first presented by Wenger (1998), as well as through the view systemic leadership provides (Allen & Cherrey, 2000). In Wenger's theory, learning is a social act, a participatory activity that has four components. The act of learning (a) provides meaning to our lives, (b) defines and changes our identity, (c) configures our communities, and (d) becomes our practice. Edwina has the opportunity to understand herself in relationship to the LGBT community, to add (a) meaning to her life, because of her connections to the LGBT Community via the structure that is the Campus Community Centers. She learns about herself as a member of the straight community entering a queer space, and (b) feels discomfort with her own identity. But she leans into the discomfort, the same discomfort she has felt for over 15 years and 20 minutes ago. She is able to do that because of her (c) connections to others in community. She continues to be an integral part of the collective that sustains mutual engagement in action, a defining feature of a (d) community of practice. By exploring the experiences of the Campus Community Center Directors as a community of practice, others who are situated similarly to the three campus community center directors may also see how their work can deepen into a collective that has more power than the individual. To do the work of stretching across the names identities of our spaces, to work beyond the narrow, tightly construed politics of race, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, UC San Diego directors have strong connections to the other leaders in other areas.

These connections can only be born out through two essential elements discussed in the cultural proficiency model. Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell (2003) describe: 1) assessing our own culture, and 2) valuing the diversity that each of us bring. The deep understanding Edwina displays of herself and her own discomfort illustrates a high degree of inside-out reflection. Concurrently, the commitment displayed by all three directors, “we are really trying to make this thing work” exemplifies the need to value the diversity of our team. Because of, and regardless of, identity and community, the Directors of the Cross-Cultural Center, Women’s Center and LGBT Resource Center come together to create the Campus Community Centers.

The titles of the individual Campus Community Centers, and the Directors who lead them, imply a world view steeped in the industrial era and fragmentation (Allen & Cherrey, 2000). The Director of the LGBT Resource Center is separate from the Director of Women’s Center is separate from the Director of Cross-Cultural Center. But as knowledge about any one of these areas becomes increasingly connected to knowledge of the others, the systemic leadership Allen and Cherrey described is enacted by the Campus Community Centers. Although a strong and necessary separation because of the identity and community that frequent the spaces, the meaning of the work of Student Affairs professionals engaged in social justice practice is enriched through practice in a community of social justice leaders.

Trust

The Campus Community Center Directors are certainly very real with each other. For example, before our third session, Edwina went shopping and Emelyn

helped. I, however, was not at all concerned with the shopping, but was frustrated as we began our third session of data collection. The connection between the two vignettes, you might ask? The shopping was happening right in front of my eyes, as I was reading the introductory protocols to the beginning of the data collection session. Let me explain.

Emelyn's partner Paul sells stuff online. Some of the stuff he sells includes women's clothes. Emelyn had snagged a number of cool pieces she thought Edwina might want in a number of sizes (because for women clothes sizes are often not at all indicative of how they might fit.) Edwina was going through bag after bag, piece after piece, holding them up, asking for opinions on style, cut and size. All the while I was trying to create that "research atmosphere" so we could have our conversations. I had set up the audio equipment, distributed the transcribed session from the previous recording, and was ready to get down to research.

Edwina was shopping, and Emelyn was helping. This was definitely going to be a struggle for me. It was our third session, and I was still trying to navigate how to ask the questions and get them answered, to participate and observe, to be both a part of the researcher and the researcher.

And Edwina starting off the day by not sitting down, by paying more attention to clothes than to me... well, it just wasn't sitting well with me.

Our first session had been nice and long, and really felt like we had come together in unison to tell stories. The second session had gone fine, although we had business to talk about after the session. I knew we would eventually, but there was a

piece of me that wanted the data collection sessions to be magical times, where the daily realities of work did not intrude. As I said, the second session went fine, even though we had to talk about a lot of stuff once the recorders were off in order to get work of the Campus Community Centers done. There seemed to be little magic in it. Data collection was becoming real.

But even as I write the reflections on the frustration of real life happening around the second and third sessions, they start to present a pattern. It is very real pattern of the relationship between the three Campus Community Center directors. We are very comfortable with each other. And the false dichotomy between personal and professional breaks down all of the time. In my second session I was frustrated by the professional “stuff” getting in the way, and the third session I was getting frustrated by the personal “stuff” getting in the way. But looking at those two sessions as a progression to the fourth session, it makes sense to have had to get through both of those to get to one of the most powerful sessions. In our fourth session, we articulated the real potential for us NOT to do the work together, as well as the reason why we are able. It was during the last part of our conversation that day, and we had been discussing the barriers to our relationships, specifically regarding resources...

“Fuck both of you” Emelyn said. I knew she didn’t mean it exactly in that moment, but was tapping into past experiences that had remained unspoken between the three of us. I knew I was feeling it as well.

“Fuck both of you.” I had felt it many times in the past. Edwina, the Director of the Cross-Cultural Center, who was older than both of us, but more importantly,

was not-by-her-choice-but-by-position leader of the brown people, had a lot of privilege in our system. “Fuck both of you.” Had Edwina ever felt that? And that is what made it so easy for me to resonate with Emelyn’s “Fuck both of you.” Given that Emelyn, who is the Director of the Women’s Center, given her racial and ethnic heritage, I often felt like to odd man out, literally the ODD MAN OUT. I was white (odd) and male (man) and queer (out), I was the Director of the LGBT Resource Center, and I was supposed to work with two women, two women of color, two straight women of color, who embody the “diversity” of our campus just by walking through the world? Look for our statistics on diversity and you have... (signal the trumpets) gender and ethnicity. “Fuck both of you.” Here I was: a white man, who might be able to pass as straight, doing diversity work and noticing that I was treated differently. A lot differently. And so “Fuck both of you” was certainly a phrase that had entered my mind more than once. And Emelyn had just said it out loud. And Edwina, who knew if she had ever felt that way? But I have jumped ahead...

We had for the fourth time gathered to talk about our stories of connections, our relationships, to explore more deeply the stories of working together around identity and community, and to unearth the barriers that challenge the relationships. Gathered at the Women’s Center, locked off for a brief time from our responsibilities to our work, our staff and our communities which drive our passions, we swam together in the collective memories of creating the Campus Community Centers organization.

We had tried something different in this particular session. As I was growing in my skills as a researcher, I had realized that the more I held on to control of the conversations by rigorously doling out the pre-determined questions off the interview protocol, the more stilted and stumbling the conversations had become. This was our fourth session, we were more than half way through with the interviews, and I still felt like we hadn't gotten to the reality of it all. "Fuck both of you." It reflected my frustrations with collecting data from my friends and colleagues. And so at the beginning I tried something new...

Shaun: "I thought for this particular session I'd give you a sense of all the questions and then as we talk I might touch on them again, or I thought we might see where some of our thoughts respond to them. So this session is about..." and I rattled off the questions. And there were a lot. Questions one, question two, question three... with five more to go I even felt like I was talking way too much! But I am tenacious when it comes to following a script. And I got through all eight. But I had lost them both.

Emelyn was the first to glaze over, most likely distracted by, well... Emelyn tends to be easily distracted, so it could have been anything. "I am walking to the Center to work on my annual report when 'Look, a bird' and the report never gets done..." is one of her favorite ways of characterizing the nature of her thoughts. Perhaps it was the sound of the wind outside the open window. She got up to close the window four questions into my eight questions soliloquy. Edwina followed suit moments later, reaching for her cup of coffee around the sixth question and

gratuitously taking a long, disinterested sip. As I wound down with question eight, I said "...and so those are all of our questions. I thought it would just be easier to put everything there to start with and see where we can go with all of that meat."

Emelyn speaks first, "Yeah."

And there was a long pause.

So I panicked. What do I do? No one was talking. Maybe I should give them the questions in writing? Do I have enough copies? I didn't really plan to give them copies. And we never leave the room once we start. Would that break the whole atmosphere? Wait, I have the questions on the interview protocol, I can give that to Edwina. And I have questions on my own note-taking sheet. I can give that to Emelyn, and then, wait... How will I know the questions? I am the researcher! All of my fears of being a novice researcher race back. "Shaun, calm down" I say to myself. Oh, yeah, the sheet with the questions from all of the sessions, it's in my notebook somewhere.

I say quickly, "And if you want to look at them, if that helps..."

I handed them out, and silence fell over the room. Not the awkward, deadening pause like the moment before, but an interested, inquisitive, exciting silence, filled with anticipation. But I was all mixed up on the inside. I had given away my power as a researcher. They knew exactly what I was going to ask. I had no control, no little joyous triumph that I could hold on to as a question was answered that I didn't even have to ask out loud. There is so much power a researcher has in trying to capture the intimate stories of three people who work together, even when I

am one of those people. Portraits are hard to paint, and I was using the portraiture method in a way that it hadn't been used before. The direct questions and subtle manipulations to get at the answers and stories I wanted to hear were difficult. However, I was usually in control. But I had just let it all go, because I trusted my colleagues, and it just seemed like previously we hadn't been able to be as open as I know we could. Maybe it was my researcher "hat" that was getting in the way. Perhaps this collaborative inquiry would require a bit more humility from the lead researcher.

Later in that afternoon, I would reflect in my research journal "This time I asked all of the questions at once, and actually shared the questions with them in writing so they could reference them as we were speaking. That seemed to REALLY work, and really let the conversation flow in ways that it had not flown in the past. They were able to see the direction and the nature of the questions up front, and to steer it as they (and I) felt necessary to get to the answers/data we needed to respond to the questions. It really felt like 'letting go of the brush' or maybe even 'sharing the brush' to have three hands on it, which is inherently messy, and does not make for a clear distinct picture, but a portrait that is more about impressions, about color and light and form and texture, not a about a perfect representation in detail, but a perfect representation in abstract. The portrait was being painted by all three of us. If the questions were the paint, I gave the paint away. And then I was no longer the sole artist, but was part of the artistry that is capturing portraiture when you are a part of the portrait. I think that may be the defining feature of this type of methodology. You

really have to let yourself go as a researcher in the moments of data collection and let the stories and narratives emerge from the collective conversation. Empower the ‘sitters’ with what you are interested in, and then let it emerge from there. And you are a part of it, because you are wrapped up in it.”

And I was certainly wrapped up in it when Emelyn said “Fuck both of you.” After giving away the questions, we embarked on an hour long discussion about the different resources each Center has. It was the most powerful discussion we have had so far in our journey together on this research. And it all stemmed from pain around diversity and money.

Emelyn: and I hear it all the time on-campus. “Oh, Women’s Center? What do you do over there?”

Edwina: and they don’t know what the Cross does, but it’s got brown people in it. So they think it’s better.

Shaun: right.

Emelyn: I think fundamentally on this campus that’s what it’s about.

Shaun: right.

Emelyn: because race is such the paradigm around diversity that that’s just automatically where it’s going to be the attention to “Oh, diversity that’s the Cross-Cultural Center’s job.”

The UC San Diego campus most often conceptualizes diversity as exclusively addressing racial and ethnic issues. And UC San Diego wants more racial and ethnic diversity, in the students, in the faculty and wherever else they can show off their

commitment to excellence that a racially diverse community represents. This conceptualization of diversity has practical consequences for the three Campus Community Centers. The Cross-Cultural Center, which Edwina directs, is the largest physically, has the most staff, and has the largest budget for program, supplies and other resources. Edwina, as the embodiment of that Center as the Director, is able to control more of that very valuable asset in our society: money. The Women's Center is in the middle, with a larger space and more budget. And the LGBT Resource Center is the smallest, with the least staff and the smallest budget.

UC San Diego's perceptions of diversity uniquely parallel the resources available to the Centers that serve these constituent communities. If there is a hierarchy of diversities that is important to the University, it most assuredly would be listed as racial/ethnic diversity, then gender diversity, and finally sexual identity diversity. Given the identities of the Directors, it is almost a complete reversal of the stereotypical privilege hierarchies that operate in our society. Those hierarchies position skin color as defining of power, access and privilege. White people have the most. People of color have the least, with gradations of color being important. That is, the lighter (whiter) you are, the more access you have to power. Those hierarchies also place sex, with men having the most power and women having the least. Edwina is a black woman. Emelyn is Pinay, she is brown, but she is unmistakably not white. And I am the white male of the group. The identities of the Directors are certainly not by design of the institution (i.e., we were not hired based on our race or gender). However, the complex nature of diversity and social justice work, combined with the

realities of identity politics, makes the comparisons an easy leap for me emotionally in the moment. “Fuck you both” I say silently to myself, as we say out loud the truth we know but rarely speak. But it is not that easy, because we all know it.

...*Edwina*: it does suck though.

Shaun: yeah, I mean, my question is, and it is one of the questions on here, “How do we make sense of that complexity?” ...How then do we even sit in the room together without saying “Fuck you both. I’m on my own y’all.”

Emelyn: I think that in a lot of ways... I try not to think about it too much. I kind of accept it for what it is. And in some ways, I think I look to you [Shaun] for support, because I feel like you understand what I’m going through. And that’s been really helpful at times when I felt like “Wow, I was really just shit upon. That’s happened to you before Shaun. Let’s talk about that,” you know what I mean, and so I find a lot of support in the that, but in other ways I’m just like “Fuck, that’s just the way that it is,” and if I try to think about it too hard I’m going to be like “Fuck both of you,” you know? And so I try not to think about it too much and try to understand, kind of, you know, where is this coming from?

It is incredibly difficult to have a commitment to social justice, and yet at the same time attend to the communities that are the intimates to our space, and to negotiate the political realities of the three Campus Community Centers and how we are resourced so differently. Social justice would assume that we were equally resourced. We are not. We do not necessarily share that depth of inequality with our constituents, but it is noticeable from our size of space and size of staff to any critical

observer. Additionally, a social justice perspective might assume that in each of our Centers we address areas of oppression (racism, sexism, etc.) equally. We do not. Our constituent communities often define the lens through which we address social justice issues, and that lens is often shaded by the identities of the people in our spaces. For example, the people that frequent the LGBT Resource Center, while they are safe in the environs of the LGBT Resource Center, often discuss experiences of homo-, bi- and transphobia in their reflection on navigating the University. Unless they have a broader lens, issues of sexism and racism may not have equal time in the conversation that fills our space. Directors, who have a strong commitment to social justice, navigate that reality and gently share broader understanding of social justice with our constituents.

Later in our conversation, we were able to articulate the complexity of it, to some degree:

Shaun: that's fine, when I think about... really sitting here and "I try not to think about it, too." I mean that phrase for me captures it a lot. Yet at the same time, at some levels I feel like we've had very intense conversations about social justice... Yet, why do I also try not to think about it much?

Emelyn: because we'd hate Edwina.

Shaun: right

We'd hate Edwina. If we thought about it too much, we'd hate Edwina. It is not equitable to have three Centers that are positioned as equal, but resourced differently, is it? Does equitable mean equal? As Directors we do not have an answer

for these questions, individually or collectively. However, disparate resources are the largest barrier to our success. We work for the equality of marginalized people, but our Centers are not equal themselves. But is that the goal? Yet because we have spent the time getting to know each other so well, it feels impossible to hate Edwina. She is a real person; complex, committed, and deeply concerned about social justice on our campus. I find it impossible to hate Edwina.

But am I then avoiding the difficult questions around differing resources just because I like the person who has the most of them? Is that fair to the community I serve, to the young, queer people that rely on me to provide the space, the time, the staff and the resources to carry them through a journey on campus and in society that at best tolerates and at worst violently responds to queer lives lived openly? And how do I explain this work to others, if it is all predicated on three people liking each other? How do I explain the LGBT Resource Center's limited resources compared to the Women's Center's and Cross-Cultural Center's expansive ones? Is "Don't think about it much..." a legitimate form of navigating the complexities of social justice work on college campuses? Is it really as simple as "Don't think about it much..."?

Shaun: what I guess... here's my question "Is that what we tell other people is the way that we do this work?"

Emelyn: is how, what?

I have lost both of them. Sometimes communication is so hard. Edwina looks at me curiously, and Emelyn is clearly lost by my question. But I feel like this is the heart, this is the most important thing we have gotten to all day. We have to articulate

it. We have to say it out loud, more clearly, more passionately than we have said it before. It is too unspoken to share with others. We have to say it to each other, and now is the moment. I don't know the words, but I know the three of us can get to it, if we just try. It is much more than just trying not to think about it.

Shaun: when you get really frustrated around perceptions and realities of unequal treatment, when you get really frustrated around seeing these things, 'try not to think about it' because you don't want to hate the people that you have to?

Emelyn: no that's not what we say.

Shaun: okay, what do we say?

The frustration is mounting. You can hear it in the pauses. I am pushing, pushing my colleagues. I know this is it, this is the moment, but I don't know what "it" is. I just feel the intensity of what is coming forth in the conversation. We stumble around in our conversation more. I notice that we all reach for the food, as a way of trying to distract ourselves from this line of questions. But Emelyn reaches the end far quicker than Edwina or I. Maybe it is because the initial proposition "I just don't think about it" came from her. More likely it is because Emelyn is brilliant. Edwina and I both know it. Sometimes it drives us crazy. Emelyn can effortlessly write papers and analyze situations that take hours, sometimes weeks for Edwina or me to do. But that is the beauty of Emelyn, and she comes through again in this situation.

Emelyn: I think what we say, because we've said it, is that "We're having these conversations." But that's also truth. I think that we're not so much lying, as we're not

telling the whole picture, because it's our job as... as the political navigators to not go 'there' with people who do not need to know that.

Emelyn is getting to the heart of it. A big part of doing this work together is where we bring our frustration, our concerns and our pain in the work. Those are "these conversations" that Emelyn references above. The conversations about the differences and how awful that can be for each of us given our identities and our positions. Where do we go when the work becomes overwhelming, when we see inequality, injustice, different resources available for different communities? Where do we go? Emelyn continues her thought...

And I can really understand why other Centers around the country explode over this stuff, because they're not intentional. That's why I was so triggered by what [our colleague] said about, "I don't know that I have the time or energy to [cooperate with other Centers]..." You have to. You have to. Because the political dynamics that are darting at us from the outside is going to rip us apart if we are not intentional, around the connections that we've made in very concrete ways. Because it's so easy for me to say "Fuck you. I'm going to go get what I'm going to get for the Women's Center and you can just take care of yourself. I'm going to go write my own grants, I'm going to do my own thing, I'm not cosponsoring any of your events." And I can understand why other places really destroy themselves because they are not intentional about their relationships, because it's work.

Shaun: right.

Edwina: and then back to your point [Shaun] that it's muddy, it's work, and if we do it correctly we all benefit.

Shaun: it's just hard. I mean for me right now. I felt myself getting very emotional, because yeah that is the story we tell and it is the truth. But the deeper truth behind it is laced with a lot of personal struggle, with a lot of strong commitment...

Edwina: well, what we have instead, and we haven't used the word today... [a long pause] It's all around, do we trust each other enough, when we're not in the room?

And Edwina sums up in a word what Emelyn has so eloquently articulated. It is about trusting each other, even when that trust could lead to hurt, pain and risk for the individual Center's that each of us care so much for, and are charged with directing. We have to trust each other enough to go to one another when there is frustration, pain, hurt and inequality. And as Edwina explains, we have to both be real about our differences to the staff we work with, and to extend that trust to the staff's we work with as well...

Edwina: And what stories do we tell our staff, because I've had conversations with my staff about how I don't think you all are treated fairly. How I'd do it differently if I was in your shoes, from a learning perspective, for them to know. And still supporting you a thousand percent of the way...

Emelyn: yeah.

Edwina: and I think that you all have to trust me more than maybe I have to trust you.

The unspoken reason for that trust, in this moment, is regarding resources. We have arrived at this point in the conversation through a very intense dialogue earlier in the day's session about our resources. Acknowledging Edwina's extensive resources out loud and in a way that highlights our inequalities clearly has stuck in her head as we have attempted to explain how we reconcile our differences. But for me, in that moment, it is not about resources at all. It is more personal. My consciousness of privilege, being a white male, is in the forefront for me, as it often is...

Shaun: That's where... That's where it's very real around resources, I mean, yes, I think that's true, but I think you have to trust me a lot more in some ways around "Am I [Shaun] really doing LGBT work with a commitment to a broader commitment to what the Cross-Cultural Center's mission is to what the Women's Center mission is?"

There was a time when I was scared that my colleagues could not, would not and sometimes must not trust me because of my white skin and because of my male identity. Education, therapy and experience with a loving community has soothed the guilt associated with the privilege of my identities. Still, as I have journeyed through this work, my privilege often floats to the front of my mind. Everything I have learned in my work around social justice has taught me to understand and acknowledge the privileges that come with two identities in particular: whiteness and maleness. The acknowledgement, however, should not come from a place of guilt, but

from a grounded reality of how I walk in the world. Paired with those privileges are a corresponding set of oppressions that folks who are targeted because of the color of their skin and because of their gender feel. Edwina and Emelyn, both women of color, are counterbalances to the privileges that I get in the body in which I was born. I often feel the weight of utilizing the privileges to change the world, and the reality of having privileges which by definition imply that I have more societal resources than others. Within the context of our conversation in the moment, Edwina feels guilt through having the most privilege within the context of resources on campus. I feel my guilt within the context of resources from a societal perspective.

Shaun: So the trust levels are different around different issues, because if you didn't think I was doing my own work at the LGBT Resource Center fundamentally around feminism, fundamentally around issues around race and social justice, could you really be engaged with me? Or would you be like "He don't get it."

Emelyn: yeah, sure.

Edwina: that is our strength in relationship in the fact that we went to *A. I.* and the fact that we are just at a baseball game on Friday.

Edwina is referencing our beginning and our end, the alpha and omega of our three-way interpersonal relationship at this point. We had gone to a baseball game the weekend before. And we talked about the rather horrible film *A. I.* at our first interview. That film was the first time we all recall being together in any kind of way that was chosen, as opposed to required by the circumstances of our work. And it had happened within the first three months of us being at the University together. Our first

session explored our first memories of working together to create the Campus Community Centers. Even in that first session we were beginning to articulate the trust it takes to do this work. But this conversation is far removed from those initial forays into our discussions of working together. We have progressed in our conversations.

Edwina: because we like and don't like each other all at the same time.

Emelyn: yeah. It's totally like a relationship, like a romantic relationship. I hate you. I love you so much.

All: laughter.

Shaun: but you know that to me speaks to it's a bold and rich relationship. It's a real relationship. It is not a surface relationship. It is not a structural relationship.

Edwina: it's not just work. A lot of it's work, but it isn't...

Shaun: Work draws us together, absolutely, but it is a full and rich relationship, which means... When I think about my relationship with my partner: It is love and hate. When I think about my relationship with my parents, with my sister... It is complex.

All: laughter

Edwina: and then we call each other up and say "Oh Shaun I'm calling you. Oh Emelyn..."

Without saying it, Edwina has touched on a collective experience we each have talking to each other about difficult things, about things that sometimes we do not want to discuss with each other.

Shaun: right, yeah.

Edwina: I remember when you all [Emelyn and Shaun] got mad at me when we had that Campus Community Centers meeting. And I was like “Oh I shouldn’t chastise them.” I think it was like [a colleagues] first meeting or something and you all were like “They didn’t paint our spaces and we are going to move in” and I was like, “What?!? They didn’t paint your spaces, are you kidding me?” Y’all were like “Calm the fuck down. Who are you? I run my own Center. Go away.” I remember that [the staff member] later was like, “I’m not quite sure what just happened.”

All: laughter.

Edwina: I said to her, “Oh I’m sorry, I am in relationship with them.” She then asked “Do you realize you were doing that?” and I’m like “Oh, I’m sorry.”

Emelyn: [in a tentative, quiet, questioning voice of the staff member...] “Do they like each other?”

And the resounding answer, as we sit at that small table, in that small room, is YES, we do like each other. The ease that the laughter comes from our lips, and the same ease that we have in knowing that saying “Fuck you” and going out on our own, dissolving the collaborative that is the Campus Community Centers, would be a disservice to the people we have committed to this journey with through social justice work, it is the ease that comes from a trusting relationship. At the end of the fourth session, I write the following reflection in my journal:

I think we really built to get to this session, and the questions really took us to the truth, to the right answer. It may have been a function of time; it may have been a

function of progressive questions... I don't know. But it certainly seemed to work today, in ways that it never has before. Today was real, more real than any other session before.

Trust - an analysis within the conceptual frameworks.

The story above illustrated how the Directors of the Campus Community Centers are operating with the skills necessary to function in a networked world as described by Allen and Cherrey in *Systemic Leadership* (2000), as well as via the element of managing the dynamics of difference described by Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell in *Cultural Proficiency* (2003). In Allen and Cherrey's description of new ways of working successfully in the networked age, they described ways of relating that do not depend on the traditional hierarchies on which the industrial era relied. Because networks facilitate the flow of emotions as well as information, the phrase *fuck you* makes sense as a descriptor for passing on both information and emotional content regarding the recognition on many things related to working together in the Campus Community Centers: disparate resources, disparate treatment in the university, disparate treatment in the social hierarchies that operate in our society, etc. However, as Allen and Cherrey indicated "We need to increase our emotional stability, and trust in our relationships, and ourselves to decrease the misinformation and amplification of negative emotions" (p. 105). In other words, the emotional impact of *fuck you* is real. The emotional security brought on by the trusting relationships between the Campus Community Center Directors allows for that emotion to be real but not amplified. Neither does it lead to misinformation about the reality of a situation at hand.

In Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell's (2003) understanding of the essential elements for a cultural proficient individual and organization, the concept of managing the dynamic of difference functions as a standard to evaluate behavior. The intense difference in the identities, resources and experiences of the three directors situates them to be in conflict. However, as Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell indicate, "a culturally proficient leader wants more than the survival of his colleagues... He wants them to thrive... You develop effective, culturally proficient strategies for managing the conflict that occurs" (p. 116). Emelyn's unspoken "Fuck you" becomes an internal strategy for emotional release that manages the differences, while trust becomes an outward strategy for managing the dynamics of the differences.

How the Campus Community Centers were Named

The Campus Community Centers team has met a number of times throughout the years as we have established the relationships and structures that have made it all happen. As the Directors were discussing leadership in the context of the Campus Community Centers, we remembered a powerful story that happened at a Campus Community Center's retreat.

"I feel like a fake," said Emelyn emphatically. The assembled staff was silent. "I feel like I got this job and I don't know what I'm doing," she continued. The faces around her were a mix of anger, shock surprise and compassion. "And sometimes I'm really afraid that people are going to find out that I really don't know what I'm doing." I felt my face flush with emotion, as I felt both embarrassment as my friend and colleague shared so powerful a statement, and shame that we could not maintain the

self-assured illusions that I thought were the requirements of leadership. “I’m really faking it every day,” Emelyn finished, in a rush of apologetic confession.

Rarely had Emelyn been so raw, so angry and so passionate in front of her colleagues. But it had been a long day, and too much had been put on her plate. We are sitting in the penthouse suite of one of the few rooms at UC San Diego that has dramatic ocean views. You can smell the sea through the open windows, its scent tantalizing to the individuals trapped in such a beautiful prison. The staffs of all three Campus Community Centers are in the room, the Women’s Center, the LGBT Resource Center and the Cross-Cultural Center. A dozen people surrounded in comfort, supported by the resources of a large research university, and constrained by dual work: individually in each Center and collectively as the Campus Community Centers. The day has been intense as we have struggled to find common ground with such three different organizations, different leaders and different missions.

“I know I always look like I know what I am doing,” I had said earlier. I pride myself in having my agendas set for meetings, my trainings mapped in outlines, and my written documentation in place for all to see. But the structures are a bravado born of insecurity. “But I really actually feel much more tentative about what I am doing, and I feel like I just make things up,” I continued. It was terrifying for me to say this out loud. Still new in my position (although after seven years I will have to at some point stop thinking of myself as being new), and always forming and maintaining relationships across all levels of the staff of the Campus Community Centers, this vulnerability was uncharacteristic of me. My self-worth is too often reflected in the

eyes of others, and for me to give away this morsel of doubt in my own work was to allow others to critique the effort, energy and commitment I have to the organization.

It was an admission that had inspired Emelyn's revelation of feeling like a fake. And later in the day, it inspired Edwina's anger and frustration. "It's not fair for you to expect that I can read your mind and then to meet that unspoken need, and then be mad at me when I don't read your mind," she retorted as one staff member in particular was upset about not being involved in the process of creating the Campus Community Centers mission.

The staff of the Campus Community Centers had spent all afternoon trying to articulate a vision of the three Campus Community Centers. They were working from a statement that had been created some time ago by the Directors. The problem had been, up to that point, that the staff (excluding the Directors) had no time to come together and actually reflect on what they needed and wanted from us in terms of leadership around this idea of the Campus Community Centers. And so the task before them was impossible. Their time together was instead spent trying to communicate across the boundaries that exist in these three organizations as separate entities.

They knew they were a part of the Campus Community Centers, but did not know how, or why, or what it meant for them. They had a statement, but they had not created it. They did know how they felt, however. It was collectively communicated with this sentiment. "You were supposed to do this [provide leadership] for us and you didn't take care of us and we have all these expectations," about what it means to work

together as Campus Community Centers. That is how Edwina remembers the collective sentiment of the staff, and as Emelyn and I hear her telling, we resonate with the memory of that anger and frustration held in the previously unspoken expectation.

It was true. The Directors were supposed to provide leadership, and we did have responsibility for creating the Campus Community Centers. The statement we had given them reflected that. And our collective name reflected it as well. As much as the Directors explored our memories, no one knows who said it first, or where the descriptor came from, but early on in the working relationship of the three Centers, the title *Campus Community Centers* had been adopted. The moniker Campus Community Centers was first used in a printed marketing piece in the fall of 2001. At that time, the phrase was used to describe not only the Women's Center, LGBT Resource Office (as it was called at the time) and Cross-Cultural Center, but also the Office of Religious Affairs. None of our group of three Directors remembered the Office of Religious Affairs being a part of the Campus Community Centers. However, the collective digging through the proverbial files had uncovered this printed marketing piece. The phrase Campus Community Centers was right on the front page, so we knew that conception must have existed. However, the phrase was not qualified. In other words, it did not say what the Campus Community Centers was; it simply titled a marketing piece that described four distinct spaces.

Our first joint document together as a three Center collective was a handout for the Board of Overseers of UC San Diego, a group of wealthy donors who had biennial

meetings with the Chancellor of the University. This was right after the three Centers had been adopted by the Chancellor, and this was the first time we had presented in an organized fashion around whom and what we were. The three Directors had come together to attempt to create a handout that described the three of us succinctly. We crafted a paragraph that named us the “Campus Community Centers” and called us to our work together, which was the top of the flyer. It read:

The University of California, San Diego Women’s Center, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center and Cross-Cultural Center come together as the UCSD Campus Community Centers. The combined work of the Campus Community Centers is fostered by the Principles of Community which supports a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism for all at UCSD. The specific missions of each Campus Community Center focus the individual endeavors towards social justice and inclusion and combine to create a synergy of improving climate. The educational, research, and service mission of the University can only be fulfilled when diversity is seamlessly interwoven into an integrated experience. It is the valuing of differences and recognition of commonalities that energize and drive the overall work of the Campus Community Centers.

The next three sections were our logos, missions and locations for the board of overseers to reference. We even quickly adopted a web page address, community.ucsd.edu that served as our joint webpage, with little content beyond the handout (recreated as a web page). And so our beginning words and connections were

born out of necessity, not through a strategic, well thought out process of community involvement and engagement that created and refined an articulation of who and what the Campus Community Centers were. It was a hurried afternoon of three very busy professionals who had to present to a very important group of people and needed something pulled together that captured the essence of what we felt as three distinct entities all reporting to the Chancellor's Office. It was top-down leadership, with the highest positions in the organizations setting the direction and expecting the communities to follow.

To be clear, the Directors were never mandated to come together and create a collective. Our new, common supervisor did not set the expectation once we were adopted by the Chancellor, nor did any of our individual center Advisory Boards, nor active community members that frequented the Centers. The idea of the Campus Community Centers, as a name and as a working collective, sprang forth from the Directors.

And so it made sense that, on this warm afternoon next to the ocean, after a day full of conversation, sharing, and connection, that the staff the Directors work with would bear the brunt of such haphazard, top-down connections. The Campus Community Centers organization was created by the Directors and for the Directors in a time of need. The three Directors have the opportunity, the space and the privilege to have conversation and mutual connections to make the Campus Community Centers work for us. It takes a lot of really hard dialogue around the perceptions and realities of unequal treatment between the three Campus Community Centers in order to

appreciate the power that happens when we do work together, given the huge barrier of unequal resources. As Emelyn would later recall:

It's our [the Directors] job ... as the political navigators to not go there with people who do not need to know [the hard dialogues referenced above] And I can really understand why other Centers around the country explode over this stuff, because they're not intentional. That's why I was so triggered by what a staff member said about, "I don't know that I have the time or energy to [work with the other Campus Community Centers]..." You have to. You have to. Because the political dynamics that are darting at us from the outside is going to rip us apart if we are not intentional, around the connections that we've made in very concrete ways. Because it's so easy for me to say "Fuck you. I'm going to go get what I'm going to get for the Women's Center and you can just take care of yourself. I'm going to go write my own grants, I'm going to do my own thing, I'm not cosponsoring any of your events." And I can understand why other places really destroy themselves because they are not intentional about their relationships, because it's work.

The reality is that the staff that we work with has to do the work as well. Because we are community-based Centers, each person that enters the space, be they employed or not, is part of co-creating what that space is. The Directors, with their positional power, have some ability to shape the overall direction and connections of the three Centers. The story of the birth of the name and first documents mentioned above speak to that issue. But the opposing truth is that every person who interacts with one of the Centers must also play a part in the idea of the Campus Community

Centers. The non-Director, full time staff, positioned as they are, have an equal responsibility to this co-creation. As Allen and Cherrey (2000) point out, the skill in navigating the relationships in Student Affairs, combined with the overlaying and competing value systems of the industrial and networked knowledge areas, demands systemic leadership in order to be successful. This systemic leadership does not stem from the Directors only. Leadership that is systemic is produced by all of the people in the system, which in the case of the Campus Community Centers includes all of the professional staff. For the LGBT Resource Center, Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Center, this systemic leadership has taken shape in the entity called the Campus Community Centers and the staff who are employed by the three Centers that collectively are known as the Campus Community Centers.

So that afternoon, in that beautiful prison, the Directors learned the drawbacks to such haphazard constructions of community and identity. We struggled with our own positional privilege and the ability we have to manage our time, energy and resources. The staff with whom we work rely on us to create the space and time necessary to forge the deep connections that the three Directors have established. If we were ever going to go beyond a name, to really do the work of what it meant to be Campus Community Centers, we would have to come together as a larger collective of employees. We would have to create the structures and relationships that bring the entity to life beyond the friendship of the three Directors. Over time, we were able to do some of that, with a new joint philosophy and mission statement which was eventually conceived after the retreat:

The Women's Center, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Center, and the Cross-Cultural Center are collectively known as the Campus Community Centers. We are grounded in a shared belief that ending one oppression requires ending all oppressions. Together we facilitate interactive learning, promote self-awareness, foster leadership development, encourage dialogue, and challenge traditional notions of diversity. The Campus Community Centers work with undergraduate and graduate students, staff, faculty, alumni, and the San Diego Community. Through these partnerships, we build and sustain a socially just campus climate.

How the Campus Community Centers were named - an analysis within the conceptual frameworks.

One of the key ideas from Allen and Cherrey's (2000) work, *Systemic Leadership*, is the dawning of a networked era that is overlaid on a fragmented, hierarchical era. In order for Student Affairs professionals to be successful, both eras have to be navigated successfully. The naming of the Campus Community Centers is a good example of how both eras were not navigated well. If working with the staff of the Campus Community Centers acknowledges a networked way of understanding identity and community, then the positional, Director-developed paragraph of the philosophies of the Campus Community Centers is a hold-over from the fragmented, hierarchical era. When those two world views touch, the frustration can be palpable, as the story shows.

Assessing the culture and institutionalizing cultural knowledge, in this case the collectively created knowledge of what the Campus Community Centers are for the staff that are employed by them, are key elements to cultural proficiency (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 2003). In the story of how the Campus Community Centers were named, the power of the diverse environment that is all of the staff together provides space for the Directors to be vulnerable. In that space, anger and frustration come out, but so does a deeper understanding of the culture that is the Campus Community Centers. The ongoing development of the organization is spurred by this assessment of culture and concurrent institutionalizing of the knowledge.

Wenger's (1998) conceptualization of a Community of Practice, with learning as a key concept between identity and community, provides a theoretical working space to begin to describe the nature of the work. In the story above, the Directors are able to acknowledge their own insecurities in doing work as Campus Community Centers. In the beginning, there was no strong theoretical framework or conceptual understanding that structurally positioned the Campus Community Centers together. Each Center was established in what might be considered an industrial paradigm. The Campus Community Centers was a venture born out of the connections of the three Directors. As the staff with whom we each work became more and more aware at how tenuous the connections were, each Director finds themselves needing to be more vulnerable to explain how difficult the work is. The acknowledgment of "faking it" and "making things up" and the frustration of having the expectations that cannot possibly be met because they are unspoken, allows for a space of learning among the

Campus Community Centers entire team. This then transitions the work into a more networked way of working (Allen & Cherrey, 2000), where cultural knowledge is institutionalized (Lindsey, Nuri Robins & Terrell, 2003) and a community of practice functions (Wenger, 1998).

CUDLI

My home is very, very small, and I always worry when people come over to visit. Today Edwina, the Director of the Cross-Cultural Center and Emelyn, the Director of the Women's Center, were coming over to my home for our final interview. Our connections and relationships had deepened even further over the course of the months of conversations, and our final session was meant to be special, different and relaxing.

I cleared off the table, set out fresh berries and made a huge pot of coffee. It was a beautiful early summer day in San Diego. The morning air had been cool, but had warmed with the sun to a temperate 74 degrees. The windows were wide open, and you could hear flowing water from the fountain in the courtyard in the background. My condominium gets lots of light and air, and I had set out our dining room table from the corner so all three of us could gather around.

Emelyn and Edwina both arrived right on time. They had been to my home before for courtyard parties and BBQ's, but never in such an intimate way as the three of us simply sharing. I was both excited and stressed, as I like to present picture-perfect realities, even when the realities are messier than the picture represents. Perfection is an ongoing theme in my life, one that Edwina and Emelyn have

recognized. Part of their connections with me has been providing me room to be messy, around work, around my relationship with my partner and around the difficulties of being involved in social justice work. That's why I didn't bother to vacuum. Plus, I ran out of time.

"Is that the picture I gave you?" Emelyn asked as she noticed the blue heart print hanging on the wall in my dining room. Indeed, it was. I had forgotten that she had given it to me. It had been a metaphor for me in recent weeks, as my relationship with my partner James continued to deteriorate and we contemplated breaking up. Throughout the months of these data collection sessions Edwina and Emelyn had been personal sounding boards for me as I struggled with the potential for a second failed relationship in my life. Her recognition of the picture brought it all crashing back to me. But it was neither the time nor the place. Besides, we had already planned to go out after our conversation, and James might even be joining us. I didn't want to share how messy things were in the moment between James and me, even though I knew I could. Again, picture perfect, even when I knew it wasn't helpful.

We sat down and prepared for the discussion. Once we all had devoured enough berries and coffee to settle the inevitable munchies that seemed to accompany our talks, the conversation progressed quickly. We were now accustomed to the rhythm of the discussions. The questions were future focused, and we began discussing the idea of the sustainability of the Campus Community Center organization over time, as well as the idea of how easily current students become disconnected from the struggle of generations of students before them.

Edwina shared a story of an alumna she is working with, “I was talking to the person who is meeting with us, and she was one of the students when she was an undergraduate here that did not want us to go to Price Center for lots of reasons.”

The Cross-Cultural Center is the last of the three Campus Community Centers to move into new, permanent space at the institution. Permanent space is a huge step for all three Centers, and although all of the Centers have increased in size and visibility, the ratio of the three Centers stayed practically the same: the LGBT Resource Center is the smallest, the Women’s Center is in the middle, and the Cross-Cultural Center is the largest. The new location of the Cross-Cultural Center would also be unique among the three Campus Community Centers, as it would be a space within a much larger student center building. The new spaces of the LGBT Resource Center and Women’s Center were the top floors in two standalone buildings.

Edwina goes on to share the alumna’s experience. The alumna was very concerned with the new move, because being a Center within a larger student center would be hard.

“Is the University really going to live up to what it says it was going to do? Is it going to feel too corporate in the Price Center? It is going to be in the middle [of a larger student center], and will it lose its sense of soul?”

Edwina began reflecting on this alumna’s very deep concern,

“And so she has not been to the [new] space yet, even though they’re meeting on the 23rd, because just hasn’t sort of done anything with [her concerns].”

Edwina continued, “It was interesting because all the people that came for the All Peoples...” The reference to All People’s: it is an annual end of the academic year celebration that brings student, staff, faculty and alumni together in the Cross-Cultural Center. All People’s for this year was the first event in the new space. Edwina reflected, “...the people that came for the All Peoples love the space and were really tripping because it's too surreal to come from ‘*We’re oppressed. You’ve gotta fight every step of the way. Nobody listens to us. We’re not getting anything around diversity on campus....*’ to ‘*Oh shit...!*’”

Emelyn completed the thought, “‘*Here’s 7,000 square feet!*’”

And Edwina continued, “Here’s 7000 square feet. ‘What do we do? And how to navigate that?’”

Emelyn continues on the role with the line of thinking, giving voice to the thoughts of the students as they entered the new space of the Cross-Cultural Center, “And how are we activists in this space? My activism comes from my oppression.”

The sentiment is a huge break through, and we all feel it.

I jump right in “Right. My activist comes from my oppression, as opposed to my activism comes from my sense of social justice.”

Emelyn wraps it up nicely, “And I think that's a key piece to our sustainability, is to cultivate those students that, much like the Chancellor’s Undergraduate Diversity Learning Initiative (CUDLI) students, who have a different understanding of social justice and activism that really does come from a place of social justice, and not from a place of marginality.”

An interlude about CUDLI.

The Chancellor's Undergraduate Diversity Learning Initiative, or CUDLI (pronounced kud-lee) as we affectionately call it, has been an ongoing collaborative of the Campus Community Centers since the fall of 2003. In the spring of that year, the Chancellor of UC San Diego was selected as the President of the entire UC system. Because the three Campus Community Centers had been adopted by the Chancellor's office the year prior, we had a year of reporting to a common supervisor, the Associate Chancellor. As she began preparations to transition with the Chancellor to the Office of the President, the opportunity for one-time funding of special projects became available. Since the beginning of my tenure as the LGBT Resource Center, I had toyed with the idea of an LGBT leadership development class. Once the adoption was complete, and with the new-found intimacies with the Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Center, a single-issue leadership course seemed out of line with our burgeoning model of working together. With the potential for funding available, the three Directors conceived of a year-long leadership institute, under the auspices of the Chancellor, which would train 20 first- and second-year students regarding the issues and concepts that concerned the three Campus Community Centers.

The proposal was funded, and a long summer of work began between the three Directors as the structures, philosophies and pedagogies that we sought to employ were examined, refined and created into syllabus for the year.

What CUDLI did for the Directors was provide an intense, weekly dialogue around both the structures of the Institute itself, but also the stories, experiences and

working concepts of how we each approached our work. We were able to learn deeply about each other, both in terms of working styles and working philosophies. It was not an easy task to come from three distinct and individual spaces to create a joint experience that reflected that values off all three spaces and all three Directors.

But the journey of CUDLI, year after year after year, provided space for dialogue, trust and learning between the three Directors that served as a basis for many, many other projects. Because of the intense amount of time it took to co-create and implement the Institute, we became more intimately connected and more attuned to the similarities and difference in the three Directors.

After the third year of CUDLI, we gave it away. We had, at that point, spent three complete years fully invested in the concepts of CULDI as a course. But concurrently, each of the Centers had been growing and changing. The smallest of the three, the LGBT Resource Center, had finally added an Assistant Director to its full time staff, bringing it up to three people. With that addition, the Campus Community Centers had parallel structures with enough people to allow for others to do the work of CULDI beyond the Directors. In the third year, one Assistant Director from each Center sat in each academic quarter, to learn, observe and grow. At the end of that year, CUDLI was handed off to the three Assistant Directors, one from each Center, for implementation in the fourth year. The Directors, after three years of implementing CUDLI, were done with it in many ways, and stepped completely away from the project.

The transition was not smooth. The three Assistant Directors have their own, intense stories of how they had to come together to co-create CUDLI in that summer before, and during the implementation in the fourth year. Many of their stories revolved around the absence of the Directors. Each Director negotiated workloads with their respective Assistant Directors differently. Each Assistant Director also has their own experiences regarding commitments to their individual Centers and to social justice. It was not as simple as recreating what had already been established by the three Directors in the first few years. The lesson plans, concepts and theories were too grounded in the experiences of the Directors. There was not enough source material from the prior three year's Institutes to readily implement a curriculum. The Assistant Directors had to go through their own process of co-creating CUDLI for that year.

Many, many frustrating conversations between individual Directors and their supervisees (that is between each Director and their respective Assistant Director), between the three Directors, and between the three Assistant Directors created a climate of openness and sharing that had heretofore been reserved for just the Directors. But suddenly the work of the Campus Community Centers collective was growing beyond the Directors. Yes, there had been some joint meetings, trainings, and programs between the three Centers before CUDLI. However, CUDLI was becoming part of the larger work of the Campus Community Centers, beyond the three Directors. This growth implied and enacted intimacies that were frustrating and painful. Add to that the feelings from the Assistant Directors of having CUDLI

“dumped” on them by the Directors, and the tensions became palpable in joint gatherings of the Campus Community Centers.

Concurrently, the experience of CUDLI created an opportunity for students which were unparalleled in the University. Students went through many experiential activities that caused them to explore their own pain around issues related to power, privilege, and oppression, as well as identity, community and social justice. They had to name the pain of oppression, and at the same time find passion around work that is sustainable beyond a reference of oppression. Throughout the years, naming passion was by far the most difficult thing for the students to accomplish. Naming the experience of oppression and privilege, while difficult, was less challenging than finding a passion to create change.

At the same time, CUDLI positioned the three Campus Community Centers as an organized unit on campus, far different than the experience many individuals had with just one Center or another. UC San Diego has three quarters per academic year, and each quarter the course was taught in the physical space of a different Center. The Institute intentionally moved experiences between the three Centers throughout its time, and showcased the interdependent workings of the three Centers around social justice. Students who completed CUDLI took that concept, that idea of the Campus Community Centers as places of empowerment for social justice, and went on to diverse leadership activities throughout the University community. The resulting “spread” of the idea of community-based, joint work towards a more socially just community, without the identity or oppression based framework, served to bolster the

work of the Campus Community Centers beyond the physical Centers themselves.

The ideas spread into the lives of the undergraduate students in numerous locations of leadership practices (i.e., student government, college programming councils, student organizations, student-initiated outreach and retention activities, etc.)

The debt of gratitude the organization that is the Campus Community Centers owes to the CUDLI experience is immense. Although time-consuming, intense, and at times burdensome, the space created among the professional staff of the Campus Community Centers around dialogue regarding our work, working styles and experiences with identity and community was precious. CUDLI still marks the most extensive collaboration of the three Centers as the organization called the Campus Community Centers.

An end to the interlude.

And so we return to the afternoon, and the story of the future of the Campus Community Centers. By this time the berries are gone, we are all on our second (or third) cups of coffee, and I notice that all three of us have at one moment or another removed our shoes. My colleagues and my friends are in my home, and our conversation is messy, because we provide the space for that, and it really works. Emelyn had just touched upon the idea of students recognizing that their work would not be able to come from a place of marginality as the institution continued to provide resources and space for the Cross-Cultural Center, as well as the other two Centers.

She referenced CUDLI, and I continued her train of thought, “We explore the students’ pain deeply in CUDLI, I mean, I think we go there and to come back out and

we refocus or... I don't know if we refocus, I think that there's enough awareness that's provided to them [regarding oppression]. You know in terms of education, in terms of perspective. I mean, I think how groundbreaking it is to go through 'Diversity Paradigms' (Palmer, 1989)?" For more information on this concept, see the note which follows this story.

I continued in the voice of a student discovering diversity paradigms for the first time, "“What? I can approach this work from a different way? And we might be working together and be fundamentally, seriously, have our world view not in line?” I think that's powerful stuff that pushes against...”

My thoughts are a jumble, crowded on top of each other.

Edwina interrupts me with her own revelations, “And the struggle that I'm hearing a lot of them talk about is, which is our next step in the future, is... it's not real in some ways, because it's sort of a created laboratory at UCSD, where there is this idea that you do have a lot of personal efficacy and power and systems can change. And so if they get all this language, and they get very empowered...” and she pauses for effect, and says slowly, “and then they leave.” Emelyn and I nod in agreement. “And then they're really screwed up for about six months, because they're working in these environments where people don't care about them or they don't even use those words or even conceptualize diversity in those ways.”

It is a reaction we have all heard from our alumni as they have returned to the Centers we direct. The world outside of the college environment is not as intentional around social justice and diversity as the University has been. Students have power in

our system, and often in their final years are flexing that power in ways that truly create change. Then they move into graduate schools or professional positions, and they struggle. The Campus Community Centers provides what Edwina has termed for the first time in our conversation, a laboratory.

“Oh, I really resonate with that,” I say, excited by this new way of describing what we do as Campus Community Centers. “I never thought of us using some of that language or some of that imagery to communicate to folks that this is a learning laboratory. That it is a unique and special environment. That is not replicated many places outside of this. Really,” I say, as if I am begging the student, the university, the society at large to honor the hard work we have done, “please realize that this collaborative work, across difference at the administrative level as well as at the student level, is pretty unique.”

In the next moment Edwina imagines the future of the students who get how our laboratory might prepare them for the future, “They’ll be the trail blazers. I mean, if we go back to what happened at the senior sendoff.” The senior send off was a joint program of the Campus Community Centers where we invited alumni from our Centers back to share their experiences with graduating seniors. Edwina continued, “What were people actually saying to the seniors about what’s going to happen? *‘And how are you going to work? How are you going to follow your passion?’*”

The alumni that we had invited back all had diverse stories, but with a common thread: if you only came from a place of fighting against oppression, continuing to do community-based, social justice work in the broader society is difficult. The fight did

not provide energy. The passion for social justice and change provided energy. To find one's passion is quite difficult, especially among the challenges of living in our society, with its myriad of social issues clamoring for our attention.

Edwina brought our thoughts to a close, her laboratory idea a new metaphor for the work that we do, "I think we're just cultivating the language to be able to share that with people. So that they go out and they can survive in these environments, but still be empowered to change those environments in some fundamental ways...."

Our last time together brought us closer to language that explains the Campus Community Centers. Perhaps it is a laboratory, a place where we try new ways of being in community. The language is evocative of positivistic, quantitative inquiry. White lab coats and Bunsen burners. However, the Campus Community Centers laboratory, like our own disciplined inquiry as graduate students, comes from a qualitative framework. Although elements of quantitative inquiry and assessment inform our work (we all know the numbers of how many constituents use our space and how many programs we present), the qualitative aspects of this ongoing experiment into the Campus Community Centers is rich. We are excited about the language, and about what it may mean for our future. The rest of our conversation is imaginative descriptions of our hopes and dreams for this laboratory at UC San Diego called the Campus Community Centers. By the end, our conversation is simply three friends, discussing our lives. Near the end we try and go back to our topics of the day, but we are exhausted. Over the course of three months we have deepened our collective understanding of who we are through our shared stories, our experiences

with each other, and the challenges that we have navigated. Our final thoughts are around a book we hope to publish, the stories that will capture what we have built for whoever comes after us. The last word on the tape, before I press stop for the final time in Emelyn's enthusiastic, and characteristic, "YAY!!"

CUDLI - an analysis within the conceptual frameworks.

Much of the analysis is contained within the story above, but is disconnected from the literature that undergirds the analysis. Weber (2002) provides a conceptual framework for understanding race, class, sexuality and gender, but does not name the framework. The story above attempts to articulate the Directors lived experiences within a framework that attends to all of these areas simultaneously.

It appears that the directors have attempted to approach the work from this larger conceptual framework, and have provided different names for the collaborative work over time. The phrase Campus Community Centers is the first attempt at naming this collaborative. The work of the Chancellor's Undergraduate Diversity Learning Initiative is another way of naming this work, within the context of the organization. However, whereas Weber (2002) provides the framework for understanding individual and community based movements, the lack of a unifying concept to draw the work together seems to stymie the directors as well. The buzz words of diversity, multiculturalism and social justice are used across too many disciplines and in too many settings to capture the essence of the ground-breaking collaboration between these three Centers. The final concept of a laboratory may be the place where the concepts of working together are refined into a unified theory of

action. This theory would then help shape the understanding of the action already underway at UC San Diego. McDonald (2002) has already utilized the metaphor in the phrase *laboratory for learning* in describing a structure for building community. However, the word laboratory has images associated with it that create psychological baggage, and there may need to be more space created to think through the words and language that best describes what the Campus Community Centers create in coming together.

A note about diversity paradigms.

There is an exercise that has become one of our fundamental training pieces called diversity paradigms (Palmer, 1989). In the exercise, participants complete a short questionnaire that slots them into one of three categories. Each of the three categories has a different take on approaching diversity work. The three directors of the Campus Community Centers approach diversity work from three fundamentally different paradigms. Edwina is our “Value All Differences” person. All differences are important, and in honoring those differences we can come together to make change. Emelyn’s paradigm is “Right the Wrongs.” There has been injustice in our world, and diversity work should challenge society to right the wrongs that have been afflicted on others in order to change the world. I am a “Golden Rule” paradigm person. My framework is guided by the idea that if we just all treated each other the way we wanted to be treated, then the world would change for the better. Rarely have CUDLI participants in this exercise imagined that there could be different ways of approaching diversity and social justice work. And the knowledge of their own

paradigm helps them to understand the complexities of working across identities that is not based in identities, but is based in paradigms for understanding the world. The beauty of the diversity paradigms exercise is that the three directors are all different, and yet our collaborative work shows that these differences make for strength, not weakness in our Campus Community Centers organization.

A Coda to the Stories

In the book *Ethnographic, I*, Ellis (2004) reflects on the difficult process of writing about her auto-ethnographic stories. An excerpt from this work illuminates the journey of this analysis.

“What were you thinking?” he asks after a few bites.

“Whether we should have written the abortion story or not... I am uncomfortable thinking about people reading it. They can’t help but see us as the couple who had an abortion. That’s not how I want our relationship to be viewed. Especially since that’s not the decision we would make now.”

“I know,” he says, quietly, “but we weren’t living now then.” (p. 83)

Reflecting on the sometimes painful revelations of auto-ethnographic research helps me frame my own journey as I reflect on the conversations after the initial stories of analysis have been written. Ellis’s words help me understand the power of this work, as well as the risk involved, as I have a number of powerful conversations with Edwina and Emelyn reflecting on the stories.

The first one was immediately after writing my first story. It was at the beginning of the analysis process, and I had spent about 7 hours writing and refining my first story. But the more I wrote, the more terrified I became. The story was too raw. It exposed too much of Edwina, and too much of my reaction to her. There was no way I would be able to share the story as research, was there? Did it have scholarly value? Was it even worth it to put the words on the page? Did I even have the right/responsibility to share such intimacies of our work, as a researcher? Perhaps it would be better to lead the life of a reflective practitioner, struggling with the daily realities of social justice work in community with my colleagues, but not sharing it with the cruel world of academic peer review? All the questions ran through my mind as I looked alone at the words on the screen. I needed someone else's voice inside my head, not just my own.

I was shaking as I called Edwina, still sitting in front of the computer, staring at what I had written. I prayed that she was home. I couldn't hold on to this story alone. I thought of selecting all the text, and pressing that small, little delete key on my laptop's keyboard, then clicking the save button, quickly erasing all the pain and exposure that the story represented. Pressing delete felt easier than capturing the moment in time that the story did.

The phone rang once, twice. "Please be home," I thought to myself, knowing that all three of us, Edwina, Emelyn, and I, often work on Sunday evening, and sometimes ignore our phone's interrupting call in the midst of our studies.

“Hello, sweetie,” I heard on the other end, as Edwina’s typical, affectionate voice came through and immediately set me at ease. “What’s up?”

My story came in a torrent. I asked her first just to listen, and then to tell me if I should scrap every bit of it. She was silent as I read the story word for word off my screen. And then I finished. There was not even a moment’s hesitation.

“I love it,” she said, and I immediately knew I would be able to get through it all. With the support of Edwina and Emelyn, with their willingness to let our stories be captured in the compelling, powerful way that this hybrid, auto-ethnographic/portraiture method allowed for was a true outpouring and commitment to my own academic research and the strength of our relationships.

However, even that first story started to test the limits of how much of the stories we would be able to share via the research. There was a difficult conversation where the name of the first story changed, as did some of the narrative line, both to make it more powerful, as well as reflect accurately on our shared experience. I was still the primary author of the story, but it was informed by the three participants (myself included) as we considered the emotional, intrapersonal and interpersonal impact the stories would have. We edited out sections of the transcripts, as names, places and contexts became too revealing. Those removals became important to our understanding of ourselves as leaders. As leaders, we have many experiences shared with us by our constituents. These experiences are gifts they have given us. We cannot give away, even in scholarly pursuits.

As happens with three professionals who are also full time graduate students involved in their dissertation research, long periods of time pass in the blink of an eye. I finished the analysis, writing story after story, but not sharing them yet with Edwina and Emelyn. I justified it by saying they were busy too, but on deeper reflection, I knew I was horribly nervous. Although the feedback on the first one had been powerful in the naming, shaping and telling of it, I find it so difficult to hear feedback. I strive for perfection in my writing, even at the first pass, and although I never achieve it, the process of editing and changing always fills me with frustration and anxiety. And so I waited until all of the rest of the stories were completed before sharing them with Edwina and Emelyn.

Edwina finished her reviews first, and she gave me feedback in a couple of sessions. The first went fine, with many of her thoughts around the fine-tuning of the stories that make them more of a shared negotiation of memory as opposed to actual deep critique of the stories themselves and its process. Her hand-written reflections were sometimes hard to decipher, but always helpful and supportive. A deeper critique, however, was on its way.

I had been struggling with a summer cold for a few days. Emelyn was on vacation, and Edwina and I met for our weekly Director's meeting without her. Edwina had come to the LGBT Resource Center, as I was staffing the space on my own for two weeks, as the other two professional staff of the Center were on vacation in early August. It was exhausting to staff the space alone, and I am sure that is what had brought on my summer illness as I hit the middle part of the second week. We

went through business quickly, and then Edwina pulled out the two remaining stories she had reviewed. The first one had only a few minor things, but as she handed the last one to me, I felt the trepidation in her voice.

“I am glad I didn’t read these in order,” she said. It confused me, because there wasn’t really an order to them yet. But she went on, “And I am nervous to tell you this, but as I was reading them last night, there is something you need to stop doing.”

My heart raced. I was sick, it was the second week of two very long weeks without staff, I was tired AND I was doing something wrong in my story analysis? Did I really want to hear it? I contemplated just stopping her, telling her it as too much, that I couldn’t handle it. This methodology, and the strength of character it requires, is beyond my grasp. I’ll just be ABD (all-but-dissertation) and end my academic studies.

Maybe she saw it my eyes. Her tone became gentler. “You need to stop apologizing for being white and male within the context of the stories. As I was reading them last night, I even saw it coming in this last one, and was like ‘Shaun, stop it!’ I think maybe you need to write a separate piece at the beginning of the data analysis and lay this out. Sometimes it feels like it is getting in your way.”

Edwina’s comment was by far the most powerful thing I have heard about the stories. I immediately knew it was true. As I struggled to write and create stories that had impact, which reflected that difficult realities of working together, I had shared my deepest hurt, my most vulnerable places. My guilt and shame around my

whiteness and my maleness as I do this work came through from my reflections on how I came to this work. And I used that emotional place to heighten the tension of the stories, even when the transcripts and original recordings didn't indicate those affective elements. In my early years of the work folks have pointed this guilt out to me. Over the years, I have learned to navigate it, to make the uglier parts of it less obvious, and to work through it so as not to be "that guy" who takes up space with his own white, male guilt. However, the reflective nature of the stories had caused me to go back in time to emotional things through which I have worked. And because they are so intimate, they also reveal the realities that I still struggle with inside of me, although in a more refined way. I knew I had to write another, reflexive piece as Edwina suggested. It was about my own development, and it is now positioned in front of the stories, *A Journey to Identity*, explaining my own journey. Without Edwina's comments, and my subsequent rewrites and reflections, I certainly would have been "that guy."

Returning to the moment, Edwina and I go back and forth, as she explains how it is interwoven in the story at hand. I see it clearly, and know there will be some edits. The stories need to reflect not just my perspective, but the perspective of the two colleagues that are involved. How they experience me and my navigation of who I am will refine the stories to a closer portrait of the shared journey. Our conversation ends with a smile, a hug and a deep gratitude born out of mutual respect.

Emelyn's reflections come after Edwina's, and they came over e-mail. Because she had the stories for a number of weeks, I hadn't had a chance to go back

and edit all of them in light of Edwina's comments. I was already in the middle of a two week break from work, taking time off to write and think and edit the stories. Emelyn's written observations certainly reflected Edwina's comments on my emotional positioning within the context of the stories. After reading all of her comments, we e-mailed to each other to set up a phone date to talk about overall reflections.

Buzz... buzz... My phone usually is on vibrate in my pocket, and fumbled to get it out. I had been sitting in front of my laptop since 8 a.m., and it was now 2 p.m. Our phone date had arrived, and given the intensity of my conversation with Edwina, I was a touch apprehensive.

"Hello," Emelyn said, her distinctive cadence to the word immediately putting me at ease. "Hey, how was the picnic?" I asked, and we chatted about the UC San Diego staff picnic, where Emelyn had been a contestant in our own campus-based version of American Idol. Emelyn has sung in the gospel choir at UC San Diego since her undergraduate years, and has an incredible voice. After reconnecting from a week-long absence, we got down to the stories.

"I noticed your comments on the 'How we all started' piece," I began, as it was the same piece Edwina had read last, the piece that truly indulged my guilt in unnecessary ways. Here are some accumulated excerpts of what Emelyn wrote:

Are these comments positioning us in hierarchies of oppression? In what ways, is this also part of social justice work—examining our efforts to "do diversity" and doing it in a critical (disciplined) way? A lot of the elements of this story are really

important to understanding how we got to where we are. In some places it also feels like a long apology, and I wonder if it is more appropriate to summarize some of it, rather than go into long justifications.

“Yeah, did that make sense?” she responded. “It does make sense, it totally does, and it matches almost exactly some of the feedback Edwina gave me,” I say, and we go on to discuss how all of the stories have not only a deep autobiographical element, but also a particular insight into the three of us. The stories, as they are written and captured seem to become the truth, the one truth, the only true history, the singular reality of the Campus Community Centers. That is the danger of portraiture, and its strongest critique. It returns to a positivistic framework. Regardless, the process excites both of us, because the collective stories do represent our memories, some long forgotten, as well as reveal insights into how our shared experiences shaped the organization. At the same time the defining nature of writing down the stories makes them stuck in time.

“Maybe you should examine your own feelings in a journal entry or something,” Emelyn suggests, as we again visit my own expressions of guilt within the context of one particular story. It is good advice, as I had already written one new reflexive piece. Her comment encouraged me to write another. We end our conversation with a shared dread of the next few months. We are both nearing the end of our graduate studies, and there is still much for both of us to do. However, we can rely on each other for many, many things, and we know we will be able to get through it together.

Analysis of the coda.

These stories are captured moments. They are reflective of a space and time of relationships. The scariest part of capturing the stories is that they then stop the story for the reader. Readers of the story do not see the continued relationship, the ongoing growth and change of the three Directors and of the Campus Community Centers for which they have responsibility. Once the stories are on paper, the reader can ruminate, can analyze, can discuss and can dissect them as if the stories are finished. But they are not. The stories reflect the relationships. As long as the relationships remain active, vibrant and strong, the stories will change. Old things will be forgotten; new experiences will define connections and intimacies. But these stories are now written down. What they mean now goes beyond us, as they are read by those separate from us.

As Ellis (2004) writes, “I am uncomfortable thinking about people reading it [her story]... That’s not how I want our relationship to be viewed... We weren’t living now then” (p. 83). But the *then* is when the stories were written, and reflect the experiences at that time.

I feel the same way. I am uncomfortable thinking about people reading these stories. About what they reflect in terms of me, and who I am. And for what they mean in terms of Edwina, Emelyn, and the other staff of the Campus Community Centers, as well as those who frequent our space and have our best interests at heart. I do not want to hurt them, or the trust they place in us as Directors. Would anyone want us to present our stories in this way? Am I doing the right thing?

The stories that are written are not the only way I want our relationships to be viewed. The relationships are too dynamic, too mercurial in the context of the issues with which we struggle, to be captured in this way. But they are captured. They are written down. When finished, they will be finished, at least in this form. Yet our relationships will continue.

In *Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* (Weber, 2001) discusses the nature of stories, of histories captured by researchers, by media and through oral traditions. All of the stories have more to them. As they address issues related to social identities, they inherently can be analyzed over and over again within Weber's framework, questioning and critiquing in an examination aimed to illuminate what is obscure and highlight what is understated. This rigorous review will reveal more shades of meaning, and pose more questions than this research can answer.

Hopefully, however, these stories represent a beginning of an engaging dialogue between practitioners in the field of social justice work. Our vulnerability through sharing stories of connections serves as a potential template for collaboration and connections. Developing a more coherent community of practice (Wenger, 1998) will strengthen all who are committed to this line of work. Additionally, others who may be interested in this field can learn from the stories shared here. Academics who are not practitioners in this field can and should critique this researcher's methodologies, analysis and conclusions. In the spirit of growth, learning and

development, these critiques will help us to refine our practice, to think critically about our work, and build community in the discussions brought forth from the critique.

Themes of the Analysis: Trust, Dialogue and Learning

If the stories above collectively paint a portrait of the Campus Community Centers, it is hoped to be a full and rich portrait, like the artistry of the famed Renaissance masters. However, a more abstract portrait, more akin to Picasso's brevity, can also be drawn by stripping away the richness and complexity that portraiture provides. Via a more traditional thematic analysis, the portrait becomes more abstract, and perhaps more digestible. With three broad strokes, the portrait of the Campus Community Centers can be manifested in themes. The themes help to answer more succinctly the research questions embedded within the explanation below.

Throughout the analysis of each story, trust, dialogue and learning emerged from the collective stories. Each theme will be highlighted as it is drawn from the elements of the stories. The thematic analysis below is not presented in a hierarchical order, nor should be construed to imply linear development.

Trust.

In the story *In the beginning*, the case of early relationships is presented. Trust grew out of primarily personal interactions, not business interactions. These interactions were connected to the workplace, but outside of the work environment or work circumstances. The two examples highlighted, trust around finding space of comfort on September 11th, and trust in living with someone while transitioning to a

new position, highlight how the trust is built around the work, but not in the context of the work. As I indicated to Emelyn in my retelling of September 11th, “I remembered you, distinctly you, and remember being with you at that time, at that point.” Yes, the reactions to September 11th were in the work place, and the folding of newsletters was technically work circumstances, but the emotional space provided through the simple interactions laid the groundwork for the trust. It created a distinct powerful emotional memory of connection and trust. Time and space for trust-building is one of a number of phases that mark the development of the Campus Community Centers organization. Trust is also highlighted *We know this*, as the directors create space with each other to talk about the interactions of constituents within the space. Although intimately tied to the theme of learning and dialogue, the trust in this situation predicated the dialogues, especially in consideration of the issues of identity. Edwina’s utterance “We know this” not only named the story, but also exemplifies the trust. The “we” is the three directors. What we “know” indicates our trusting dialogue about the issues. The “this” is how knowledge of how we are treated differently. Together the phrase “We know this” captures the three themes, trust, dialogue and learning.

However, the epitome of the theme trust is, not surprisingly, captured in the story *Trust*. The emotional space created between the three directors, which allows for anger, frustration and hurt, requires trust. This trust is so intense that the institutional barrier in place (the unequal distribution of resources) becomes surmountable. A simplistic analysis could conclude that the unequal distribution of resources is the largest, single-most barrier to the working relationships of the Directors. However, as

the history of the Campus Community Centers shows, although this inequality has been present since the beginning, it has neither stopped nor dismantled the Campus Community Centers organization. Edwina says at one point “and I think that you all have to trust me more than maybe I have to trust you,” to which there is an immediate refute from the other Directors. The trust has to go in all ways at all times. Although unequal resources may appear to be a barrier, it is not. A decrease in the trust between the Directors would be a real barrier to the success of the Campus Community Centers organization.

How the Campus Community Centers Were Named extends the circle of trust beyond the Directors to the professional staff that also work at the Centers. The Directors shared their own short-comings, and subsequently had their own philosophical statement about Campus Community Centers challenged and ultimately changed. This expanding circle of trust is also highlighted in *CUDLI*, as the Assistant Directors began to develop trust via the Institute that was thrust upon them by the Directors.

Learning.

Learning is articulated in *In the beginning* through the practice and identity related elements of the daily work. Because much of the work of the three Centers is grounded in identity and community, there is a process of continued learning that informs the practice and the relationships with each other. Without a shared commitment to this ongoing learning, neither the establishment nor sustenance of the Campus Community Centers would be possible. *Three journeys to the work position*

learning about each other as so common as to be the first elements of our coming together. Although not even formally asked, the first interactions on this research journey become learning opportunities as we reflected and shared the paths that have brought us to this point in our social justice journey. Edwina's natural curiosity, "Shaun, what was your master's in and how does that relate?" reflects on ongoing learning between each other.

She's not gay highlights learning about all oppressions (not just the identities where we experience oppression), and the comfort and discomfort required in order to learn and to grow. *How the Campus Community Centers Were Named* calls for a space of learning in multiple ways. The setting of a retreat, where the gift of time is granted to the staff that do not have the privilege of negotiating their own schedules, speaks to spaces of learning.

CUDLI epitomized the learning theme. Two major elements of the story speak to learning. The first is the Directors ongoing dialogue to name the work space, with the final descriptor being that we have "created a laboratory at UCSD." That laboratory is by definition a space of experimentation and, therefore, learning. The second is the learning that occurred within the context of the Directors creating and teaching CUDLI. That learning brought the Directors to the place that Emelyn succinctly described, "I think that's a key piece to our sustainability, is to cultivate those students that, much like the Chancellor's Undergraduate Diversity Learning Initiative (CUDLI) students, who have a different understanding of social justice and activism that really does come from a place of social justice, and not from a place of

marginality.” The fact that the three Directors have a shared understanding of the need for this characterization of the work underscores the learning that has happened between the Directors.

Dialogue.

All of the stories present the literary element of dialogue. Dialogue as a theme is built the notion of the interactions necessary to do the work. However, as Edwina indicates in *In the Beginning* “you are some of the closest people I know...” Her comment is reflective of the degree of dialogue we have had to establish the trusting relationships. In *Three Journey's to the Work*, the dialogue is more intense, and explores the intensity that can come with reflecting on identity development and growth.

In *We Know This* we acknowledge that the Directors “have had some really hard conversations.” The dialogue necessary to navigate the complexities of community and identity is something we do not tell our constituents very often. However, the dialogue theme is so pervasive within this story that it appears to be a precursor to any kind of collaborative success. Dialogue appears to be a requirement for any shared accomplishments.

Trust provides space for the powerful and necessary phrase “fuck you.” First articulated by Emelyn, the phrase communicates a visceral reaction to the difficult dialogues that happen between the three Directors. Allen and Cherrey (2000) provide a framework for systemic leadership that assumes a networked era where dialogue happens across multiple levels and boundaries to transfer not just information, but

emotional content. This emotional content can be amplified with phrases like “fuck you.” At the same time it can be channeled through powerful dialogues where learning and growth occur.

Both *How the Campus Community Centers were Named* and *CUDLI* provide further examples of dialogue. In *How the Campus Community Centers were Named* we see the dialogue among the entire professional staff in a retreat. The power of that dialogue transforms as statement created out of a hierarchical world view into one that more clearly reflects the networked world. It also creates space for a statement that embodies the ideals of the entire system, not just the top (i.e., the Directors) of the system. That statement represents significant learning from all of the players in the system. In *CUDLI* we hear “I think that we are just beginning to cultivate the language to be able to share that with people.” That cultivation indicates an ongoing dialogue between the Directors regarding their work and the learning that has come from it. It represents the need for continuing dialogue to further understand and share the work of social justice.

The three themes of trust, dialogue and learning emerged from the collective stories. The relationships are informed by the communities and identities of the Directors. Figure 3 graphically represents the construct. Taken together, the themes cannot be separated, for they appear to rely on each other in order to function. The themes are elemental within the relationship, but they come together as a compound, like sugar. Sugar (sucrose) is a compound of the elements oxygen, hydrogen and carbon. Separately, each element is important to life, but put together in a particular

way and given enough time, they become much more than what they were, and something all together new happens. The compound becomes sweet. Even the process of analysis separates them in ways that characterize them as elements. In removing themes from the reality of the stories of the Directors, they lose their compound sweetness (the stories). However, there is something to be gained in the themes separated. In doing so it names key elements which compound into an organic organization called the Campus Community Centers. Other may be able to combine these themes and given enough time, produce something similarly sweet.

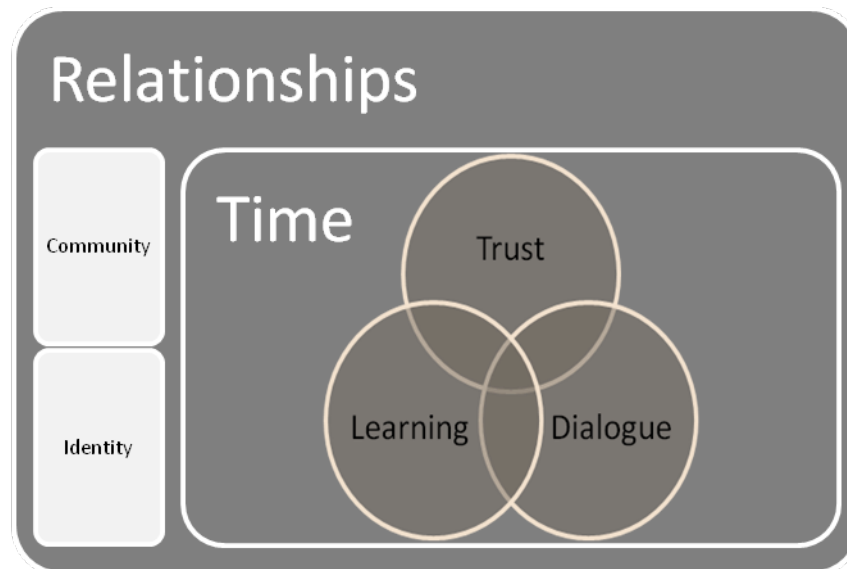


Figure 3. The elemental compound of the Campus Community Center Directors. The relationships are informed by each director's community and identity. Learning flows in and out of dialogue. Dialogue is grounded in trusting relationships. Trust enhances learning through dialogue.

The relationships of the three Campus Community Centers are informed by both identity and community. Within that informative structure, time functions as a

variable. Although not a variable in quantitative sense, time as a qualitative variable indicates a temporal passage that prerequisites any trust, learning and dialogue around identity and/or community. As Wenger (1998) states “The development of practice takes time, but what defines a community of practice in its temporal dimension is not just a matter of a specific minimum amount of time. Rather, it is a matter of sustaining enough mutual engagement in pursuing an enterprise together to share some significant learning” (p. 86). Although there were immediate connections from the time the three Directors were employed by UC San Diego, the variable time has and will continue to affect dialogue, trust and learning. Wenger’s concept of mutual engagement translates into the finding of dialogue, and learning is named within the context of time above. Trust is not discussed by Wenger. However, other authors have empirically examined trust, dialogue and learning. Chapter V continues the discussion of these three major findings in relations to the current study and other research.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the intersection of the Centers on college campuses that support traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities. It explored how Campus Community Centers’ Directors interact through the stories of the relationships of the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. Three research questions drove the analysis: What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego? What do the stories of these relationships illustrate in terms of working

together around identity and community? What barriers exist that challenge these relationships?

An organizational portrait of the Campus Community Centers was presented as an answer to the research questions. The portrait was informed by an autoethnographic perspective of the researcher. On analysis via the portrait, the stories were connected back to the conceptual frameworks that guided the study. Each story was a whole, with an analysis after each. A second analysis revealed elemental themes, trust, dialogue and learning, which also tied to the conceptual frameworks.

In Chapter V, the study is summarized, with an overview of the methodology and findings. The findings are connected back to the literature. Some surprises are highlighted. Conclusions are drawn, implications for practice are articulated via phases of development, and recommendations for further research are reviewed.

Chapter V

Introduction

Campus Community Centers are uniquely positioned on college campuses to support all students equitably, especially students from marginalized and underrepresented communities. This study explored the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of the University of California, San Diego. The stories of these relationships painted a portrait in terms of working together around identity and community. Over time, trust, dialogue and learning overcome the barriers which challenge these relationships.

Summary of the Study

This study explored the stories of the Directors of UC San Diego Women's Center, LGBT Resource Center and Cross-Cultural Center. These Campus Community Centers function as a community of practice, addressing systems of power relating to privilege and oppression through systemic leadership. Three participants shared stories of identity, connection and community over the course of three months. Shaun, Edwina and Emelyn's vulnerability and honesty provided rich, intriguing stories. The study did not utilize pseudonyms for the participants. We know who Edwina, Emelyn and Shaun are and where they work. With informed consent, the study allowed for particular insight into one campus's experience. The analysis was multifaceted, including the creation of stories, as well as traditional thematic analysis. Learning, dialogue and trust emerged as the major themes, with time as an important variable.

Overview of the Problem

Colleges and universities across the nation have established Centers to serve marginalized and underrepresented students (Davie, 2002; Hord, 2005; Kasper, 2004; LGBT Consortium, 2006; Ritchie & Banning, 2001; Sanlo, 2000; Stennis-Williams, Terrell, & Haynes, 1998). These Centers, collectively termed Campus Community Centers, play a powerful role in shaping identity and community on campus. However, no scholarly research or practical writings on collaborations across these centers exist. On many campuses, identity-based politics serves to separate and further disenfranchise community members from underrepresented and unrecognized groups. Leaders of campus community centers work at the nexus point of these identity politics. Individual leaders' negotiations of these complex identity politics shape and determine the direction of entire organizations and communities. Center directors play a unique role, simultaneously administrators and community leaders within identity groups. As such, directors inhabit unique positions to frame a campus's overall orientation towards diversity initiatives. Prior to this study, no shared stories of struggle, collaboration or collective experience were available.

Purpose statement and research questions.

The purpose of this study was to understand UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers. Three research questions drove the study. What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego? What do the stories of these relationships illustrate in terms of working

together around identity and community? What barriers exist that challenge these relationships?

Review of the methodology.

The study utilized a unique methodology: autoethnographic portraiture (Ellis, 2004; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann Davis, 1997). It provided a powerful ability to answer the research questions. The study occurred in the spring of 2008. Over the course of three months, the Directors of UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers came together six times to share stories and experiences. The conversations were recorded and transcribed, and from the transcriptions stories were created. The stories had high degrees of transgressive validities (Lather, 1993), with the participants addressing their credibility and authenticity via multiple reviews. Each story was refined to provide the highest degree of resonance with the participants involved. The role of the researcher was both as participant and observer; a portraitist jointly painting the organization called the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers with the participants. This autoethnographic role allowed for unique, emotional insight into the Directors' experiences.

Major Findings

The study found that the relationships among these professionals were mitigated by their identities and communities. Over time *trust*, *dialogue* and *learning* served as a basis for successful collaboration between the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. *Trust*, *dialogue* and *learning* complemented both identity and community. However, the structures and circumstances at UC San Diego

are unique to the time and place explored. These stories cannot be replicated, nor can the distinctive experiences of the Directors relationship together be mimicked.

There is a paucity of literature related to Campus Community Centers. Limited research regarding Women's Centers (Byrne, 2000; Davie, 2002; Kasper, 2004), Cross-Cultural Centers (Bankole, 2005; Hefner, 2002; Hord, 2005; Princes, 1994; Stennis-Williams, Terrell, & Haynes, 1998) and LGBT Centers (D'Augelli, 1989; Ritchie & Banning, 2001; Sanlo, 2000; Sanlo, Rankin & Schoenberg, 2002) exists. Writing from the perspective of three Centers working together as an organized unit breaks new ground. These findings provide a scholarly basis to begin a dialogue in the respective fields of each Center.

Where, then do we go for guidance on these type of collaborations? The theoretical frameworks that guided this study create order to the experiences of professionals doing this type of work. The frameworks build a body of literature on which professionals rely. Systemic leadership (Allen & Cherrey, 2000) offers a nuanced way of navigating the complexities of a changing world. This navigation was particularly grounded in the experiences of Student Affairs professionals. It grew from original scholarship in the world of business. Argyris (1993) theories of organizational culture, specifically double-loop learning, call professionals to change systems, and Senge's (2006) systems thinking present a systemic orientation to organizational learning, which provides the bridge from the individual to the organization. However, these three theories all grounded themselves in individual

learning, which lead to organizational learning. After all, organizations are made up of individuals.

However, organizations also are made up of individuals in communities. Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice began to pull away from the individualistic model of change to a focus on how people learn socially. Meaning and identity are derived from these communities of practice. This, in and of itself, could have framed the study. The examination of the Campus Community Centers Director's as solely a community of practice may have been a simpler way of understanding the organizational as a whole. However, given the diversity of the three Centers, another frame was necessary.

Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell (2003) articulated a model of cultural proficiency to respond to environments shaped by diversity, as opposed to explain what diversity is or how to learn about new cultures. The Campus Community Centers are fundamentally shaped by diversity. The cultural proficiency continuum, the five elements and the three barriers described by Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell assisted in seeing the world from a privileged perspective. The acknowledgment of that privilege then prepares individuals and organizations for a further step.

Race, class, gender and sexuality deeply inform the experiences of the Directors. Weber's (2001) framework regarding these social systems offered a complex tool of analysis for their stories. Five themes permeate race, class, gender and sexuality. (1) Stories are historically and geographically/globally contextual; (2) race, class, gender and sexuality are socially constructed; (3) power relationships

function within race, class, gender and sexuality; (4) macro/social structure and micro/social psychological levels are at play; (5) and race, class, gender and sexuality are expressed simultaneously. This framework, too, fell short of the necessary depth to theoretically frame the entire study, as the study was grounded in practice, not theory.

The four conceptual frameworks combined certainly informed the analysis, but I am still left with the question of what it all means. These conceptual frameworks are theoretical in nature. The practicality of the study precludes theoretical works from rendering legibility for what the study means for practice. In other words, the four conceptual frameworks were simply not enough. Therefore, after completing the study, I went back to the literature, again examining databases for empirical works that paralleled the themes: dialogue, trust, and learning. The study of Multicultural Program Organizations by Longerbeam, et al (2005), referenced in the opening paragraphs of this work, came up again and gave me pause.

Longerbeam's, et al (2005) results provide a powerful counterpart to my own themes. Within Multicultural Program Organizations (an umbrella term similar to the concept of campus community centers defined here) Longerbeam found (1) a reluctance to acknowledge prejudice, (2) limits on socializing outside of work, and (3) disempowerment of support and student staff. The current study found that dialogue, learning and trust characterized the nature of the relationships of the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. Interestingly, these three themes grew out of acknowledging the power, privilege and oppression that each of the Directors feel. This is in contrast to Longerbeam's reluctance to acknowledge prejudice.

Additionally, the time socializing outside of work seemed significant, not in terms of quantity of time, but quality. The Directors are friends. Edwina even remarks “You are probably some of the closest people that I know in San Diego.” Contrast this to Longerbeam’s limits on socializing outside of work. The final finding of Longerbeam is particularly troubling. The disempowerment of support and student staff certainly seemed to parallel some of the experiences that the Assistant Directors had in having CUDLI “dumped” on them. The positional privilege of the Directors, with an ability to control schedules, space and work load provides a baseline empowerment in the workplace. Is the empowerment of the Directors, through positional privilege, a unique feature of UC San Diego’s structure that provides the necessary space to sustain learning, dialogue and trust over time? Future comparable explorations may uncover answers to this question.

However, how have others explored these findings of learning, dialogue and trust? Trust is beginning to be understood empirically in a number of ways. A three year study (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) in Chicago schools found that social relationships, which the authors termed relational trust, were key to the academic achievement of all students. A review of the study’s framework for understanding relational trust reveals a powerful observation. “Relational trust thus is not something that can be achieved simply through some workshop, retreat, or form of sensitivity training, although all of these can be helpful. Rather relational trust is forged in daily social exchanges.” (p. 136). This powerful observation speaks to the three findings of dialogue, trust and learning. If daily social exchanges can be described in terms of

dialogue, and if learning can be assumed to stem from these dialogues, then their importance and interconnectedness to trust are indeed deeply embedded.

Additionally, the variable of time is considered. That is, the daily nature of the interactions is indicative of the time required to develop trust.

Building on Bryk and Schneider's (2002) work on trust, Daly and Chrispeels (2008) recently examined trust as it relates to leadership. Three aspects of trust: respect, risk, and competence were significant predictors of adaptive and technical leadership. Adaptive and technical leadership can be understood as similar constructs to Argyris's (1993) single loop and double loop learning. Technical leadership is similar to single-loop learning, "concerned with applying 'fixes' to problems that exist within a system, with the solutions bounded by existing paradigms" (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008, p. 32). Adaptive leadership is akin to double-loop learning, "creating the conditions for individuals to confront existing values and norms" (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008, p. 33). Trust within the context of leadership is a predictor for both types of leadership above.

The three aspects of trust are particularly powerful in light of the current study. For example, respect "reflect[s] genuine listening and recognizing the important role each plays in a system" (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008, p. 51). Edwina, Shaun and Emelyn's journey through the development of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers consistently honored each leader's role in the creation of the organization (system). In the story *Trust*, Shaun says "the trust levels are different around different issues, because if you didn't think I was doing my own work at the LGBT Resource

Center fundamentally around feminism, fundamentally around issues around race and social justice, could you really be engaged with me? Or would you be like ‘He don't get it.’” The Directors of the Campus Community Centers understand the role both identity and community plays within trust, especially given the systems of power in place. The respect, as a construct of trust, is high. Respect is especially high, knowing that each Director is doing their own work around privileged and oppressed communities in their respective Centers, and within their own identities.

Daly and Chrispeels (2008) described risk as “the degree of confidence in being, and allowing others to be vulnerable” (p. 51). Risk is another construct of trust determined to be significant predictors of technical and adaptive leadership. This study required significant vulnerability. As apparent via the stories and indicated by the level of consent of the participants (i.e., no pseudonyms) the level of risk between the three Directors is also high. The final construct within trust, competence, relates to “holding high expectations and using a level of skill in executing role responsibilities” (p. 51). Each Director has responsibilities for their own centers and constituencies. Given the trajectory of the three Centers, as indicated by new spaces, expanding budgets and increased staff in the last five years, competence from each can be assumed. This competence, as well as the risk and respect, allows for trust that precursors the powerful leadership of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. This study supports the findings of Daly and Chrispeels (2008) and furthers the scholarship beyond K-12 environments and into leadership in higher education’s social justice centers.

Learning was also a major theme. Kumashiro's (2000) study on anti-oppressive education presented learning as a "discomforting process" (p. 7). Contrasting learning with repetition, learning is positioned as evolving from crisis. Reflecting on the present study, two stories help illustrate clearly this crisis discomfort: *We Know This* and *She's Not Gay*. In *She's Not Gay* Edwina struggles with her own understanding of homophobia and heterosexism. The discomfort felt by all three participants moves the group towards a place of deep learning around difference. In *We Know This* there is deep discomfort around the pain that is evoked in dealing with issues related to social justice. Difficult conversation about racism, sexism and homophobia are not uncommon.

Even more so, there is an investigation of how spaces committed to ending sexism may be racist and homophobic; how spaces committed to ending homophobia may be sexist and racist; and how spaces committed to ending racism may be sexist and homophobic. These dialogues lead to a rational crisis of identity (Kumashiro, 2000). How can leaders in higher education's social justice centers rationally understand the systematic use of power and oppression, and the corresponding privileges, while retaining a willful ignorance of how these systems are used to separate the spaces, individuals and communities on most college campuses? In other words, how can we deal with what we know, knowing the discomfort it will cause as we confront this knowledge? How do we tell the stories we do not tell very often? Especially to other leaders in higher education's social justice centers? The third theme helps answer these questions.

Dialogue emerged as another major finding. In Shields (2004) study regarding dialogic leadership, the author positioned moral dialogue as the centerpiece of transformative education. Grounded in the experiences of K-12 educators, Shields calls educators to challenge the status quo by acknowledging the centrality of relationships. Once the focus in education becomes relationships (see Roper, 2002), then facilitating dialogues becomes the tool to transformative leadership. Absent dialogue, silence abounds. Shields (2004) then terms these spaces the pathologies of silence. These pathologies are the opposite condition of dialogue.

[Pathologies of silence] are misguided attempts to act justly, to display empathy, and to create democratic and optimistic educational communities. Educators often find it difficult to acknowledge difference, in part, I think, because we have not learned to distinguish between recognizing difference in legitimate ways and using a single characteristic or factor as a way of labeling and consequently of essentializing others. Sometimes we are afraid of being politically incorrect or of offending those with whom we hope to enter into a relationship. (p. 117)

The current study found that dialogue was a key element to navigating relationships in the context of community and identity. The essentialism that Shields references above is intrinsic in the naming of each of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. That naming is not unique to UC San Diego, but extends throughout institutions of higher education as a necessary structure to communicate constituent-based organizations. This study found that the UC San Diego leaders who

direct the LGBT Center, Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Center utilize dialogue with their counterparts to overcome the essentialistic tendencies which sustain pathologic silences. In the context of relationship, these dialogues are informed by community and identity, but need not be overwhelmed by them. In other words, the interconnections of dialogue, trust and learning concurrently protect against the fear of being politically incorrect in the context of the relationship.

Shields (2004) described the steps to ensure a socially just school that may translate into the structure of campus community center leaders. The first task is to develop a guiding framework. The section on implications for practice discussed later may be starting place for this framework. At UC San Diego, the framework evolved organically out of the directors' relationship and in response to the campus structures and the three Centers' constituents. However, savvy supervisors can propose guiding frameworks which honor identity and community. Shields proposed that the framework should provide specific markers to examine practice. UC San Diego's leadership practices were examined most intensely during the development and implementation of CUDLI, with the primary marker being continued *learning* regarding practice. However, more structured examination, utilizing a guiding framework as suggested by Shields, could lead to similar outcomes. Shields acknowledged that everyone involved has to take responsibility for the framework and the examination of practice for these dialogues to be powerful. Implications for the dialogues power across social justice organizations include the ability to frame the work, measure the effect and sustain the relationships. Overall, the current study

resonated with Shields' study, further bolstering Shields' theoretical construct of dialogic leadership with empirical evidence. The potential for further studies abound. However, the implications for this study are still to come. The research questions provide the answer to what this study means.

Conclusions – The Research Questions Revisited

Table 2 summarizes the research questions and conclusions. The first research question asked *What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego?* Through the findings, this study determined that the Directors' relationships are trusting, are built on and sustained through dialogue, and are in a perpetual state of learning. The complex nature of these relationships reflects the Directors time spent investing in the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. This speaks to the need for strong commitment to long-term relationships in this type of work, and to the complexity that the portrait created.

The second research question asked *What do the stories of the Directors relationships illustrate in terms of working together around identity and community?* Based on the findings, this study determined that trust, learning and dialogue interact simultaneously over time, informing identity and community relationships. Within many of the stories, and for many of the examples, one of the themes could not operate without the other two. For example, trust is often built thorough dialogue which promotes learning. Community and identity are intertwined in and among the relationships characterized by learning, dialogue and trust. The symbiotic nature of the three themes problematizes the linear expectations of a developing relationship and

a growing organization. Time as a variable does not presuppose a clockwork following of the hours. In other words, dialogue did not lead to learning which then led to trust, nor did learning serve as a precursor to trust which led to intense dialogue. Learning flows in and out of dialogue. Dialogue is grounded in trusting relationships. Our stories illustrate a complex, symbiotic relationship between the elements of trust, learning and dialogue that informs our own identities and communities. Time is important to all three, but each shows up over time in different ways, one not precursory to another.

The third research question inquired into *What barriers exist that challenge these relationships?* Unequal resources exist as an institutional barrier. However, the continued collaboration of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers in light of this barrier debunks its separative capacity. Utilizing Lindsey, Nuri Robins and Terrell's (2003) understanding of barriers, it appears that the overall university has *an unawareness of the need to adapt* to the changing demographics of college students, especially from marginalized and underrepresented communities. In other words, the barrier in place is the institution's investment of diversity work as a function of only these three Centers, as opposed to a campus-wide work in partnership with these three Centers.

This study determined that silence, doubt and willful ignorance challenge the work of the Directors of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. These barriers work in resonance to strengthen existing fears of collaboration. The elemental themes of the stories, trust, learning and dialogue symbiotically remove barriers.

Silence is overcome by dialogue. Trust and learning occur. Learning challenges willful ignorance and the context of trust and dialogue create space for true learning. Learning rarely happens without trust and dialogue. The necessary dialogue for collaborative work rarely happens without trust, which leads to learning. The stories did little to simplify the interactions of the themes. The stories made them more complex. The barriers were not present, but are ascertained through an examination of the themes.

Table 2. Research Questions and Conclusions

Research question	Conclusion
What is the nature of the relationships between the Directors of the Campus Community Centers of UC San Diego?	Are trusting, are built on and sustained through dialogue, and are in a perpetual state of learning. Time is a variable.
What do the stories of the Directors relationships illustrate in terms of working together around identity and community?	Stories illustrate a complex, symbiotic relationship between the elements of trust, learning and dialogue that informs our own identities and communities. Time is important to all three, but each shows up over time in different ways, one not precursory to another.
What barriers exist that challenge these relationships?	Silence, doubt and willful ignorance. Overall the university is not aware of the need to adapt to diversity.

Surprises

I surprised myself about how much I wanted to present the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers way of doing things as the *right* way to do things. I continually felt pride in the organization that I have been a part of creating. I also felt pride in the deep, interpersonal relationships I have with the other two Campus

Community Center Directors. I found myself struggling to not end every story on a happy note. I struggled to find the reality of the stories, not the cover story that we tell other people. The more that we shared, and certainly as I write, I was troubled by how scared I was to record these stories.

You, the reader, were often on my mind as I analyzed the data, found the stories within the transcripts, and re-storied these transcripts into the narratives that became the portrait of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers. Will you like what you read? Will you think of this as a relevant piece to your own life and relationships? Can it influence the students who frequent these Centers? Will it be relevant to K-12 educators and administrators? Would a stereotypical middle manager in corporate America find any value in reading these stories and understanding this organization called the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers?

The more I questioned how this work may be perceived, the more I recognized the intrapersonal nature of the writing process. At the end of the writing, I realized I was painting the portrait for myself. This is something I want to hang on my wall in my home. Others may appreciate its value, may learn and grow from its colors and textures, and may find their own truth layered in it. However, the autoethnographic portrait of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers is, more than anything, a documentation of my own journey in its co-creation. Edwina and Emelyn deeply informed the journey, but their own portraits would be different. This study was conducted for me, and it has been a very successful study, because I have grown tremendously in its development.

At the same time, I have hope that this study, this portrait hangs not only on my wall, but the wall of those similarly situated in higher education. The easiest links are to my colleagues doing this work. Perhaps the portrait may also hang on the wall of other educators as well. Did I achieve a portrait that meets the demands of the general public, the aesthetic that has as its goal to speak “to broader audiences beyond the academy” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 14)? Well, I doubt my family will read through the whole thing, and they love me dearly. Scholars searching for studies related to social justice, trust, dialogue and learning may stumble upon this dissertation, and cite the abstract or the findings briefly. I doubt it will change the world. However, it certainly changed me, and I am of this world, so perhaps it does matter after all.

Implications for Practice

Blimling (2001) indicated that Student Affairs practice falls into four areas that assist in defining communities of practice. The first communities are created within specific colleges and universities at the office level. In this case, each Center at UC San Diego is a community of practice. At UC San Diego the LGBT Resource Center, Women’s Center and Cross-Cultural Center have collaborated to create the Campus Community Centers, a division level organization.

No subspecialty organization currently exists that captures the essence of the collaborative work of Campus Community Centers. Although professional associations exist for each Center individually (for example the Consortium of Higher Education Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Resource Professionals, the UC

Women's Federation, and the California Council of Cultural Centers in Higher Education) there is no professional organization which addresses the collaborative work of all three.

Within ACPA (one of the two large Student Affairs professional organizations – the other being NASPA) there is a Commission for Social Justice Educators that begins to provide a dialogical space for this work. In terms of professional development opportunities for this kind of work, the closest examples are the bi-annual Multicultural Institute hosted by NASPA or the Tools for Social Justice Conference hosted by ACPA. There is the potential to negotiate the space between the office level and the subspecialty level of Blimling's (2001) communities of practice, to fundamentally create a community of practice associated with the Campus Community Centers. This may come about through the collaborative efforts of existing organizations, or through the development of new organizations.

Campus community centers exist on one campus. The UC San Diego Campus Community Centers are a burgeoning community of practice. Other similarly situated units may begin to see the subspecialty area of *campus community centers* as a community of practice. This recognition may spark a deep conversation at universities to organize around the practice of campus community centers. As a divisional level organization, structures can be put in place to begin collaboration. However, the strategies around trust, learning and dialogue revealed through this study imply a need for a long-term and high level of commitment from the positional leaders involved. How does this trust, learning and dialogue happen? Table 3 presents some strategies.

Table 3. Successful Practices and Possible Strategies

Practice	Strategy
Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Meet regularly (every week) for a significant period of time -Work together on a significant project -Have every full time staff member meet monthly -Have analogues in the work meet to discuss their work regularly (assistant directors all meet, front desk staff all meet)
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop and teach a class on social justice together -Train the students you employ together at least once a year so they understand the connections -Allow room for learning through crisis. Be "politically incorrect" to avoid pathological silences about differences -Train others specifically on the "others" area - e.g. LGBT Director presents trainings on racism
Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop a joint philosophy and/or mission statement -Develop a joint named identity that you choose -Examine your own privileged areas "in front of" your colleagues -Share all of your budget information -Share financial resources beyond traditional co-sponsorships -Establish a joint financial account and decide how to spend money out of it jointly

Many of the strategies listed above have been reinforced throughout the course of the study as ways to practice leadership in higher education's social justice centers. The Directors of UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers utilized the strategies to enhance collaboration. At the beginning of this study, campus community centers were defined as an umbrella term for LGBT Centers, Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Centers collectively. When used, the phrase implies a level of cooperation, coordinated work, and collegiality. It also implies separation within the connectedness. The final story of this study crystallizes the ideas of what the practice of the campus community centers may imply for this kind of relationship: intentional interdependence.

The defense – a concluding story

All candidates for the doctorate of education focus on the practice of education. This practice is what makes the doctorate applied, not philosophical. The culminating event for the doctorate is the dissertation defense. This test is a scholarly dialogue among experienced peers reflecting on the initial research works of a novice.

It is mid-winter in San Diego County and the weather has held for a number of days, although in Southern California you can never trust February. Periods of warmth and blue skies are interspersed with days of rain and chill. The day of my dissertation is indeterminate, like the outcome of the defense itself. It looks like rain, but there is sun shining. The forecast: a 50% chance of rain. It either will or it will not. How appropriate for a day where the outcome is all or nothing.

Edwina, Emelyn and I carpool together to Cal State San Marcos where my defense is held. We have made the trip many times on Saturdays for classes and although we leave from UC San Diego's campus, we still take our old route through Mira Mesa on the 15, avoiding the quicker, less familiar route up the 5.

We arrive and enter a beautiful new building. The room where my defense will happen is part of an ambitious campus, being built with all the latest gadgets and gizmos to enhance the technological quality of education. My defense will be captured on video, on audio, and will be edited with an embedded copy of my presentation and written dissertation. The final product will be an on-demand, multi-media teaching and learning tool for future doctoral students. The setting is ripe for technological mishap, but my presentation flows, as I am practiced at the art of performance. I am comfortable onstage where I am in control of what is happening. For this process, the more terrifying part is when I step off that stage, when the defense becomes the liminal moments between that of a student and that of a peer. After I finish my rehearsed remarks, I sit exposed in my chair. In front of me, behind a tiered wooden desk are my judges, my faculty, the powerful members of my committee. They have read my work, have given me feedback before, but this is the penultimate point in my career as a student. The weight of the moments fills me with excitement and dread.

The defense begins with a gentle nudging of my thoughts around how my work may have implications for practice. What if others engaged in this work are not friends, like Edwina, Emelyn and me? What models have I given, what templates

have I created that others may follow? Another comment rides on the coattails of those thoughts, pushing my thinking around my own vulnerability in my stories. The faculty is clear that they want more. They want the leaders of the campus community centers even more raw, even more naked, revealed in the moments of anger, pain and hurt, displayed for others to dissect and understand, so that they, too, may learn from our work. It is asking us to reveal even more discomfort. I struggle to understand, to comprehend, that they can be asking for more when we, when I, have given so much in this process. We have left our wounds exposed already, our anger and doubts tied to written words that do not disappear even as we shift away from those emotions towards collaborative action. I know I cannot ask for more from my colleagues. The dissertation is done, and except for a few minor edits, I know that I will not revisit the bulk of my work. But still, they ask for revisions of Chapter V.

There are ideas, new and fresh, which are revealed through the discourse of the dissertation defense. They deserve to be explored in writing. The more we are engaged in dialogue, the more learning happens. I am aware that I can see both Edwina and Emelyn. They are positioned behind the faculty. They whisper to each other as a committee member elaborates on the ideas of interdependence. Notes are hastily jotted down on found scraps, as I am stumbling through responses to difficult questions of transgressive validity (Lather, 1993), which will later inform a new reading of my methodology. We are engaged in an interdependent web of learning, intentionally formed by the attendees, made possible only by the commitment to making a difference out of the lives that we lead in these moments.

As the defense concludes, a member of my committee, heretofore quiet throughout the process, asks questions around relevance, around what it all means to me, to my colleagues, and to the field of education. I am excited by my answers, as I feel the creation of knowledge, of ideas forming and growing in the context of four peers, no longer three faculty and one student, but equals engaged in a scholarly dialogue. However, my moment is premature. As the final question is answered, I snap back to the process in which I am so deeply imbedded. This is the defense, and I will either pass or fail. I am not yet a peer. On this sunny morning, there is still a chance of rain.

Everyone leaves the room except for my committee. The recordings are stopped. We are sequestered in the hallway, my future trapped in the moments between then and now as we await their decision. I am a jumble of emotions: angry, sad, excited and scared. They all come fumbling out of me, the hurt, the pain of more than three years of my life compressed into a conversation of these three committee members. I know I will pass, and I do not know that I will pass. Perhaps the world will end in the moments before it happens. I try to breathe.

As the door opens and we all are invited back in, I remember one word that has been so key to this work: trust. Regardless of what happens, I trust the process. The outcome, whatever it is, is as important as the journey, and in the seconds before I am magically transformed into Dr. Shaun Travers, I know that the journey was worth every moment.

The defense – an analysis.

As I review the media site for the defense, a few comments are critical to the understanding of my findings and the practical applications of the study. First, there is the intentionality with which the three Directors approached the work of leadership in higher education's social justice centers. The intentionality goes beyond friendship. As individual leaders we each believe, as a state of mind and a function of practice, that we must be intentionally interdependent for our work to be successful. The ideas of intentionality and interdependence became themes of the dissertation defense. Interdependence more accurately describes the work of campus community centers as a community of practice. The working definition which began the study implied a level of cooperation, coordinated work, and collegiality. It also implies separation within the connectedness. However, as the study concludes, it is interdependence, a distinct togetherness that is also separate, which more accurately describes the work of campus community centers. This intentional interdependence is a defining characteristic of the community of practice that is the campus community centers. Intentional interdependence, along with many other issues, are worthy of further study.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study explored the experiences of only the positional leaders of the Campus Community Centers: the Directors. What would the stories of the Assistant Directors uncover? And the other staff of the UC San Diego Campus Community Centers? What about the people that frequent the space? What are the experiences of

the students, of the staff and of the faculty whom utilize the resources of these UC San Diego Campus Community Centers? What are the stories of the Advisory Board members? How intentional are these communities regarding interdependence?

This study also focused on formal Centers that serve specific communities. What are the experiences of positional leaders in informal organizations that serve specific communities? In other words, what is the nature of the relationship between the chair of the UC San Diego Council on the Status of Women, chair of the Committee on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Issues, and chair of the Diversity Council? Contrasting to employee experiences, what about the leaders of the student organizations that support these communities? The staff and faculty organizations? These untold stories could reveal different relationships through identity and community, and barriers which challenge these relationships.

Are there other similarly situated organizations on other campuses in the nation? What would a survey of each Center's respective counterpart at the University of California system reveal? Do different networks and patterns of relationships inform the work of similar Directors, but in different ways? What would the hierarchical realities of unequally positioned Centers (i.e., one Center reporting to another Center) imply for the necessary trust, dialogue and learning to occur? An examination of similar and different structures, in the context of the stories of relationships, may reveal intriguing and enlightening experiences that further illuminate the nature of this work.

How could senior Student Affairs officers utilize these findings to examine structures currently in place on college campuses across the United States? What are comparable divisional structures, leadership practices and institutional positionings of social justice efforts? What might these structures, and subsequent relationships, reveal in terms of identity and community? To bring this work full circle, how might the orphans that began this study be affected by the politics surrounding department and division structures and decision making processes and consequences?

Concluding Remarks

Educational efforts must support all students equitably, especially students from marginalized and underrepresented communities. A portrait of UC San Diego's Campus Community Centers leadership practices displays three social justice educator's relationship. Embedded in these relationships are trust, learning and dialogue, informed by the identities and communities of the leaders themselves. The exploration of these relationships revealed themes which inform the practices of similarly situated leaders throughout the field of education. Campus Community Centers can be redefined as intentionally interdependent. Over time relationships grounded in trust, learning and dialogue sustain the powerful work of social justice leadership practice.

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Appendix A

The Orphan Story - An Allegory Explained.

In this story, the big city is the university. Each of the three orphans is one of the Directors of the three UC San Diego Campus Community Centers, and/or the one of the three Centers itself. Certain elements of the analogy work best if viewed from the point of view of orphans-as-Directors, and other elements work better if it is viewed as orphans-as-Centers. The differences can be noted in the explanations that follow.

The boxes are the respective physical Centers. The oldest orphan is the Cross-Cultural Center. Directed by Edwina Welch, it is the oldest of the three centers. Its first physical space, the “oldest and most dilapidated” was an old mailroom that came unfurnished. The Women’s Center was the next, with a “converted and refurbished” building that was completed for the Women’s Center in 1997, and funded for all new furniture. Emelyn dela Pena is the Director of the Women’s center, the “defiant” one of the three Directors. The Director of the LGBT Resource Center, Shaun Travers, was the youngest “scary” orphan. With just 300 square feet of space carved out of left-over space from an old building, the “old boxes, thrown together just to provide shelter,” the LGBT Resource Center when founded was the youngest Center. The issues with which the LGBT Resource Center works are uncomfortable for many people.

The toys are the resources that each Center utilized. They represent not only physical resources, but the time, talent and skill in training and education that each Center offers the campus individually.

The repeated phrase that there was an “unspoken but widely heard rumor that the whole city knew: the orphans were important, but they really shouldn’t play together” represents a number of things. The “unspoken but widely heard rumor” speaks to nature with which the university approached issues of diversity. Diversity is important and the issue is discussed, but it functions more like a rumor, as the campus struggles to identify success in its quest for diversity.

The “importance” of the orphans individually is the language around diversity that the University employs. The idea that they “really shouldn’t play together” represents the campuses ongoing struggle with seeing the 1) individual mission’s of each center to serve specific communities (women served by the Women’s Center, LGBT people served by the LGBT Resource Center, and people of color served by the Cross-Cultural Center) and the 2) broader social justice mission that the directors of each Center have co-constructed. In total the phrase captures the experience from many students, faculty and staff that interact with the Centers in the beginning stages. It often takes a while for these communities to understand the combined understanding of how we work together. Some community members never understand, and continue to support us through individual work, without ever supporting the broader notion of social justice.

Weber (2002) provides a framework for understanding these broad social systems. However, that framework is not widely utilized. The Directors' experience indicates that many community members have a commitment to a particular Center through oppressed, targeted identities. Often community members have to adjust their focus from one Center to all three campus Community Centers, and that adjustment only happens through personal work on understanding issues beyond personal, oppressed identities to an exploration of the interconnections of power, privilege and oppression.

The idea of "sharing toys" represents the physical history of our Centers having pieces of each other in each other's Centers. For example, the LGBT Resource Center has all of the books from the original LGBT section of the Women's Center library. It also represents the knowledge and skill base in education and training that we have shared with each other through conversations, joint trainings and published materials, like our joint web page.

"We weren't designed to play together" speaks to our identities that are embodied in our names. Both the Women's Center and LGBT Resource Center have specific constituent communities named within their titles. Although the Cross-Cultural Center does not have such a narrow descriptor in its title, many make assumptions regarding its focus on race and ethnicity, and often turn exclusively to the Cross-Cultural Center to meet the needs of people of color communities on UC San Diego's campus. The organization called the Campus Community Centers was not conceived of or designed prior to the relationships of the three Directors. Each Center

was established as a separate, individual Center with no formal connections to any other Centers.

The idea of the Mayor knowing the youngest orphan recalls the history of the LGBT Resource Center being funded completely through the Chancellor's office since its inception. This is in contrast to the Cross-Cultural Center and Women's Center, both of which were funded by three different Vice-Chancellor areas. This reflected the beginnings of both the Women's Center and Cross-Cultural Center, which grew out of complex, collaborative work of campus-wide committees. They also reported to different supervisors in Academic Affairs. And the fact that "no one talked about" the Mayor assisting the youngest orphan recalls the history of the LGBT Resource Center being funded through the Chancellor's Office, but having a reporting relationship through Human Resources. The Director of the LGBT Resource Center reported to the Director of Staff Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action. However, after this level supervision there was a dotted line to the Chancellor's office, as opposed to the Director of Human Resources. The Chancellor's Office was the second (and highest) level of management above the LGBT Resource Center.

The timing of the orphans beginning to play with each other also represents the historical record of the three Directors coming together. The Women's Center was the first to reach out the Cross-Cultural Center, and the pair made connections with the LGBT Resource Center soon after it was established. All three of the Directors had a background in Women's Centers/programs/development at other higher education institutions, which may have provide a common experience and language with

precipitated UC San Diego's unique collaborative model. In other words, and in relation to the analogy, their individual experiences made it easier for them to "play well together." All three acknowledged the tentative nature of their relationship at the beginning, as there was little support for that deep of a connection. Therefore, the rumor that the Centers "really should not play together."

The idea of "blaming" the idea of connection on the oldest orphan, i.e., the Director of the Cross-Cultural Center speaks not only to her seniority as a Center Director at the University, but also to the status the Cross-Cultural Center is awarded at the institution. Our conversation together has centered that status in the fear and hope that surrounds the Cross-Cultural Center as an answer to the campus's concerns regarding diversity. The status provides political capital for the Cross-Cultural Center Director unparalleled in the other two Centers or their Directors.

The City Dwellers represent the broader UC San Diego community, faculty, staff and students. The "odd jobs, one's that they didn't want to do themselves" are the difficult tasks around diversity and social justice that are important to the campus, but that are often embodied in the work of the three centers at the expense of campus-wide efforts to bring about change. The strong service orientation of many campus units makes them ill-suited to address diversity and social justice issues. Other units often see diversity as an add-on, after their "real" work has been completed. They look to the Campus Community centers to do the "diversity" work.

The Citizens represent the Advisory Board members of each Center, many of whom have relatively high rank at the institution, that were on committees and groups

that initially brought the Centers individually into existence. Founding documents indicate that the Citizens envisioned their particular Center-of-focus as a place of safety, visibility and a way to hold the University accountable on moral grounds for attending to its diverse constituents. Few Citizens have any background or training in the overall social justice work that is the focus that three Centers came to embody later in their existence. Most have one constituent center for which they devote time, energy and efforts.

The quotes of the City Dwellers are some of the comments we have heard through the years in response to our working together. Some community members do not see the value of working together as a unit. Others are concerned about the political nature of our work, especially in the climate of California after Proposition 209 and the removal of affirmative action from the selection process for colleges and universities. In addition, there is often fear and misinformation around talking about sex, sexuality, gender and gender identity in work settings.

The final comment from the Citizen, “I fully support the youngest orphan,” but secretly to himself thought, “But I really don’t think he should be playing with the others like that” represents the thoughts of a number of our individual Advisory Board members (each Center has its own) that disagree with the nature of social justice work across communities. The quote is drawn from a story of someone not understanding the connections between the work around racism, sexism and homophobia. Often one oppression (homophobia, sexism, or racism) is seen as the most important work for a particular Center (based on its title – Women’s Center equals an exclusive focus on

sexism, LGBT Resource center equals an exclusive focus on homophobia, Cross-Cultural Center equals an exclusive focus on racism).

The differing treatment of the orphans, when they were alone or together, also speaks to the lived experiences of the staffs and directors of the three Centers. Alone, there are one set of supporters. Together, another set becomes vocal. But all in all, the work of social justice and diversity is not taken on by the entire institution, but is assumed to be the work of the Centers. An example of this is when the LGBT Resource Center is expected to become the support center for out LGBT athletes, as opposed to the deep and intense training necessary for an Athletics Department to create a supportive environment in their teams, within their locker rooms and on their playing fields.

Other metaphors for being an orphan.

Outside of the allegorical elements of the orphan story, the metaphor draws on a number of experiences that the Directors related to each other throughout the course of their conversation around leadership. Each Center enters the work of social justice through a very specific history that is centered on a constituent community. Each of these constituent communities (LGBT people, women, and people of color) has been left out of the dominant discourse of the University, orphaned, if you will, by the institution that claims to desire them. Allen and Cherrey (2000) position this separation of constituents communities as stemming from an industrial, hierarchical era. In many ways, this as rightfully so, as a means to provide targeted support to a distinct group. However, Allen and Cherrey call institutions of higher education to a

more networked, knowledge-based era. In this new era structures and practices around diversity and social justice would flow freely through the system that is the university setting. Centers may exist as a nexus of energy, but not as the diversity cog that is in the machine of the university.

Another way the metaphor of orphans works for the early history of the Campus Community Centers has to do with placement. Each of these communities has fought for, in their own way, a place in the citizenry of the University. Each has taken a different route to achieve its end, and relies on a discrete history and social movement to drive its value in the broader campus life. The heroes and history of the broader social movements; Martin Luther King, Betty Friedan and the legacy of the Stonewall riots inform the work of each Center separate from the work of the others. These larger social movements have not widely shared their history of cross-issue organizing or broader commitment to social justice. In the University setting those who study such movements have identified the deeper legacy of these movements as parallel paths to a more socially just society for all people.

But each movement is also in a sense orphaned from society and from the other movements. This orphaning is exhibited through the neglect of laws, social structures and cultural references that acknowledge the movements. Orphaning is diminished through the difficult conversations required to move beyond identity politics and toward a broader movement.

Each Director feels alone in the work that she/he does, while an expert in her/his own field of work and social justice, but at the same time, “fake” as leaders in

the movement. The allegory of the orphan story ends with the three orphans being adopted. Currently, that is where the story ends. But our research conversations, as well as continuing shared experiences over the last five years, have begun a new chapter of the orphans actually becoming siblings. Each sibling is unique and different, but they are recognizing a shared history, a shared family, where they can be safe enough with each other to journey together on the road towards social justice.

The story that is being created is a different story. I imagine it will begin with the line “Once there was a family that didn’t know how to get along...” I imagine this beginning because we are still in the process of determining how to get along as members of the family in the entity called the Campus Community Centers. Because we are an organization, not a family unit, the stereotypical structure of mother, father and children does not fit. The role of Directors is not parental, and the nature of the interplay between the Directors is not spousal. The staff are not younger siblings, and the communities we serve are not children. However, the metaphor of orphans has defined us for too long. What is the next chapter of the story? Family sounds interesting, but may not be the right symbol to capture and inspire the growth and change that will come as the three Centers continue to change together. That, perhaps, will be another research project.

Appendix B

Conversation with UC San Diego Campus Community Center Directors

Post session, immediate observations and reflections

Personal notes - How is this affecting me as a participant observer?

What just happened during the research? What did I experience? How am I occupying that liminal space? What reflexive notes must be written immediately to capture the experience?

Methodological issues - How is the portrait emerging?

Theoretical issues - How is this conversation mapping of the theoretical framework?

Systemic leadership, communities of practice?

Appendix C

Discussion questions

Discussion #1

Community of Practice Element Practice (learning as doing)

Systemic Leadership Element Active engagement, Collaboration

Part of what I am trying to uncover is the lived experiences of the Campus Community Center Directors in community. What is it like to work this closely with two other people? What is it like to come together to create this structure called the campus community centers. What does it mean for your personal interactions? What does it mean for your professional interactions?

Discussion #2

Community of Practice Element Meaning (learning as experience)

Systemic Leadership Element Systems cognition, Paradigm cognition

What is the big story of the campus community centers? What is the story (are the stories) that you don't tell very often? What story do you tell new staff/interns about the campus community centers? What do you tell people at UCSD about the campus community centers? What story do you tell outsiders from other universities?

Discussion #3

Community of Practice Element Identity (learning as becoming)

Systemic Leadership Element Emotional competence

How has the organization called Campus Community Centers affected your leadership within your Center? How has it affected your leadership practice in the broader campus community? How have you navigated identity and community in the broader campus community given the connections to the other two Centers? Have there been times you have highlighted/hidden the connections? When has it been an advantage? When has it been a disadvantage?

Discussion #4

Community of Practice Element Community (learning as belonging)

Systemic Leadership Element Profound change

What story do you tell in other communities of practice about the campus community centers (your analogous colleagues at other institutions)? What is so obvious/so known about the campus community centers story that we don't tell it as part of the story anymore? What information does a person need to know to be culturally competent in working with the entities that are the campus community centers?

Discussion #5

Community of Practice Element Practice (learning as doing)

Systemic Leadership Element Diversify perspectives

When do our collective stories diverge? Do they? How do our stories differ from our actual behavior? Are there instances of large disconnections between what we *say* we do, and what we *actually* do? Do we tell each other when we don't follow our own stories of how we connect? What do we say instead?

Discussion #6

Community of Practice Element Meaning (learning as experience)

Systemic Leadership Element Meaning making

What are we “expected” to say about our connections because of our commitment to social justice? What happens when that commitment is at odds with the experience of the moment (think hierarchy of oppressions)? What stories do we tell that make sense of this complexity?

Discussion #7

Community of Practice Element Identity (learning as becoming)

Systemic Leadership Element Engage paradox

What gets in the way to the campus community centers working together? Why do they get in the way? What stories do we tell about the barriers to our work? Are they shared stories, or are the individual to each center? What stories are about things “not making sense”?

Discussion #8

Community of Practice Element Community (learning as belonging)

Systemic Leadership Element Continual learning, Sustainability

Our memories are malleable, and our stories are our creations of what the campus community centers are. How close are our stories to the lived experience (i.e. the reality) of the campus community centers? How can the campus community centers sustain over time? How might the campus community centers change?