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Publication Date

2023

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Cura Apostolica:

Jesuit Higher Education's Support for the

Development of Social Justice and Inclusion Competency in Student Affairs

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Lisha Kathleen Maddox

2023

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Cura Apostolica:

Jesuit Higher Education's Support for the

Development of Social Justice and Inclusion Competency in Student Affairs

by

Lisha Kathleen Maddox

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor Robert Cooper, Chair

This study examined the espoused values of an institution whose mission calls for a focus and promotion of social justice and how that institution supports its staff's development of a competency focused on social justice and inclusion. It examined the intersection of social justice and inclusion competence, early-career staff development, and espoused educational values, all within the context of Jesuit higher education and student affairs, an understudied area. The study

revealed new ideas to meet the growing need to train student affairs staff on how to better

support their students, so they may become citizens of the world and leaders who transform the

world (University, n.d.-c).

The dissertation of Lisha Kathleen Maddox is approved.

Jessica Christine Harris

Mark Harrington

Robert Cooper, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2023

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father Leonard Maddox and my mother Kathleen Lois Maddox. Your support is quite literally the only reason I was able to persevere. For every moment of my life, you both have reminded me that I can do anything I want. You have encouraged me to make good choices, invest in myself and my family. This dedication is a very small token of my love and appreciation. Without you, I am nothing. I love you.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I started down the road to this dissertation in 2020 during a time of extreme uncertainty. I expected to learn about educational leadership but was surprised at how much I learned about myself. These last three years have been the happiest and hardest of my life, but I survived but by the grace of God. I made it. All glory be to Him.

My parents are my biggest cheerleaders, and I could not have done this without them. Thank you, Mami, for keeping me grounded and disciplined, and always checking to make sure I had what I needed to get through. Thank you, Papa, for emphasizing the importance of education, encouraging me to go as far as I could, and for keeping me fed throughout the process. Tu preciosa te ama mucho.

To my sister Lenaka, my brother-in-love Antonio, my niece Anlen, and nephew Lenan: you always brought me more joy that you'll ever know at the exact right moment throughout this process. I love you and need you, now and forever. Thank you for supporting me.

Thank you to my Cohort 28 crew for holding me down all the way to the finish line. They say that you need a group of people to lean on during a program like this; I had no idea how right they were. I am grateful to Drs. Michelle Maye, Dominica Scibetta, MJ Madda, Damon Cagnolotti, Jonathan Kylng, Daniel Helena, Kassidy Camilleri, and Ifeanyi Onyejiji for the continuous support, encouragement, writing sessions, park picnics, lunches, brunches, and countless other moments of joy. May they always continue.

I am fortunate enough to have an expansive village of people who have not only held me down but lifted me up when I couldn't stand on my own. The list is so long and I'm so grateful. I know you know who you are. The women I am closest to have protected me, sheltered me,

prayed over me and encouraged me to keep going when I didn't think I could. Krista, Lana, Raven, Ashley, Danielle, Erin, and Asha, I love y'all for real for real and thank you for it all. Christen and Julia, thank you for literally holding my hand through this dissertation process, sharing your examples and ideas, telling how you managed it and what I might want to think about, and practicing with me over and over. Y'all are my Ed.D. girlies.

I must thank my interview participants their willingness to participate and their excitement to help me reach my goal. Each of them were so open and honest and unafraid to speak their truth. They made this process enjoyable. I am also extremely fortunate to have received funding from JASPA: Jesuit Student Affairs. Thank you for supporting this study.

Thank you to all my colleagues who encouraged me to focus on what I was passionate about and celebrating me along the way; shout out to the Revolution. I would not have done this program or focused on this work if not for them. Thank you to my committee Drs. Robert Cooper, Jessica Harris, and Mark Harrington for their support flexibility, suggestions, and encouragement to the bitter end. And thank you Dr. Laura Monje-Paulson for literally crossing the finish line with me. I don't even know how to properly thank you for all you did for me, but I will find a way friend.

To everyone named and unnamed in these acknowledgements, I am because you are. WE earned this degree.

Ashe. Amen. It is done.

VITA

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions in the United States are more diverse now than any other time in history (Clauson & McKnight, 2018). According to Plagman-Galvin (2018), higher education enrollment data show that racial diversity on college campuses is increasing at the same rate as the racial diversity of the United States. Between 1976 and 2015, there were increases in college attendance among every racial minority group, and by 2055, no single racial or ethnic minority will represent more than 50% of the population in the United States (Coomes & Wilson, 2009). Because of this increase in college student diversity, the study and practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has also grown within the fields of higher education and student affairs research and practice. Colleges and universities are in a unique position to research and address issues of DEI, and for student affairs practitioners to help foster opportunities of engagement between students from myriad backgrounds and demographics other than their own (Plagman-Galvin, 2018). Because diversity promotes personal growth, strengthens communities and workplaces, and enriches the experiences of students in college, student affairs professionals need to engage in consistent evaluation and assessment to maintain a minimum standard of multicultural competence (Castellanos et al., 2007; Landrum et al., 2003). Developing common language and understanding for defining diversity and multicultural competence for student affairs professionals is critical.

Broad Background

The Profession of Student Affairs

The field of student affairs was born of the application of behavioral psychology, industrial psychology and the personnel movement of the early 1900s (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016). There was a notion that work in the personnel office at a college or university was meant

to connect students with careers upon graduation. These appointment secretaries, as they became known, formed their own professional organization that became the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), the name reflecting the work and the personal movement created by Walter Dill Scott at Northwestern University years before (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016). As the United States entered its "golden age of higher education" post World War II in 1945, the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the GI Bill, provided financial support for more than 2.2 million veterans to attend a college or university. Many institutions of higher education doubled and tripled in size and many states began expanding their state college systems. With this sharp increase of college students, the field of college student personnel expanded to meet the new demands for student services on college and university campuses (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016).

During the era of consumerism in higher education from 1970 to 1995, there was a movement to professionalize the field of college student personnel administrators and to recognize the managerial role of these administrators (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016). Three seminal documents were published in 1975, laying out the guiding principles of student affairs as a profession: the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education (COSPA) publications *Student Development Services in Postsecondary Education*, *Tomorrow's Higher Education* (*T.H.E.*) *Phase II: A Student Development Model for Student Affairs,* and *The Future of Student Affairs.* These documents ushered in the student development movement in student affairs, "recommitting the profession to many of the foundational ideas and values that were first articulated in *The Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937, 1949; Schwartz & Stewart, 2016). Additionally, the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services (CAS) was founded in 1979 with a mission to codify and document best

practices in student services across colleges and universities in the US. The first set of professional standards was published in 1986 and became known as the *CAS Standards* in the field. These documents and the CAS Standards continued to professionalize the field, which included a growth in graduate professional preparation programs from 64 programs between 1945 and 1963, to 91 programs in the 1980s (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016). According to the NASPA Graduate Program directory, there are now over 200 graduate professional preparation programs in the United States (NASPA, 2023).

In 1994, ACPA published *Student Learning Imperative* and a decade later, NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, published *Learning Reconsidered*. Coomes and Wilson (2009) claim that this was the beginning of the era of student learning, which sought to "establish the centrality of student affairs professionals as educational partners with faculty members in promoting student learning on campus" (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016, p. 32). This era redefined learning to include the holistic development of students inside and outside of the classroom. Student affairs professionals began to assert themselves as experts and equal partners with faculty, as well as contributors to the academic mission of higher education (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016).

Schwartz and Stewart (2016) propose that the profession has since entered a new era, ushered in by the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (2010), a joint document by NASPA and ACPA that shifts the field's focus from student affairs professionals' roles in student learning and development to the status and accountability of the professional. As the cost of higher education rises rapidly, so too do the expectations of a phenomenal return on investment by multiple stakeholders (i.e., students, families, employers, etc.). This era also introduces the mechanism by which the profession holds itself accountable; a

focus on assessment that is not limited to just effectiveness in promoting student learning goals and outcomes, but to assess student affairs educators' own growth and development of knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary for the effectiveness of student learning.

Social Justice and Inclusion Competency in Student Affairs

In 2010, the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (Professional Competencies) created a framework of 10 competency areas that were then updated in 2014. One of the most significant 2014 changes was to the competency known as Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI), formerly known as Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. This competency area is premised on the belief that practitioners must understand "oppression, privilege, and power before they can understand social justice" (Amey & David, 2020).

As it is the mission of student affairs educators to walk the developmental journey alongside their students, and the responsibility of educators to encourage the understanding of and respect for diversity, there is an inherent necessity for student affairs professionals to not only be well versed in the area of social justice and inclusion, but to excel in this competency for their own personal and professional development, and in order to do the work that the field of student affairs requires. The Professional Competencies assist professionals in deepening this understanding within themselves.

The Professional Competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) are as follows: Personal and Ethical Foundations; Values, Philosophy, and History; Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; Law, Policy, and Governance; Organizational and Human Resource; Leadership; Social Justice and Inclusion; Student Learning and Development; Technology; and Advising and Supporting. The Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI) competency aims to integrate the ideas of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the active framework of social justice, and has become so critical in higher

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education and student affairs that it is a functional area of divisions of student affairs in many institutions. As SJI develops as an area of research and practice, it is unclear if emerging student affairs professionals are prepared to work with students in this way. Some institutions do not have the mechanisms to meet the CAS and ACPA/NASPA professional standards in social justice and inclusion, such as mandatory training to develop competency. Others may not have the desire to invest in developing this competency for their staff. In either case, institutions should consider investing in their student affairs professionals' development and deepening of their SJI competency skills, as a means of its own brand of inclusion and equity work. Student affairs professionals must look inward towards their own developmental journey to grow in the SJI capacity (*Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities--Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, n.d.).

Intersection of SJI and Jesuit Higher Education

Similarly, one of the espoused values of Jesuit higher education is the belief that participating in the struggle for justice in ways appropriate to the academic community is a requirement—not simply an option—of biblical faith (University, n.d.-d). Saint Ignatius of Loyola was the leading founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuit/the Jesuits), a religious order whose ministry foci are education and missionary work. The paramount purpose of the Society is the service of faith, but it must be joined by the promotion of justice (Kolvenbach, 2000; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). For Jesuit colleges and universities today, service to others through the service of faith and the promotion of justice are interpretations of St. Ignatius' original mission and ministry. Students, faculty, and staff who commit to become a part of a Jesuit academic community must also commit to social justice work as a matter of principle. With renewed interest in DEI work after the nation's racial reckoning in 2020, Jesuit institutions doubled down

on their commitment to creating a just society through educating young people (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 2020).

Gaps in the Research

The study of multicultural competence has extensive research dating back to the 1970s. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004, 2019) have published seminal works on the subject and focus on advancing the social justice and inclusion competency. Their books, however, offer frameworks for everyday challenges of student affairs professionals and best practices to help professionals advance change on their campuses. There is little research on the personal development of the SJI professional competency for student affairs professionals.

While the Pope et. al (2004, 2019) framework is critical to the field and does focus on social justice and inclusion, minimal research exists about the work of student affairs professionals within a Jesuit higher education context. What does exist focuses on the congruence of a student affairs professional graduate program and the values of Jesuit higher education, and the connection between the mission of a Jesuit institution and student affairs educators (Lewis-King, n.d.; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). The academy is void of research on the intersection of Jesuit higher education, its mission and values, and the social justice and inclusion competency needed for student affairs practitioners.

Additionally, the words and terms used in student affairs practice change because there are developments in research and the literature, and so the common lexicon evolves to keep pace; the same is true for multicultural and social justice in the field. (Pope et al., 2019). The terms "social justice" and "inclusion" were updated and introduced to the broader field via the Professional Competencies in 2015 because there was a "shift in awareness of diversity…to a

more active orientation" which renamed the competency (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, pp. 4-5; Pope et al., 2019).

Study Overview and Statement of Purpose

By examining one Jesuit university's division of student affairs, I tried to uncover if and how Jesuit higher education institutions are preparing early-career student affairs professionals to develop the necessary professional career competency of social justice and inclusion. Considering the espoused values of Jesuit institutions, are those values congruent with the competencies that Jesuit student affairs professionals are also required to possess? In this study, I focused on the implementation of SJI at one Jesuit institution because the competency so closely aligns with the values and mission of Jesuit higher education.

Research Questions

Given the importance of this topic and my personal and professional investment in the work of student affairs and social justice and inclusion, I wanted to understand how student affairs professionals are supported by their institution to develop this competency. Through this study I sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What do early-career student affairs professionals view as SJI work at a Jesuit institution?

2. What strategies do these student affairs professionals use to approach SJI work at a Jesuit institution?

3. In what ways does a Jesuit institution support the development of the social justice and inclusion competence among early-career student affairs educators?

4. In what ways does one Jesuit institution encourage alignment between its espoused values and the personal values of early-career student affairs staff?

Study Design

This was a qualitative case study seeking to understand how one Jesuit university supports the development of social justice and inclusion competence among early-career student affairs educators. Early-career professionals may have experienced the integration of social justice and inclusion in graduate programs since the creation of the Professional Competencies in 2015, as opposed to mid-level or senior-level administrators who were trained before that time. This study was comprised of document analysis and interviews. Document analysis provided information about espoused institutional values of social justice and inclusion. The interviews provided insight on how participants feel their own beliefs align with the institutions, and of how these beliefs are supported by the institution.

This case study focused on one institution in Southern California and examined how student affairs professionals who have been working in the field for up to five years feel supported and encouraged by that institution to further develop their professional competency of social justice and inclusion. Because the research questions address understanding a process, a qualitative approach provided rich in-depth information with the opportunity to follow up and explore processes more fully.

Rationale for Site Selection

Mission University (MU) is a Jesuit institution located in Southern California. It is one of three Jesuit universities in California and one of 28 in the national Association of the Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU). MU is the largest Jesuit institution on the west coast and boasts about being one of the most diverse, with students from across the world. Because of these factors, MU was a unique site to study how social justice and inclusion competencies are promoted and supported among student affairs professionals. I have been employed at MU for more than 12 years and had unique access and knowledge of the documents needed for analysis.

My position as the inaugural Divisional Lead/Chair of the Student Affairs Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (SADEI) Initiatives Committee also provided me with close proximity to staff engaged in DEI practices and proved helpful, as it allowed a level of access and credibility when gathering participants for the individual interviews. My employment at MU allowed for both feasibility and access to the site, and for a depth in research of the documents necessary for my study.

Rationale for Sample Selection

To select interview participants, I used purposeful sampling to determine all early-career staff in the division. A list of all staff in the Division was obtained from a division wide staff engagement committee. I contacted each participant individually via email to invite them to participate in an interview for the study using their professional email addresses. Each early-career professional was defined as new to the field of student affairs, having been employed full time for up to five years.

Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

This qualitative case study utilized document analysis and interviews to answer the research questions. The documents gathered and analyzed provided context for the interviews as I sought to explore the relationships between early-career professionals, the SJI competency area, and the Jesuit institutional context.

Organizational Documents

The organizational documents were collected through a thorough search and review of documents at the institution. Because the focus of the study was on methods of support for professionals, I reviewed the policies of the Division of Student Affairs (the division) for onboarding new staff members, job descriptions and compensation packages when recruiting

new professionals, and searched for professional development opportunities at the university for staff to develop the social justice and inclusion competence within the first five years of employment. Since the focus of this study was also support for the development of the SJI competency by a Jesuit institution, I reviewed the mission of the university and learning goals and outcomes of the student affairs division.

Interviews

I conducted twelve interviews with early-career professionals who were recruited through purposive sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Using both my knowledge of the organization and key professional roles, I directly recruited individuals who are known for their personal value for social justice and inclusion. Through the interview process I asked participants questions about their sense of value of the social justice and inclusion competency, and their sense of support from the institution in strengthening this competency. The questions also explored how participants navigate equity work at a Jesuit institution and strategies that they employ to approach SJI in their roles. .

Significance of the Study

In the ever-changing landscape of higher education, student affairs professionals are continuously called upon to help students make meaning of the world around them. This call is answered in many ways: programmatically, developmentally, and through systematic change. Student affairs professionals should be aware of the task put upon them. But is it fair to expect them to be proficient in a competency area that they may not know exists and are not necessarily supported in developing?

This study examined the espoused values of an institution whose mission calls for a focus and promotion of social justice and how that institution supports its staff's development of a

competency focused on social justice and inclusion. It examined the intersection of social justice and inclusion competence, early-career staff development, and espoused educational values, all within the context of Jesuit higher education and student affairs, an understudied area. The study revealed new ideas to meet the growing need to train student affairs staff on how to better support their students, so they may become citizens of the world and leaders who transform the world (University, n.d.-c).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The field of student affairs has standards of practice and competencies for its professionals that some colleges and universities are not implementing as their divisions grow. The profession "values people, and in an era of assessment and accountability, it must also be a professional that values the development and demonstration of competence by those people" (Grabsch et al., 2019, p. 145). When examining one Jesuit university's student affairs division, parallels can be made between the learning goals, outcomes, and mission of both the division and institution, and the Professional Competencies (Amey & David, 2020).

This review of the literature explored whether there is support provided by colleges and universities to student affairs professionals to develop the social justice and inclusion competency within the first five years of their career. The first step was to briefly situate early-career student affairs professionals within the larger context of the field, which provided reasoning for studying this level of professional. Gaining this context allowed for a shared understanding of the development of the field, programs, and professional competencies offered by ACPA and NASPA (Amey & David, 2020). Next, I provided justification as to why Jesuit higher education and student affairs is the proper framework to examine the SJI competency among student affairs professionals. This literature review then synthesized diversity, equity, and inclusion practices and competencies in student affairs, paying particular attention to the SJI competency, and concluded with rationale for SJI as a necessary professional competence that institutions must promote and encourage their staff to improve.

Early-Career Student Affairs Professionals

Hirschy et.al. (2015) briefly defined the term early-career professional for the purposes of their study on the socialization of graduate students to the field. Early-career student affairs

professionals are full time employees of a division of student affairs at one or more four-year institutions who have been employed 0-5 years (Hirschy et al., 2015). I will use this definition for the purposes of this study. Additionally, mid-level and senior student affairs administrators have identified entry-level positions as those that involve high student content through direct individual or group services, like a program coordinator for orientation leaders, and positions that are responsible for program development and conceptualization of direct services, like a coordinator for intramural sports (Burkard et al., 2005).

Early-career professionals are the ideal demographic of student affairs educators to examine when determining if a university supports their development. More recent shifting demographics and understanding of students' personal identities have challenged student affairs professionals to respond through both policy and practice to inequities on campus across the nation (Boss et al., 2018; Rhoads, 2016). Boss et al. (2018) examined how early-career professionals engaged a social justice lens in their work and found that they encounter many challenges navigating social justice in their practice with students. Theories to assist in the personal and professional development of critical thinking about social justice are taught in graduate preparation programs for student affairs but are often static and do not lend themselves to practices after graduate school (Boss et al., 2018). In a Delphi study of 102 mid- and senior-level student affairs administrators' perceptions of necessary competencies for entry-level student affairs professionals, multicultural competency was identified as one of the most important human relation skills needed (Burkard et al., 2005). Early-career professionals must make their own meaning of the challenges in navigating social justice work, which could lead to a dangerous deficiency in practice with their students simply because of a lack of experience or awareness. After the publication of the original *Professional Competencies* in 2010, these

standards have been incorporated into many graduate programs, in the form of capstone projects, for example, and assessment is one of the *Competencies* that ask graduate students to conduct self-assessment in other competency areas (Schwartz & Stewart, 2016). Therefore, an argument can be made that development of a competence in social justice and inclusion should be in the preparation of one for the field, i.e., in graduate programs designed for student affairs professionals. Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) found that many new professionals cited their practical training, i.e. fieldwork placements and assistantships, as essential components in their preparation for full-time student affairs positions. They also found that an increased focus on what a graduate student can do with their knowledge they acquired in student affairs preparation programs, i.e. competencies, is critical (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

Wherein student affairs as a profession is typically accessed through obtaining a graduate degree in postsecondary administration, student affairs, student development or college student personnel, there are some who enter the field with graduate degrees in other areas. The *Professional Competencies* were one way to fill the gap of specific student affairs training and knowledge for those who are not formally educated in the field and provides some assurance for hiring managers that there is a consistency of preparation for work within a highly varied higher education system in the United States (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Perez-Velez, 2019).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practices and Competencies in Student Affairs

The study and practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has sharply increased on college campuses because diversity in the student populations of American higher education institutions has significantly increased over the past several decades. From the 1944 G.I. Bill that brought an unprecedented number of returning veterans in higher education, to the advent of the Pell Grant, which provided pathways to college attainment for lower-income students, this

accessibility of higher education to more students from a variety of demographics created a much more diverse student population than America had seen since the arrival of America's first university (Clauson & McKnight, 2018).

As higher education shifted to a more diverse student population at the height of the civil rights era in the 1960s, cultural centers began to be established in American higher education and functioned primarily as a safe haven for Black students in particular who were expected to assimilate to the fabric of a predominantly white institution of higher education and accept a college culture that was fraught with racism, discrimination, and oppression (Clauson & McKnight, 2018). These Black student centers were soon followed by centers dedicated to supporting students who identified as Asian and Pacific Islander, Latine, and Indigenous peoples. These centers often formed near the physical proximity of one another and led to the increase of staff in all student services for their respective student populations. Just as the new wave of multiculturalism in the United States was influencing college enrollments, there was a shift in cultural life on campus (Patton & Hannon, 2008; Young, 1991). Many campuses merged these separate cultural centers into one multicultural or cross-cultural center that served students of color and students from marginalized communities, like certain religious affiliations, gender identity or sexual orientation (Clauson & McKnight, 2018).

These newly established multicultural centers from the 1980s were evolving from serving the direct needs of underrepresented student populations to centers providing social justice education to the campus community in the 1990s and early aughts (Clauson & McKnight, 2018). There was a consensus during that time that called for this functional area of student affairs to respond directly to the shift in national demographics of underrepresented students and incorporated intercultural competence focus for all students to prepare them for a more global

workforce in the future (Lee et al., 2012). In the early aughts, new senior level positions were created to address the gaps that multicultural centers, equal employment and affirmative action offices, and student cultural groups were unable to fill (Clauson & McKnight, 2018). Inaugural positions of chief diversity officer (CDO) began to be a mainstay in higher education by 2017.

Social Justice and Inclusion as a Professional Competency in Student Affairs

As the landscape of higher education was changing to address the needs of a more diverse student body, so too was the field of student affairs. In 2009, two of the leading professional associations in higher education administration, ACPA - College Student Educators International (ACPA) and NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), collaborated to create the first edition of professional competency areas for student affairs educators called the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (ACPA & NASPA, 2010)*. After a review of core documents from both associations and the Council for the Advancement of Stands in Higher Education (CAS), the Professional Competencies were published in 2010 (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017). The Professional Competencies were intended to provide scope, content, and rationale of professional competences to prepare student affairs educators to succeed within this new and continuously changing landscape of higher education and possess skills that will be useful in the future (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

A periodic review and updates to the Professional Competencies were also established and in the 2014 review, the most substantial change to the Professional Competencies was regarding the previously titled Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion competency area, which was renamed Social Justice and Inclusion. Significant changes to this area were due to a review of studies published after 2010 that suggested a shift away from a simple awareness of diversity to a

more active engagement and orientation within it (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). With the name change, the Professional Competencies Task Force aimed to "align this competency with research, practice, and a commonly utilized definition of social justice as a 'process and a goal' where the goal is 'full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs'" (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). As defined by Bell (2013) social justice must include a "vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (PAGE NUMBER). The intent with the change was to integrate the ideas of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the active framework of social justice (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

As integration was the intent behind the update to the SJI competency, many scholars began to emphasize the incorporation of multicultural and social justice issues into the curriculum and training of student affairs (Castellanos et al., 2007; Pope & Mueller, 2017; Pope et al., 2019; Wilson, 2013). Pope et al. (2019) claim that while past studies evidence that multicultural issues are being incorporated into the curriculum of student affairs preparation graduate programs, there is limited research that examines an introduction of social justice issues in that curriculum. Flowers and Howard-Hamilton (2002) found that most programs do have a diversity course, but not all do and for some students, Gaston Gayles and Kelly (2007) discovered that "learning about diversity issues often occurred outside of the classroom" (p. 25) for graduate students in student affairs programs.

Necessity for Social Justice and Inclusion Development

Gansemer-Topf & Ryder (2017) conducted a study examining mid-level supervisors' perceptions of the skills necessary for effective entry-level student affairs work and compared those to the *Professional Competencies*. When asked which professional competencies were

necessary for an early-career professional to be successful in their positions, mid-level

supervisors frequently noted knowledge of multiculturalism and diversity (Gansemer-Topf &

Ryder, 2017). Additionally, the ability to know content such as theory, and apply that knowledge

in practices is critical for an early-career professional particularly regarding diversity and social

justice (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017). Emphasis is placed on the values and content related to

equity, diversity, and inclusion in many graduate preparation programs, therefore early-career

professionals are conversant with those theories. However, those same professionals may find it

difficult to enact those values in a real-time situation with students or other staff. This is

evidence that a higher education institution should continue to support the development of social

justice competence with newer staff members so that they may be successful.

Moreover, the *ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies Rubrics* charge student affairs

professionals to not only understand but also "dismantle systems of oppression, privileges, and

power on campus" (ACPA & NASPA, 2016, p. 31; Garcia et al., 2021). Further investigation

indicates that other studies support the rationale for the necessity of social justice and inclusion

competence. In a continuation of Lovell & Kosten's (2000) seminal meta-analysis of necessary

skills, knowledge, and personal traits necessary for success as a student affairs administrator,

Herdlein et. al. (2013) discovered that since the original study in 2000, 83% of studies indicated

that knowledge in and of multicultural/diversity issues are among the most necessary knowledge

characteristics to be a successful student affairs practitioner. Pope et al. (2019), seminal

researchers in the field of diversity and multiculturalism in student affairs, contend that:

> the more multiculturalism is integrated into the very center of student affairs work instead
>
> of merely being added on, the more the profession changes and transforms itself into one

that is truly meeting the needs of all students and is contributing to the creation of multicultural campuses (p. 20).

Diversity, social justice, multiculturalism, and inclusion are foundational to the development of student affairs professionals. Similarly, the Society of Jesus was founded on the idea that the promotion of justice is how we can all be men and women for others, including college students.

The Ignatian Way

Brief History of Jesuit Education

Understanding modern Catholic higher educational teachings provide context for examining Jesuit student affairs. The Catholic Church began radical transformation in the 20th century, beginning with the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) which took place from 1962 to 1965 (Furlong, 2022). Vatican II shifted the focus of Catholic education to be centers for social justice and liberation and reaffirmed a stronger focus on social justices as a way of preaching and living gospel values (Denig & Dosen, 2009; Furlong, 2022). Following the new direction of the Catholic Church, Superior General Pedro Arrupe, S.J. spoke to the 10th International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe in 1973. Because of the new awareness in the Catholic church, Fr. Arrupe states that graduates from Jesuit institutions have not been properly educated to participate "in the promotion of justice and the liberation of the oppressed" (Arrupe & Aixala, 1980). Instead he hoped that "the paramount objective of Jesuit education" could be obtained if graduates were "men for others," later adjusted to men and women for others. (Arrupe & Aixala, 1980). This dynamic shift would be further emphasized when the Society of Jesus gathered for General Congregation (GC) 32 in 1975. It was at GC 32 that Jesuits acknowledged that they had not been upholding justice, instead focusing on educating the wealthiest in society (Furlong,

2022). It was at GC 32 (1982) that the purpose of the Jesuits, "the service of faith" must be joined with "the promotion of justice" and the two may not be separated (Furlong, 2022; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). It was to be an "integrating factor" in all the Society's works, including higher education (Kolvenbach, 2000; Stringer & Swezey, 2006).

Jesuit higher education has long been identified by its commitment to social justice, and the boarder Catholic church has also begun to recognize the need for justice explicit in its teachings (Furlong, 2022). Dialogue about Catholic identity in Catholic education has been taking place since the publication of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (John Paul II, 1990; James & Estanek, 2012). Its purpose was to define and refine the Catholicism of Catholic institutions of higher education. The Pope stated that Catholic universities "demonstrate the courage to express uncomfortable truth, truths that may clash with public opinion but that are also necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society" (p. 32). While the discussions about Catholic identity tended to be focused on academic affairs, the implications of it on student affairs professionals and their roles at a Catholic institution was understood (James & Estanek, 2012). During the first Rome Seminar, an opportunity sponsored by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) for leaders of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States to dialogue with Vatican officials, participant pondered how to "demonstrate and assess the contribution of student life programs and policies to the Catholic mission of the institution" (James & Estanek, 2012). From there, the *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities* (Estanek & James, 2007) emerged.

The Principles are a document that represents "the ideals, challenges, expectations, and aspirations of student affairs professionals who work at Catholic colleges and universities" (Estanek & James, 2007, p. 2). The document borrowed the general framework of "principles"

from the 1996 document published jointly by the two major student affairs organizations

NASPA and ACPA, which would be familiar to student affairs professionals. (James & Estanek,

2012). In 2006, *The Principles* were authorized by the Jesuit Association of Student Affairs

Professionals (JASPA) the professional association for student affairs professionals who work at

the 28 Jesuit institutions in the US and Central America, established in 1954.

    The Principles characterizes the ways to approach student affairs practice at Catholic

colleges and universities similarly to how the Professional Competencies "set out the scope and

content of professional competencies required of student affairs educations in order for the to

succeed" within higher education and future professional environments (ACPA & NASPA,

2015). Principle 4 states that good practice for student affairs at Catholic colleges and

universities:

> Creates opportunities for students to experience, reflect, and act from a commitment to
>
> justice, mercy, and compassion, and in light of Catholic social teaching to develop
>
> respect and responsibility for all, especially those most in need. Because the framework
>
> of the Catholic social tradition is vital to the work of student affairs professionals in
>
> Catholic institutions, it is important for these professionals to become familiar with the
>
> tradition and to incorporate it into learning opportunities for students. Central to this work
>
> is a deepening awareness of injustice in the local, national, and global arenas that can
>
> become more grounded through creative partnering with diverse, underserved
>
> communities. Ample opportunities for action and reflection will help all to grow,
>
> individually and collectively, in their knowledge and practice of this rich tradition,
>
> thereby contributing to the common good and building a more human and just world.

Principle 4 closely parallels the social justice and inclusion competency from the Professional Competencies. This parallel give student affairs practitioners at Jesuit schools a better understanding of their roles at the university and with students as they encounter issues and incidents that involve diversity, equity and inclusion on their campuses.   The Importance of Mission

Contextualizing student affairs educators within Jesuit higher education requires an examination of the mission of the Society of Jesus, as the mission of every Jesuit institution can be traced back to the mission of the Society (Stringer & Swezey, 2006). The purpose of mission-based education in this context is to form men and women for and with others, and to prepare its graduates to "be leaders in service, men and women of competence, conscience, and compassionate commitment" (Duminuco, 2000; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). As for its universal purpose in higher education, mission statements are guiding documents intended to provide direction and clarity for an institution's goals and guide curricular primacies for faculty and administration (Garcia et al., 2021). Within student affairs, one espoused value of the mission is a shared commitment to student learning and holistic development that aligns with an institution's mission. In the case of Jesuit higher education and their divisions of student affairs, alignment is necessary and scholars have highlighted the integral role student affairs place in achieving that institutional mission (Garcia et al., 2021; Stringer & Swezey, 2006).

The Jesuit mission is one of reconciliation, working so that women and men can be reconciled with God, with themselves, with each other and with God's creation. One of the primary tenants of the mission of the Society of Jesus is the service of faith and the promotion of justice, with the notion of *cura personalis*. This Latin phrase means "care of the person," a characteristic of Jesuit education that recognizes the individuality of each person and seeks to

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integrate all aspects of that individuality: intellectual, aesthetic, moral, spiritual, affective, physical, and social (University, n.d.-b). St. Ignatius included *cura personalis* in the constitutions of the Society as the way Jesuit educators were to care for their students and be concerned with their holistic growth (Modras, 2010; Stringer & Swezey, 2006).

The service of faith, honoring religious pluralism within and out of the classroom, is incomplete without the promotion of justice, as it is participating in the struggle of justice in ways appropriate to the academic community is a requirement of biblical faith (University, n.d.-d). Similarly, many Jesuit institutions, high schools, colleges, and universities, hold these tenants dear, as a part in their mission and guiding principles. The philosophical foundation for the student affairs profession echoes the same principles of a holistic Jesuit education (Stringer & Swezey, 2006). In the foundational student affairs document *The Student Personnel Point of View*, educational institutions are admonished to emphasize "the development of the student as a person rather than upon [their] intellectual training alone" (American Council on Education, 1937). Moreover, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) express that "[i]f, as a profession, student affairs espouses the value diversity within higher education for students, faculty and staff it should be equally important for each individual to demonstrate a personal commitment to diversity or inclusion" (Kretovics, 2002). The profession cannot thrive without individuals who are committed to diversity, social justice, and inclusion.

Characteristic 3 in the *Characteristics of Jesuit Higher Education: A Guide for Mission Reflection*, issued jointly by the AJCU and the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, states that four interrelated areas are necessary for institutional reflection and planning: (a) a commitment to social justice and reconciliation; (b) a commitment to anti-racism within the University and wider culture; (c) a commitment to care for our common home, the Earth; and (d)

a commitment to serving the global community (AJCU, 2021). In 2018, Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa stated that Jesuit universities are called to be a "project of social transformation" (Sosa, S.J., 2018). Part of that transformation is a focus on social justice, and racial justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion, as stated in Characteristic 3.

Social justice and inclusion work with students and development of the competency is by far the most pressing issue for Jesuit student affairs in the United States. Jesuit student affairs professionals are at the forefront of change in this area. An examination of how a university supports the development of this competency area will help institutions and divisions of student affairs further the charge set forth by the Superior General and the Jesuit mission for colleges and universities.

Conceptual Framework

After the release of the updated ACPA/NASPA Professional Competency Areas in 2015, an accompanying document, ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies Rubrics (2016) was released a year later as a tool that professionals and organizations can use to assess knowledge, skills, and dispositions across levels of experience (see Table 1). The rubric for each professional competency area contains a definition and distributes its outcomes in a table that lists multiple dimensions of the competency and a development scale ranging from fundamental to intermediate to advanced in three columns (ACPA & NASPA, 2016). The rubrics provide guidance on how they can be used, including within hiring and professional development. The Social Justice and Inclusion rubric can be used by a division of student affairs to identify gaps in training or knowledge of its staff; and also to develop professional training opportunities, for example, to fill in those gaps and also assess and on-board new professionals in the field (ACPA & NASPA, 2016). Using the foundational, intermediate, and advanced outcomes under the SJI

competency and accompanying rubrics, student affairs divisions at Jesuit institutions can measure growth and progress of this competency over the course of the first year to five years of a new professionals' career at an institution. The release of the rubrics is an important tool that aids practitioners in measuring competency attainment (Grabsch et al., 2019).

For the purposes of this competency, SJI is defined "as both a process and a goal which includes knowledge skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups while seeking to address and acknowledge issues of oppression, privilege, and power" (ACPA & NASPA, 2016). Student affairs educators must have their own sense of agency and social responsibilities that includes the community and larger global context. I used the four areas of knowledge criterion for the SJI competency to first establish each interview participants' personal sense of social justice and responsibility, then establish their sense of social justice and responsibility for the larger university community.

 I used the four areas of knowledge criterion as my conceptual framework and developed interview questions based on the foundational, intermediate, and advanced criterion within the SJI competency's rubric. I developed the early-career professionals' interview questions around how the rubric can be used for professional development and how they can advocate to learn this competency for themselves and to their higher education communities to impact.

By using the rubrics as a conceptual framework, I conducted interviews that answered how early-career professionals feel about their own social justice and inclusion competence and then if and how they feel support in developing that competence from their Jesuit student affairs division and broader university community.

Table 1

Social Justice and Inclusion Professional Competency Rubric (edited)

Dimension	Foundational	Intermediate	Advanced
Understanding of Self and Navigating Systems of Power	Able to articulate one's identities and intersectionality. Articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and inclusion within the context of higher education.	Identify systemic barriers to social justice and inclusion. Assess one's own department's role in addressing such barriers.	Ensure campus resources are distributed equitably and adequately meet the needs of all campus communities.
Critical Assessment and Self-Directed Learning	Utilize critical reflection in order to identify one's own prejudices and biases. Participate in activities that assess and complicate one's understanding of inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power.	Evaluate one's participation in systems of oppression, privilege, and power without shaming others. Provide opportunities for inclusive and social justice educational professional development.	Assess institutional effectiveness in removing barriers to addressing issues of social justice and inclusion. Link individual and departmental performance indicators with demonstrated commitment to social justice and inclusion.
Engaging in Socially-Just Practice	Integrate knowledge of social justice, inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power into one's practice. Advocate on issues of social justice, oppression, privilege, and power.	Facilitate dialogue about issues of social justice, inclusion, power, privilege, and oppression in one's practice. Address bias incidents affecting campus communities.	Advocate for social justice values in institutional mission, goals, and programs. Foster and promote an institutional culture that supports the free and open expression of ideas, identities, and beliefs.
Organizational Systemic Advocacy	Understand how one is affected by and participates in maintaining systems of oppression, privilege, and power.	Engage in hiring and promotion practices that are non-discriminatory and work toward building inclusive teams.	Ensure institutional policies, practices, facilities, structures, systems, and technologies respect and represent the needs of all people.

Conclusion

Social justice and inclusion are at the heart of both student affairs work and Jesuit education and are critical to the formation of fully competent student affairs professionals. My review of the literature provides a foundational understanding of that tenet and grounds my research in the history of Jesuit higher education and the field of student affairs. Research shows that the competence of SJI development in professionals is linked to the overall success of students (ACPA & NASPA, 2016). This study fills a gap between the development of SJI and how an institution whose mission includes SJI can support that development. By centering my research in that gap, I contributed to a larger area of study that can further support the idea that SJI is a necessary competency for all student affairs professionals, especially those at a Jesuit college or university.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The purpose of this study is to uncover if and how a Jesuit higher education institution is preparing early-career student affairs professionals to develop the necessary professional career competence of social justice and inclusion. Chapter three outlines my research questions and provides more information about the study's design and rationale. I begin this discussion with the study's methodology, including rationale for site and population selection, and data collection and analysis. The chapter proceeds to address issues of researcher positionality, trustworthiness, and credibility. Finally, I present limitations to the study and implications of results.

Research Questions

1. What do early-career student affairs professionals view as SJI work at a Jesuit institution?

2. What strategies do these student affairs professionals use to approach SJI work at a Jesuit institution?

3. In what ways does a Jesuit institution support the development of the social justice and inclusion competence among early-career student affairs educators?

4. In what ways does one Jesuit institution encourage alignment between its espoused values and the personal values of early-career student affairs staff?

Research Design and Rationale

This is a qualitative case study seeking to understand how one Jesuit university supports the development of social justice and inclusion competence among early-career student affairs educators. The goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of support and encouragement of a particular professional competency. A qualitative approach is necessary

to gain a holistic understanding of that perception. Qualitative research is exploratory in nature which makes it the preferable method of research for this study. I used document analysis and in-depth interviews to conduct this study and focused on early-career professionals in student affairs. This study focused on early-career professionals as they are more likely than their more senior colleagues to have experienced the integration of social justice and inclusion in graduate programs since the creation of the Professional Competencies in 2015. I wanted to gather insight on individuals' perspectives and their own interpretation of the institution, using documents like the mission as a guide and backdrop to these personal accounts. I used the documents to provide context and material in which to situate the interview participants' experiences. I used interviews to examine how student affairs professionals who have been working in the field for up to five years feel supported and encouraged by their Jesuit institution to further develop their professional competency of social justice and inclusion. Because the research questions guiding this study focus on understanding a process, a qualitative study will provide insight to the perceived support of competency development from Jesuit institutions and allows for an element of storytelling for each participant.

Site and Population Selection

Mission University (MU) is the only Jesuit institution in Southern California. MU is one of the largest Catholic universities in the West (*Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities--Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, n.d.), and boasts about being in the top two percent in diversity across all colleges and universities according to College Factual (University, n.d.-a). The ethnicity of students is as follows: African American: 7.2%; Asian: 9.8%; Hispanic/Latino: 22.8%; White/Non-Hispanic: 42.4%; Multi-race: 7.8%. Geographic diversity is also considered; 9.9% of students are from outside of the United States and 34% are from outside of California

(University, n.d.-a). According to the University (n.d.-a), MU ranks in the top 10 of 234 of the "Best Catholic Colleges and Universities" in the US by Niche.com and out of the nation's top ten list of colleges and university promoting Latina/o student success, MU ranks third according to an Education Trust report; the entire report analyzed 613 public and private nonspecialized institutions. MU also ranks number 4 nationally for "Students Most Engaged in Community Service" of 25 colleges in the nation by Princeton Review (University, n.d.-a). These statistics lay claim for MU being a unique site to study how social justice and inclusion competencies are promoted and supported among student affairs professionals.

The Division of Student Affairs at MU currently employs approximately 100 full-time staff and of those, about 9% are early-career professionals. Because I have been employed at MU for 12 years, I have access to many of the documents needed for data analysis, and because of my position as the Inaugural Divisional Lead/Chair of the Student Affairs Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (SADEI) Initiatives Committee, my proximity to staff engaged in DEI practices proved helpful and allowed access to participants for a survey and individual interviews. My employment at MU also allowed for both feasibility and access to the site, and for a depth of understanding when researching the documents necessary for my study.

Access

Throughout my tenure at MU, I built strong rapport with my colleagues, developing relationships built on trust, understanding, and mutual benefit. Many of the colleagues that I interacted with have been close partners of mine in the division for some time. In this study I respectfully leveraged these partnerships while also being mindful of the emotional and spiritual impact that these interviews may have on participants. As my connection to MU and Jesuit higher education runs deep; so too do my connections with colleagues. Understanding that

allowed me to continuously be cognizant of the emotional labor that I am asking my colleagues to manage.

Acknowledging that my employment allowed ease of access to gather a robust sample, I was also mindful that my positionality as an employee deeply rooted in this work could potentially affect how honestly and openly participants would answer questions. To mitigate this concern, I ensured that I did not supervise or have a history of supervising any of the participants, nor did I hold a position of power that directly affected participants' employment or seemingly caused undue influence that would prevent them from providing their voluntary consent to participate in the study and answering honestly about their experiences at MU.

Participant Recruitment

To select interview participants, I used purposeful sampling to determine all early-career staff in the Division of Student Affairs (the division) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I defined early-career professionals as those who are new to the field of student affairs, having been employed full time for 0-5 years at any four-year institution. I obtained a list of all staff in the division through a divisional staff engagement committee of which I was the Social Committee Chair and verified the list was accurate in consultation with the Executive Assistant to the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs. I contacted each participant individually via my personal email address to invite them to interview for the study using their professional email addresses (See Appendix A).

Twelve was the target number of interviews to share their experiences with social justice and inclusion competency development. Sample size depends on the qualitative design being used (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Here I used a case study design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) reviewed many qualitative research studies and shared rough estimates regarding sample

size, and noted that for a case study, four or five cases is sufficient. As my study is a qualitative research design, 12 interviews coupled with document analysis was sufficient to discover how a student affairs practitioner feels supported by their institution

The participants in the interviews came from diverse backgrounds, areas of campus, and graduate areas of study. The twelve participants came from nine different departments within the Division of Student Affairs at MU. Those departments covered functional areas such as intercultural services, residential life, case management, student health, leadership, service programs, sorority and fraternity life and a diversity, equity, and inclusion office, The participants provided self-reported demographic information including age, race or ethnicity, and gender identity. The average age of the participants was 29 years with a range from 25-35 years of age. Participants identified as Latina (n = 2), Asian American, Jamaican and Filipino, African American, Afro-Latina, Mexican and third culture, White (n = 2), Multiracial – Black, Indigenous, and white, Guatemalan, and Black. Most participants had completed a graduate program in higher education administration/student affairs (n = 8). Other graduate programs included social work, clinical mental health counseling and school counseling, Latin American studies, conflict resolution and human rights, and health and wellness promotion.

Data Collection

Obtaining Relevant Documents

Data collection for the institutional documents was conducted through a thorough search for and review of documents at the institution. Because the focus of the study is methods of support for professionals by a Jesuit institution, I reviewed the policies of the division for onboarding new staff members, reviewed job descriptions and compensation packages when recruiting new professionals and searched for professional development opportunities at the

university for staff to develop the social justice and inclusion competence within the first five years of employment.

I also reviewed the organizational documents of the university, namely its mission; the mission, learning goals and outcomes of the division; and the founding documents of the Jesuits to examine the espoused values of this university. A review of the philosophy of St. Ignatius of Loyola also provided a foundation for the values this university is supposed to hold. I reviewed a total of eight documents at the university, divided amount student affairs, university, and Jesuit documents. I searched for documents that provided insight to the foundational mission and values of the university and the division of student affairs, as well as documents that concretely matched criteria of learning or training in social justice related topics. I ultimately used five of the eight documents I reviewed in this study.

Conducting Interviews

I conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with early-career professionals who had been involved in social justice and inclusion work throughout the division. I conducted these interviews remotely using Zoom, and used Rev.com for transcription, while also recording each interview as a backup. The interviews lasted an average of 65 minutes. Given the familiarity I had with the participants, I also was sure to dedicate time in the interview articulating that their participation was completely voluntary and how their information would be protected. **The interview questions asked participants about their sense of value of the social justice and inclusion competency, and their sense of support from the institution in strengthening this competency. The questions also asked participants about what strategies they use to navigate SJI work at a Jesuit institution. I spent time with the participants asking about their own developmental journeys related to SJI in order to better understand their**

current competency and the potential importance of the institution in fostering their

development. Data Analysis

This section summarizes how each method of data collection, and each research question were analyzed.

Organizational Document Review

I made notes while examining each document as to what supports were offered or provided to staff in a spreadsheet designated for document review. Each document had its own column, and I noted any areas that revealed themselves to be supportive of social justice and inclusion competencies, as defined by the Professional Competencies. I used a thematic analysis approach to the documents, looking for a form or pattern recognition within the documents' data. I took emerging themes and made them categories that I used later for further analysis, then focused on reading and re-reading of the documents while I coded them. I also compared what was described in documents to what staff reported experiencing at the institution.

Interview

In the initial review, I used the questions as categories for coding, and listened for possible sub-categories that could emerge. While I reviewed the transcripts, I made notes on themes that I saw emerging from the participants' answers and developed connections and categories, determining what was relevant to my study. I then used an online coding software to review the transcripts a last time, using the categories and subcategories that I established. I used this process for all interviews.

Positionality and Potential Ethical Issues

I positioned myself as a student affairs practitioner and simultaneously a UCLA doctoral student researcher. I believe that aligning my professional and academic positions helped to

make participants more comfortable, as I understand what it is like to work in the field. While my role as the divisional lead for SADEI initiatives was an advantage to gaining access, I thought it may be a hindrance when conducting the interviews, as the participants could have looked to me as an expert in the topic of social justice and inclusion competencies and begin to engage me for my thoughts. However, I was careful to emphasize that my role in that space was as a researcher and that my goal was to learn about their perspectives and thoughts about the topic, not highlight my own.

Even though all participants work on campus at MU, I conducted the interviews via Zoom and outside of work hours, in the evenings and weekends at the convenience of the participants. I thanked each participant individually with a handwritten note and token of appreciation, highlighting that their valuable insights and responses have contributed to the focus on student affairs educators' perspectives and experiences navigating equity work and social justice and inclusion competence.

Ethical concerns for this study involve the employment of participants. I asked participants to share honestly their opinions of their employer, the university, and its support of their professional and personal growth. Depending on what the participants shared, there was a potential risk that should the participants' identities be revealed, their employment status could be in jeopardy. Protecting the anonymity of participants' identities could have also proved challenging because the Division is small, and some answers could be traced back to a participant if demographic information is revealed in that answer. I assured participants that I would take measures to protect participant privacy and emphasized that the interview would remain confidential.I explained that transcripts and video recording of the interviews would remain safely stored within my storage cloud and on my personal computer. Additionally, I

asked participants to choose a pseudonym that would be used in the report of the findings of this study. Finally, the name of the university was changed to decrease the likelihood that readers could determine the identity of the site. When using participant quotes in my findings, I withheld demographic or other information that might reveal the identity of a particular individual.

Reliability, Credibility, and Trustworthiness

Because I am a member of the community of which I am studying, my own bias of the site and the sample selection were threats to credibility. All participants in the study knew me professionally, some personally, and some have collaborated with me for a number of years. Interview participants may have felt pressure to provide insights or feel inclined to answer questions in a way that they feel was helpful to the study because of their relationships with me. To combat that threat, I used transcriptions from the interviews, as well as my observer notes and review of the video recordings to accurately capture the answers and experiences of participants. The nature of my relationships with participants allowed for a safe environment in which they felt more open and comfortable sharing their experiences and feelings honestly. I informed all participants that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions asked, but rather, being completely candid about their experiences and beliefs could help inform their division of Student Affairs and institution, as well as other Jesuit, Catholic and otherwise religiously affiliated institutions.

Study Limitations

Several limitations exist in the difference between document analysis and data collected from interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Document data is not intended for research purposes. The materials I analyzed may have been incomplete from a research perspective, especially in comparison to that of an interview transcript. Additionally, determining the

authenticity and accuracy of documents was another problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Document analysis is dependent on the period in which these documents were created, as well as the state of the university, in this case. Documents are the result of much discussion and deliberation, and that discussion and deliberation could be considered a much richer set of data to analyze. Nevertheless, document analysis was used to illuminate "the topic of research and incorporated into the process of building categories and theoretical constructs…[therefore becoming] evidence in support of the findings" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Documents are a useful source of data for a case study like this because documents are easily accessible. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that "if one were interested in a historical case study of an institution or program, documents would be the best source of data, particularly if persons associated with the institution were not available for interviews" (p. 182). In this case, the persons responsible for the creation of the university's mission, for example, are unavailable in that the mission was developed and revised several times in the institution's 112-year history.

Conclusion

Chapter three provided detail of each methodological choice for my study. I have explained why and how I use document analysis to answer research questions pertaining to the ways Jesuit institutions provide support to staff in the development of their own values of social justice and inclusion, and how a Jesuit university aligns their institutional values with those of the Society of Jesus. I provided in-depth information on how I collected and analyzed data of original documents, and one-on-one interviews for the purpose of examining what strategies student affairs professionals may use to approach equity work at a Jesuit institution, and if those professionals feel an alignment of their own values and those of the university. I closed this

chapter by addressing issues of credibility, ethics and limitations that may hinder this study.

Chapter four focuses on how the methodology brings the study to life and explains its findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I report the findings of a qualitative case study focused on how one Jesuit institution supports the development of the social justice and inclusion career competency among early-career student affairs professionals. The purpose of this study is to add to the limited literature that explores whether there is support provided by colleges and universities to student affairs professionals to develop social justice and inclusion competency within the first five years of their career. It provides rationale for why social justice and inclusion is a necessary professional competence that institutions must not only promote and encourage their staff to improve, but also provide pathways to obtaining the knowledge that the institution's mission requires members of its community to have. My research participants revealed the following findings:

1. Early-career educators have their own definition of social justice that is separate from inclusion, and it aligns with what they know of the university's mission and the division's learning goals and outcomes.

2. Early-career practitioners are unaware of how to navigate developing the social justice and inclusion competency; that is, they can identify ways to grow in the competency, but do not have a provided strategy or path to finding it.

3. Early-career staff are individually supported by their supervisors to develop social justice and inclusion competency, and student affairs divisions should provide more opportunities for the entire division and encourage supervisors to support staff in their growth.

These findings emerged from my research where I interviewed 12 student affairs professionals at one Jesuit institution in the southwestern region of the United States, referred to as Mission

University. The participants are diverse in age, their work in different student affairs areas, gender identity, and educational background, primarily master's degree work. Additionally, I analyzed original documents from the university.

Defining Social Justice and Inclusion

Using the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies Rubric (ACPA & NASPA, 2016) as the theoretical framework for this study provided a foundation to understanding of how student affairs professionals grow in this competency. The rubric takes into account that there are multiple conceptions of social justice and inclusion in various contexts and provides a definition for the purpose of the professional competency. The definition for social justice and inclusion collectively is "both a process and a goal which includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups while seeking to address and acknowledge issues of oppression, privilege, and power" (ACPA & NASPA, 2016).

The first dimension of the rubric, *Understanding of self and navigating systems of power*, foundationally requires that one is able to articulate their own identities and intersectionality, identify what systems influence one's multiple identities, and articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and inclusion within higher education. It also requires that "student affairs educators have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context" (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Given the competency's definition and dimension, it is necessary for early-career student affairs educators to (1) know their institution's definition of social justice and inclusion, (2) develop their own definition of social justice and inclusion, and (3) look for alignment between the two.

University Definition

As a Jesuit institution, social justice and inclusion is embedded in the work of Mission University. Yet searching for a narrowly defined definition proved difficult. In my search through the university's mission statement, both the expanded and the truncated versions, I could not find a singular definition of this tenet of Jesuit education (AJCU, 2021). The two areas of the university that could hold a definition are the offices of Mission and Ministry, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). After reaching out to an upper level administrator at the university I learned that the closest formal definition of social justice (without inclusion) comes from the elaborated mission statement:

> We insist that the service of faith is incomplete without the promotion of justice. Together with the University's sponsoring religious orders and the post-Vatican II Church, we believe that participating in the struggle for justice in ways appropriate to our academic community is a requirement--not simply an option--of biblical faith. In this struggle [MU] makes common cause with all who share a commitment to local and global justice, whether they are motivated by faith or other noble ideals.

> The campus administrator shared that since MU does not have a formal definition, the university looks back to a long teaching of social justice within Catholic social teaching that informs the university's ideas of social justice. He admits that "this may be part of the challenge for [the university]: we assume everyone knows this tradition to which we allude, but there's no solid basis for that assumption!" (MU Administrator, personal communication, March 23, 2023). Uncovering this lack of a formal definition is perhaps the basis for a gap in the onboarding of new staff.

Four of the interview participants felt that they were familiar or very familiar with the university's mission. Bella and Mary Jane stated that they are familiar with the mission because

of their undergraduate education at MU, not their employment. Sarah believed she too was familiar with the mission, but upon answering the question, I noticed that her familiarity was actually with the division of student affairs learning goals and outcomes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Division of Student Affairs Learning Goals

PRACTICE IGNATIAN VALUES
MAKE DECISIONS CONGRUENT WITH THEIR PERSONAL BELIEFS, VALUES, AND FAITH THROUGH CONTINUOUS REFLECTION AND DISCERNMENT.

INTEGRATE MIND, BODY & SPIRIT
DEMONSTRATE TRANSFORMATIVE GROWTH AND DEVELOP AS WHOLE PERSONS THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT.

COMMIT TO SERVICE & JUSTICE
BE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS COMMITTED TO BUILDING A MORE JUST WORLD.

BECOME A GLOBAL CITIZEN
VALUE THE DIVERSITY OF THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND COMMIT TO THE PRACTICE OF INTERCULTURALISM TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS AS CITIZENS OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

LIVE A LIFE OF PURPOSE
LEAD A LIFE WHERE THEIR GREATEST PASSION MEETS THE WORLD'S GREATEST NEEDS.

These learning goals and outcomes, called the Five Pillars, are a way for students to integrate knowledge with action so they become leaders that transform the world. Ideally through the experiences students have at MU, they will be able to meet these outcomes. The pillars are derived from the university's mission but are not the mission. That distinction suggests that early-career professionals are not exposed to the university's mission and/or definition for social justice through employment in a meaningful way within their first five years. This could be because the university has no definition to share, or because the understanding of social justice and inclusion is assumed.

When participants were asked first research question, what do you view as social justice and inclusion work as a Jesuit institution, seven participants view social justice work as the process *towards* inclusion of marginalized communities and those who are underrepresented in many decision-making bodies. When asked how they define social justice and inclusion, six of the participants provided two separate definitions for social justice and inclusion. Sarah defined social justice as "standing up for what you believe in or just addressing current life issues that are happening" and inclusion as "allowing everyone a seat at the table." Danielle felt that:

> With social justice, I would say being specifically a Jesuit university, I think that just translates into multiple spaces from student, not revamping, but bringing back to life MEChA [a nationwide college student organization that seeks to promote Chicano unity and empowerment through political action], which again stands for advocacy and social justice to the multiple service orgs that we have on campus that each focus on a different social justice issue to also campus ministry doing work in that area. So I think it translates across the university in multiple capacities.

Danielle too had a separate definition for inclusion that focuses namely on the Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) student population:

> I think the work, when I think of inclusion specifically, I'm thinking specifically with our Black and Latine students. And so, I would say individuals, individuals or groups who are black and Latine groups specifically. And I'm thinking of, for example, from when was it, 2020 students bringing up to the university the need for a space for the Black community, for example. So, I think that conversation about inclusivity and the need for that and kind of things that were created to now in 2023, there is a role for the Dream Center [for undocumented students] director. So, I think gravitating towards historically

marginalized, I think groups, in that end to…just bringing those demands from the Latino Association to the university as a whole and that comes to mind with inclusion.

The university does have a more concrete definition of inclusion that is provided by the Office of DEI. At MU, "inclusion insists that all members of the…community are welcome and feel welcomed, have a voice and are able to fully participate in the co-creation of this vision of our world" (University, n.d.-a). Evidence from the interview participants shows that the personal definition of inclusion closely aligns with the definition provided by the university. This can provide a helpful roadmap to formalizing the university's values in its onboarding of staff in their first five years.

Student Affairs Interpretation of Social Justice and Inclusion Definition

While the university may lack a formal definition, the division provides more context for staff and their role in social justice and inclusion work with students. The Division has goals that are intended to guide staff and their work. Student affairs practitioners are expected to walk alongside students, and, in concert with faculty partners, commit to making the following goals a living reality:

- Promote innovative programs and events that develop an enlivened and engaged campus community.
- Instill in students the value of service and the promotion of justice.
- Guide students through a process of reflection, self-discovery, and character development.
- Foster students' respect for each other in an intercultural community.
- Advance the University's recruitment and retention efforts.
- Promote the integration of body, mind, and spirit.

- Encourage students to find God in all things.

- Commit to the practice of excellence.

- Prepare students for a life where their greatest passion meets the world's greatest need (University, n.d.-d).

Even still, none of these staff goals connect to a direct pathway of understanding how the division defines social justice and inclusion and can support the growth of that competency in their staff. Instead, the goals are what staff *should* strive for, which can be helpful *if* staff are aware of them.

These goals are critical for practitioners at this university to understand because it is the roadmap for their work, as set forth by the senior vice president. Yet no participant referenced these practitioner goals in their responses to alignment between their personal and professional goals. Instead, participants were much more familiar with the *student* learning goals of the division; what the division wants *students* to take from their experience at MU. The division has packaged these learning goals and outcomes into the five aforementioned pillars that are meant to "inspire students to integrate knowledge with action so they become leaders who transform the world" (University, n.d.-d). These pillars are reiterated to staff regularly through monthly divisional meetings and biannual divisional convocations, again for staff who teach an introduction to the university course for first year students, and again as a framework for a divisional annual report that is submitted to the provost of Mission University about the status of each department. Early-career staff at MU are also introduced to the five pillars through new staff orientation. David recalls becoming more familiar with the learning goals and outcomes due to his involvement within other functional student affairs areas at MU, and his involvement with student affairs associations and conferences both regionally and nationally. He feels that

"regardless of your involvement, you shouldn't have to be overly invested in the division to be understanding and aware of the outcomes."

Personal Values and Alignment of Social Justice and Inclusion Definitions

Student affairs educators need to be able to evaluate and assess themselves and their own understanding of social justice and inclusion using the Professional Competency Rubric in order to move from the foundational to the intermediate and eventually advanced outcomes of the competency. The data from my study show that early-career professionals do have some understanding of what social justice means at the university and the division; while a full assessment of the competency was not conducted, the data indicate that the professionals interviewed are at least at the foundational stage of their social justice and inclusion competence.

The foundational stage of the competency rubric states that professionals need to be "able to articulate one's identities and intersectionality…[and] articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and inclusion within the context of higher education" (ACPA & NASPA, 2016). When asked how they define social justice and inclusion at a Jesuit institution, there was alignment of the participants' personal definitions to at least one Jesuit tenet of the truncated mission. David connected his definition of social justice to both the *education of the whole person* and the *promotion of justice* in the university's mission. He stated, "social justice is what we do to educate young adults on what is essentially right in society." Fewer participants could name or summarize tenets of the mission, and then connect them to their personal definition for a deeper meaning of the expanded version of the mission. When asked how they define social justice and inclusion at a Jesuit institution, Bella felt that "being in a Jesuit institution gives [us] the proper place to talk about [social justice]." This does not mean that their experiences with social justice and inclusion work at the university is not important to them. It highlights that

there can be better alignment. Ashley feels that being at MU means that she seeks social justice issues to address with her students. Keisha believes that the work of student affairs professionals is to create a system that is inherently focused on social justice and inclusion; that MU is:

trying the best that they can with what they have. That social justice piece though I think is a component that we need to work on top down where we're challenging old views and welcoming newer views, or as you're defining younger, early-education, or whatever, [type of] professionals right there.

Some participants felt that equity, access, and living up to the university's mission are all part of the social justice and inclusion work at a Jesuit institution. While there is an alignment between social justice and inclusion work professionally, it can be potentially dangerous if not articulated clearly through action by the division or the university. Ryan E. highlights the dilemma:

I think when we are aligning those pieces of our strategic plan, how we want to move forward and aligning that even with our mission, [what] my current institution has done shows that emphasis of actually sticking to our mission. I think we can always just throw out our mission, which can look cute [;] we can brand it on whatever we want to. It can have that visual aspect, but if we're not putting in that actual work to uplift our mission, [it] becomes performative at large, which I think so many institutions have become cheerleaders of, unknowingly.

This is not to say that early-career student affairs professionals have no understanding of the mission of the university. Rather, it is a comment, as stated above, on those professionals who have more experience within Jesuit education, through their secondary or post-secondary education or their employment at an institution. Those who begin to work at a Jesuit institution

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without previous experience within Jesuit education have a more difficult time connecting their personal values to that of the university. However, professionals can still find a personal connection to the mission using their personal values. Becky had no Jesuit connection prior to employment at Mission. She chose to work there because she felt that she "[already] related to what the university's kind of message and values were. So, I knew this isn't going to be some foreign thing that I need to commit to. This is a lot of what I already care about too." Data show that the mission and values of an institution matter to student affairs professionals. Ashley believes in the mission "because the university and division of student affairs supports the work [she] does, and it aligns with my values." It would be beneficial to institutions to consider how they are helping staff uncover those values; this could lead to a deeper connection to the university and ideally, retention of student affairs professionals.

Developing Social Justice and Inclusion Competence

The second research question asked what strategies these student affairs professionals use to approach social justice and inclusion work at a Jesuit institution. To answer this question, participants were asked the following questions:

- How do student affairs professionals become conversant with the values and aims of a Jesuit education?

- How are these integrated into your work with students?

The study shows that early-career student affairs practitioners can identify specific ways, strategies, that they use to become more fluent in the language of social justice, inclusion, and Jesuit values. This was revealed through their on-campus experiences as staff. Mary Jane knew that:

New employees of the Student Affairs professional do receive like an orientation and a couple of workshops around Jesuit education and the university's values, so I know that's being presented to them in that way. I think for ongoing staff, we do incorporate it when it comes to, I think, reports that we have to create or when there are awards for certain type of student leadership.

Danielle felt that MU specifically had broad categories that help her become more conversant with the values and aims of a Jesuit education. She shared that "an event or a class lecture or some kind of activity…ultimately reflects…the university's values and mission." Danielle's experience is similar to that of other participants. However, five participants felt that there could be a more streamlined approach to helping student affairs professionals make sense of their work in a social justice and inclusion context. Ashley believes that if "there was some kind of formal, and I do mean formal, training that outlined what all of these things mean, and what this kind of means for us as professionals in this space, [it] would be very beneficial." Lara recently realized "there is a lack of official programming or official discussions to educate us on these values and these goals unless they're already happening at the office level, which I think they are." Lara works in an office that focuses on providing students opportunities to be of service to their community and advocate for social justice through action and participatory learning experiences. Mary Jane expressed that "in day-to-day context, I'm not sure if [strategies for approaching SJI work were] being presented with one staff to the other." Lara, along with Kristin, Ryan, and Becky felt that through conversations in their specific departments and with supervisors, they were beginning to understand where social justice and inclusion knowledge exists and how to become involved in those conversations.

While early-career professionals understand how they can learn about social justice and inclusion, they were not provided with a clear path to navigate growth in the competency. Ten of the participants could identify programs and experiences that they felt helped staff grow in their understanding of social justice and inclusion. They were able to name at least one program from the university and/or from the division, which is promising evidence to build upon. However, many of the programs or experiences offered are short-term, either a one-day workshop or a one-time event. One participant, Ashley, shared the following:

> There was one program…the Cultural Consciousness, something. I only went for one day though, because it was a one-day thing, but there is a longer cohort. *This* is an effort. However, the effort is very... I don't see where it goes, after the programming. After the workshop, I see the vision for the workshop. I think it did a really good job of outlining possible implicit biases. It did a good job of allowing you to see your peers and learn a little bit about their background so you can possibly understand where they could be coming from. However, long term, there is no... What do we call that? Continued learning, or there is no follow up as to outcomes, or what we're supposed to be getting from this. After this, what are we supposed to feel, and how is this supposed to...? So, I feel like it's a good start, however, it doesn't do anything to personalize the work that we could do as individuals, after we learn each other's backgrounds. We do a lot of work of getting to know one another as staff, but then after, it doesn't kind of build on, "Now we know each other's backgrounds and how unique they are, how can we be pairing these unique backgrounds with some kind of efforts of work, to do something else?"

I also searched for relevant documents from the university's human resources department, the DEI office, and the division of student affairs website to find evidence of ways

that staff can increase their social justice and inclusion competence. Evidence shows that the foundational offerings, programs, and experiences for staff to increase their knowledge of social justice and inclusion competence exist at the university. But there is not a systematic way for early-career student affairs staff to be made aware of the programs. A review of documents for human resources new staff orientation and divisional onboarding reveals a modicum of information in multiple places across the university. However, I was able to find these documents because I knew where to look as a 12-year veteran staff member. The document analysis data revealed there is no one location where professionals new to the university can find all the offerings.

New staff orientation exists both through the university's human resources department and through the division for the onboarding of new student affairs practitioners. After a thorough search of new staff orientation materials by the human resources department, there is no list or website provided to help new staff orient themselves with the university's efforts for social justice and inclusion. Human resources work closely with the DEI office to have equitable hiring practices at the university. I knew that Ryan's role in the DEI office could provide more insight to my study because their work is specifically connected to increasing access to a social justice and inclusion knowledge base in hiring practices for the university. They shared a draft of a one-page interactive sheet of information to be used to assist new staff with increasing their SJI knowledge as a part of a DEI orientation process. The information is scheduled to roll out widely to the university in fall 2023. The creation of this document is evidence that the university is responding to the needs of a growing, more culturally inclusive employee pool and is attempting to provide more transparent evidence of their support for SJI knowledge.

Support for the Growth of Social Justice and Inclusion Competence

As the focus of this study is methods of support for developing a professional competency, I reviewed the policies and offerings of the Division for onboarding new staff members. I then searched for professional development opportunities at the university for staff to develop social justice and inclusion competence within the first five years of employment through the DEI office. On the DEI office's website, I uncovered the president's letters to the community that begin in June 2020 at the height of the country's racial reckoning, addressing the issues our country was facing. Throughout this series of five letters, the president proclaimed plans to make the university an anti-racist institution through three commitments:

1. Hiring: "We will increase the diversity and inclusiveness of our [MU] community and commit resources to do so."

2. Climate and Culture: "We will ensure that our organizational climate and culture are anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive, with particular attention to anti-Black racism."

3. Education: "A [MU] education must be unequivocally inclusive and anti-racist."

Interview participants were asked the extent to which they felt the elements of the plan were known and enacted throughout campus. All participants stated that they did not feel the plans were known on campus outside of student affairs. Becky shared that what was known on campus about the plan was performative, like the establishment of Juneteenth as a university holiday in 2020. Kristin, who was employed at MU before 2020, shared the following thought:

We have a lot of new people coming here on campus with the words being thrown around that we are an anti-racism institution, but I don't even sometimes see what that even means anymore. You made a declaration. Yeah, there's a website for me to check on, make sure they can see where the status is of things. But that doesn't really show me where you've actually made the difference and stuff. And I feel like it was something that

we needed to do, and it was something that was said during that time, but it's still not something that we are continuing, sometimes, to embrace and make sure the newer [staff] embrace too.

Participants were asked directly if they feel supported by MU, and more specifically, the Division of Student Affairs, to increase their knowledge about social justice and inclusion. Eleven of the twelve participants stated that they do feel supported, but by whom and in what ways differed. Lara said

I do feel supported, and that's to say in that no one is actively trying to hinder my expanded knowledge and learning about social justice and my own development towards inclusion and DEI work, so no one's hindering that and that's a good thing.

Danielle felt that her support came from her direct supervisor

I would say in student affairs, yes, but I would maybe kind of bring it back down to my direct supervisor, and I'm not sure how much it gets up to of, "Oh, can Danielle attend this conference, or can funds be used to by X book," or this department's understanding or learning of social justice. So from a supervisor's standpoint, I feel supported, which I think if I am being supported, I think there is, even if it doesn't go up. I think ultimately I would say student affairs, yes, I'm going to conferences, getting books, attending summits, workshops, professional developments.

It should be noted that Lara and Danielle are in the same functional area of student affairs at MU and share a supervisor once removed. Similarly, Becky has "always been very supported by supervisors, which I think is important because in a way that also trickles down to social justice and inclusion as well. I think being surrounded by a good team I think is important." Bella feels

supported within her department and is encouraged "to learn more, to promote social justice and to be involved and to put that into practice in work."

David and Kristin feel supported to develop their knowledge because they are not hindered by their supervisors. This is a different kind of support that does not necessarily reflect encouragement. Kristin said she was "supported as long as I come to them with how I want to do it." David shared that the support also depends on individual staff desires. He felt that

> the resources are provided to us. Whether we choose to do that and act on that is really based on the person… I think it was very telling and understanding that even within our division, not a lot of people were signed up for [a] workshop. Even though it's something that as a very high touch student-facing role, should be something we're looking into."

Their supervisors allow time off for exploration of this competency at work and through professional development opportunities outside of the university.

Kristin was concerned that the path to developing social justice and inclusion competency was one that the division started but did not continue, and is not sure how to continue growing:

> The classes and courses I took here at LMU were a great entry level point, but we're kind of stuck in the middle point. After I got done taking the anti-racism courses, after I got done taking the implicit bias, I don't know what's next. There is no next steps as far as me growing in that situation. So, if I come to them with an idea, they're willing and ready to help implement it if possible, and if we have the budget for it, but I have to be proactive on that end.

Similarly, Lara wondered "what it could look like for the division to actively invest in opportunities that would educate and further my knowledge and understanding of diversity,

equity, inclusion, and anti-racist best practices and holding those conversations at the forefront of our work." Her statement is a summary of the feelings of nearly all interview participants.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office offers training in implicit bias, cultural consciousness, and anti-racism that staff at any level can opt into. Interview participants named several of these offerings when asked what programs and policies assist them in their development of SJI. The division of student affairs provides access to the university's DEI resources and encourages new professionals to attend workshops during new staff orientation, but these offerings are not mandatory. The division does provide a separate, mandatory Cultural Consciousness workshop, as mentioned by Ashley, which is a one-day off campus workshop meant to help staff understand the intercultural ethos of student affairs at MU. There is also evidence in new staff orientation that practitioners are exposed to Jesuit Association of Student Personnel Administrators (JASPA), an organization whose vision is to be the student affairs leader in Catholic higher education, advancing professional development within the rich heritage of Ignatian values. There is a presentation provided from an MU staff member who is also on the executive board for JASPA during the orientation that encourages new professionals to explore JASPA, a place where they can develop justice and inclusion values of Jesuit institutions.

Summary

Chapter four detailed findings for each research question. Social justice is a term defined in multiple ways and in multiple contexts but for this institution, its definition is rooted in the tenets of its founding orders. Student affairs staff value this definition alongside their own personal definition, and data show the definitions are congruent. Having a foundational definition helps staff understand how they can further develop the professional competency that is necessary for their work. I also found that staff need assistance in navigating the university and

division of student affairs in finding places to develop that competence. Finally, I found that early-career staff feel supported to develop the competency but would like the division to provide a clearer pathway for that development. In the next chapter, I discuss the implications of these findings on the future of Jesuit student affairs.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Student affairs professionals are charged with walking alongside students in their journey through higher education, helping them wrestle with the bigger questions that reveal themselves during a student's tenure. Student affairs educators are continuously called on to help students make meaning of the work around them. These statements lead me to believe that those educators should be aware of the task put upon them, what they are expected to facilitate for the students with whom they work. However, many professionals are not aware of the training and competencies necessary to provide that support. Is it fair to expect them to be proficient in a competency area many do not know exist and are not supported in developing? This study examined the values of a Jesuit institution whose mission calls for a focus and proposition of social justice, and examined how the institution supported its staff's development of a student affairs professional competency area focused on social justice and inclusion. In Jesuit circles, that idea is referred to as *cura apostolica*.

Cura apostolica most literally translates to apostolic care. In a modern application, it translates to care for the community, an individual's apostolate or ministry work, and the care to be given to the work. Stephanie Russell, vice president of the AJCU, reflected on *cura apostolica* in the context of a loss of trust in higher education. Russell (2019) posited that an authentic embrace of *cura apostolica* brings us to a deeper level of humanity and mission commitment at Jesuit institutions.

In his yearly letter to brother Jesuits, Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J. (2020) wrote that *cura apostolica* and *cura personalis* are "dimensions of **one single *cura,*** that is, care for mission. This single *cura* has as its focus persons, communities and works, which are at the service of mission. It is a mission, therefore, that must be the fundamental criterion that unites *cura*

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apostolica and *cura personalis*." A difficulty arises when the two ideas are separated. Russell (2019) helps ground the connection and difference between the two within Jesuit institutions:

> *Cura apostolica* is the complement to *cura personalis*, but it is not an institutional counterweight that tempers our warm and fuzzy inclinations to provide personal care…Rather, through *cura apostolica*, the same intimate knowledge and compassion found in *cura personalis* is extended, beyond any single person, to encompass our shared personhood and mission. Thinking of a Jesuit college or university as a complex and communal person rather than a corporate container for good works transforms our sterile language about "the university" to a more humane and invested conversation about "our university" and "us." It allows us to confront our common failings and build on shared virtues. We matter to each other; we matter together for the common good.

The work of Jesuit higher education is for all of us, for those who choose to be a part of a place with purpose and mission. To live the mission fully, we must refocus our work on the development of competencies that propel that mission forward. Through the experiences of early-career student affairs professionals, we begin to understand if "the university" is investing in "us."

My study found that early-career student affairs professionals must have alignment between their personal values, the university's values, and the values of the student affairs division. The study also reveals that there is no clear pathway for early-career student affairs professionals to grow in the social justice and inclusion competency at the institution. Finally, the study reveals that early-career student affairs staff feel supported by their supervisors to develop social justice and inclusion competency, and that student affairs divisions need to provide more opportunities for staff to grow in this competency. This final chapter connects

these findings with previous research, and shares recommendations on practice for both practitioners and higher education institutions.

Discussion

My study answered the following research questions:

1. What do early-career student affairs professionals view as SJI work at a Jesuit institution?

2. What strategies do these student affairs professionals use to approach SJI work at a Jesuit institution?

3. In what ways does a Jesuit institution support the development of the social justice and inclusion competence among early-career student affairs educators?

4. In what ways does one Jesuit institution encourage alignment between its espoused values and the personal values of early-career student affairs staff?

The interview protocol (see Appendix B) addressed each of the research questions and examined closely what became the overarching research question of the study: how does one Jesuit institution support the development of the social justice and inclusion competence among early-career student affairs educators? This section highlights my findings, and both supports existing literature that pushes for an examination of the mission of Jesuit institutions for student affairs staff and fills in gaps within existing literature about the intersection of Jesuit higher education, its mission and values, and the social justice and inclusion competency needed for student affairs practitioners.

Finding 1: Early-career educators have their own definition of social justice that is separate from inclusion, and it aligns with what they know of the university's mission and the division's learning goals and outcomes.

The student affairs staff that I interviewed expressed that they have some level of understanding of the mission and values of the university and were able to align their own values with at least one tenet of the truncated mission. This finding supports the notion that contextualizing student affairs educators within Jesuit higher education requires an examination of the mission of the Society of Jesus (Stringer & Swezey, 2006). Additionally, my findings confirm that for Jesuit colleges and universities, alignment between staff personal and institutional values is necessary and that student affairs plays an integral role in achieving institutional mission (Garcia et al., 2021; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). This alignment directly reflects the teaches in *The Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities,* in which "student affairs professionals at Catholic institutions are both guided by generally-accepted principles of student affairs practice and called to bring the Catholic mission to life in their work, often within the context of the charism of the institution's founding congregation" (Estanek & James, 2007).

Interview participants separated social justice from inclusion when asked to provide a personal definition. Without a concrete definition from the university, alignment of personal and professional values with those of the university is that much more difficult to obtain. The mission of MU directly expresses the following idea:

> The service of faith is incomplete without the promotion of justice. Together with the University's sponsoring religious orders and the post-Vatican II Church, we believe that participating in the struggle for justice in ways appropriate to our academic community is a requirement--not simply an option--of biblical faith. In this struggle [Mission] makes common cause with all who share a commitment to local and global justice, whether they are motivated by faith or other noble ideals. (University, n.d.)

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This portion of the mission explains that regardless of motivation, social justice is our common cause. University mission statements are often used to express "the aspirations, often unstated, that society has for institutions of higher education. These aspirations are consensual and represent the most general level of hopes and expectations people in general hold for colleges and universities" (Fenske, 1980; Scott, 2006). The purpose of mission-based Jesuit education is to prepare graduates to be leaders in service to others, to be people of competence, conscience, and compassionate commitment (Duminuco, 2000; Stringer & Swezey, 2006). At Mission, there is an added layer to this definition that is mandated by Ignatian values and purpose. Social justice is at the center of the mission of the Society of Jesus and therefore even more fundamental to the mission of the university. My findings suggest that there is a potential pitfall in having Jesuit student affairs practitioners who do not understand how their own values directly align with those of the university, and to understand how to put that alignment into action. Early-career student affairs practitioners understand why they choose to do the work they do at a Jesuit institution and mission and values are a part of that decision. However, my findings reveal that they also want to understand where to put that understanding into practice for their students.

Finding 2: Early-career practitioners are unaware of how to navigate developing the social justice and inclusion competency; they can identify ways to grow in the competency, but do not have a provided strategy or path to finding it.

In the early 2000s, student affairs scholars began to understand the necessity of defining competencies for professionals that may not be taught in graduate training programs. By 2007, many scholars began to emphasize the incorporation of multicultural issues into the curriculum and training of student affairs (Castellanos et al., 2007; Pope & Mueller, 2017; Pope et al., 2019;

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Wilson, 2013). As mentioned, eight of 12 participants were trained in a student affairs and/or higher education administration graduate program after 2010. It is safe to assume that these professionals received a curriculum that incorporated, emphasized, or outright taught students about social justice and inclusion practices and competencies as it relates to the field they were going to enter. Pope et al. (2019) claim that while past studies evidence that multicultural issues are being incorporated into the curriculum of student affairs preparation graduate programs, there is limited research that examines an introduction of social justice issues in that curriculum. Flowers and Howard-Hamilton (2002) found that most programs do have a diversity course, but not all do and for some students, Gaston, Gayles and Kelly (2007) discovered that "learning about diversity issues often occurred outside of the classroom" (pg. 25) for graduate students in student affairs programs. My findings suggest that while these professionals were exposed to social justice and inclusion in some of their graduate courses, the skills that the competency defined as necessary were not emphasized in any meaningful way. It is also unclear if the remaining four participants were ever exposed to social justice, inclusion, diversity and/or multicultural student development courses in their graduate training. This supports the argument that the Professional Competencies and the accompanying rubric should be incorporated into an onboarding and continued education program for professionals in student affairs. These issues will only become more pertinent and common in the future. Institutions, especially those whose mission focus on social justice and inclusion, have a duty to provide avenues for development of this competency for those who work with students at a pivotal time in their development.

Because social justice and inclusion is embedded in the values of MU, a definition should be foundational in guiding student affairs staff through the development of the competency. However, a document analysis of MU concluded that there is no formal definition of social

justice or inclusion. My findings reveal that there is a gap in the onboarding and training of staff regarding this competency. For those who are hired with a lack of formal training in student affairs or higher education, there will be a meaningful gap in the support that they can provide students in the navigation of social justice and inclusion. To help close this gap, more structured formalized training is needed for anyone who works with students. This training should occur as a part of the onboarding process to the university, as to ensure that all members of the university community have the skills necessary to complete a fundamental part of their work.

This study also reveals that early-career student affairs professionals need to understand their own idea of social justice and inclusion, both personally and professionally to be prepared to assist students in their own challenges with social justice and inclusion issues or incidents. Additionally, they need to understand their institution's commitment to social justice and inclusion and align that with their own understanding. The Council for the Advancement of Standard in Higher education support the findings in my study: "[i]f, as a profession, student affairs espouses the value diversity within higher education for students, faculty and staff it should be equally important for each individual to demonstrate a personal commitment to diversity or inclusion" (Kretovics, 2002). Early-career student affairs practitioners are aware of some of the ways they can become more competent in this area, but the university has not provided a clear pathway for growth.

Finding 3: Early-career staff are individually supported by their supervisors to develop social justice and inclusion competency, and student affairs divisions should provide more opportunities for the entire division and encourage supervisors to support staff in their growth.

Knowledge of social justice and inclusion and the importance of developing that professional competency is often learned through graduate preparation programs (Boss et al., 2018). Eight of 12 interview participants in this study were trained through a formal higher education and/or a student affairs administration graduate program. The remaining four have graduate preparation in social work, Latin American studies, health and wellness promotion and business, and clinical mental health counseling; those participants' graduate degrees directly connect to the work that they are doing in student affairs. However, they may or may not have exposure to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of working with students in college. My findings support literature that suggests using a professional competency like social justice and inclusion can fill in the gap of specific student affairs training and knowledge for those not formally educated in the field (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Perez-Velez, 2019).

The study's final interview question asked participants if they feel supported by Mission University and the division of student affairs to increase their knowledge of social justice and inclusion. Nearly all the interview participants shared that they were supported in developing this competency but felt that the division of student affairs could do a better job in actively investing in opportunities to further education staff on social justice and inclusion. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office offers training in implicit bias, cultural consciousness, and anti-racism that are open to all staff. The interview participants were aware of these programs, but the programs were not shared with them during any onboarding process, suggested by their supervisor, or mandated by the division of student affairs. Gansemer-Topf and Ryder (2017) uncovered that early-career professionals need to be able to apply their knowledge of theories into practice regarding diversity and social justice. While emphasis is placed on the values and content related to social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in graduate programs, staff are conversant in the

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accompanying theories, but have difficulty enacting the theories in real-time. This is evidence that there is a need for a clear pathway to developing social justice and inclusion competency early in the careers of student affairs practitioners, as it will most likely be an issue, they are faced with within their first five years of employment.

Limitations of the Study

Sample and Document Analysis

This study was originally designed to examine three tiers of student affairs professionals to gain perspective on the necessity of social justice and inclusion competency for early-career professionals. Research shows that mid-level and senior level professionals can help determine what types of professional competences are necessary for early-career professionals to possess in the field of student affairs (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Garcia et al., 2021). I intended to conduct three focus groups: one with early-career professionals, one with mid-level professionals, and one with senior administrators in student affairs. After consideration with my dissertation committee, I focused the research on the narratives of early-career professionals and their perspectives to gain deeper insight as to their preparation and development of the competency. This was a worthwhile endeavor and provided rich data to support the notion that there are more concrete pathways to develop this competency in the manner determined by NASPA and ACPA through the Professional Competencies Rubric.

In Chapter 3, I thought that the quality of the documents I reviewed would be a study limitation. While I discovered that some documents, like a university definition for social justice and inclusion, did not exist, many documents were in fact complete and accessible.

Recommendations

This study presents three implications for student affairs practice, particularly within Jesuit higher education. These implications are the result of the data collected through interviews with early-career professionals and understanding how their narrative highlights avenues for change, as well as crucial document analysis. My findings lead to the following recommendations for practice.

Mandatory Training and Continued Education

My findings indicate that there is a gap between what early-career student affairs professionals are learning about diversity, social justice, and inclusion in their graduate preparation programs and what they encounter in a situation working with students. More structured formalized training for anyone who works with students in this way should be a mandatory part of the onboarding process to the university, to ensure that they have the skills necessary to complete a fundamental part of their work. Student affairs divisions should take special care to incorporate this as a part of new staff onboarding for their work. NASPA and ACPA suggest that The Professional Competencies Rubrics be used to develop curriculum or training related to a specific competency for the entire division. The rubrics can provide a framework to develop outcomes for professional development and training. Moreover, rubrics are encouraged to be used to provide a curriculum for onboarding new employees in areas that may directly pertain to their functional area or areas that are central to the mission and work of a student affairs division. This supports the argument that the Professional Competencies and the accompanying rubric should be incorporated into an onboarding and continued education program for professionals in student affairs. These issues will only become more pertinent and common in the future. Institutions, especially those whose mission focus on social justice and

inclusion, have a duty to provide avenues for development of this competency for those who

work with students at a pivotal time in their development.

Onboarding and Orientation

Similarly, my study makes clear that there is a need for a streamlined onboarding then

orientation process for new staff in student affairs that reflects the teachings of Jesuit values and

its alignment with professional standards of the field. It is not only imperative, but necessary,

that Jesuit institutions provide a direct path for the development of this competency for its staff

because of the social justice focus of the mission. If an institution does not, cannot, or will not

follow this directive, it is not fulfilling a core tenet of St. Ignatius and the founders of the Society

of Jesus. Human resources departments and hiring managers for student affairs should consider

adding a question regarding social justice and inclusion competence in the interview process so

that the university can help determine a candidate's level of competency and indicate to the

person interviewing that social justice and inclusion is a critical competency necessary for their

work.

Onboarding typically begins before new staff officially begin their positions. In

preparation documents, new staff should receive a packet of information that includes the

mission, values, and ethos of both the university and division of student affairs. Typically, on the

first day or within the first week of employment, new staff should attend orientation that will

include a session on why social justice and inclusion is in the fabric of the university and

division. The division should also provide an orientation that includes an assessment tool to

assist staff in determining where they land on the social justice and inclusion spectrum and

identify ways to gain more understanding over time.

Social Justice and Inclusion Definition

Jesuit universities and divisions of student affairs need to determine a clear definition of social justice and inclusion that is widely publicized and known by all employees, as a matter of fulfilling their mission. My study suggests that if such a definition exists, it helps staff more clearly understand the university's commitment to social justice and inclusion, and helps staff design their own working definition that is in alignment with their values and the values of the university and division. The definition should also be rooted in the mission of the Society of Jesus, and any other sponsoring religious orders that are a part of the institution. This definition must be attainable and easy to understand so that students, staff, and faculty can find their own personal definition within.

A Tool for Jesuit Student Affairs

My study highlights how a guided pathway would help Jesuit student affairs divisions provide a concrete way to increase social justice and inclusion competency among their staff. The data from this study suggest that:

1. It is important for student affairs professionals to understand deeply the mission of the university.

2. Social justice and inclusion is at the heart of the mission of Jesuit institutions and student affairs staff need to be able to define social justice and inclusion.

3. Staff need to understand where they are on the scale of social justice and inclusion competency.

4. The university needs to provide more specific ways to help staff move from foundational to intermediate and eventually to advanced competency in social justice and inclusion as a matter of fulfilling the mission of the university and the best practices and principles of Jesuit and Catholic student affairs work.

To achieve this, I propose a robust day-long orientation program for new student affairs staff. Ideally the program would be led by the senior student affairs officer (SSAO) with assistance from the mission and ministry division because research shows "that presidents, senior academic officers, and student affairs staff members all looked to the SSAO to integrate the Catholic identity of the institution with student life" but that SSAOs "struggled to affect this integration of student affairs and Catholic identity because they believed that they did not know enough about the Catholic tradition" (Estanek & James, 2012). Because the majority of SSAOs are lay women and men trained in student affairs at secular institutions, working collaboratively with mission and ministry will help to bolster SSAOs confidence and knowledge of "their role of interpreter of the Catholic identity of the institution in the realm of student life" (Estanek, 2007).

The program will be presented in four parts with follow up within the first year of employment. First, new staff will be exposed to the university and division of student affairs' mission and definition of social justice and inclusion. A member of the mission and ministry staff will offer a reflection on the mission, an introduction to Ignatian ideals, values and practices to help participants begin their understanding of a Jesuit education.

Next, the SSAO will introduce the Professionals Competency Areas for Student Affairs and *The Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs At Catholic Colleges And Universities* together as best practices for Jesuit student affairs professionals and to provide a foundation for what is being asked of them as student affairs professionals around social justice and inclusion work. This section would include an assessment of all new staff using the Professional Competency Rubric for social justice and inclusion to determine where new staff were on the spectrum. This pre-assessment would be conducted by the director of student affairs research and assessment or someone in a similarly appropriate role.

The third part of the orientation would be an interactive discussion with new staff about the initial reactions to what they are being called to do in their work. New staff would also be asked to reflect on their own ideas of social justice and inclusion and begin creating their own definition, sharing them with the group if they feel comfortable. This would also allow for collective flow of ideas, with the moderator noting any suggestions from the group on how to continue growth in this competence. At the end of the discussion, the moderator will share a series of in person and virtual professional development opportunities on campus, through the student affairs division, and through JASPA and NASPA to further develop their SJI competence. New staff will be expected to engage in at least five of the opportunities presented throughout their first year.

The final portion of the day-long program would be an Examen lead by the vice president for mission and ministry. The Examen is "method of peaceful daily prayer taught by St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises as a way to notice the presence of God in one's daily life and to live in generous response to it" (University, n.d.-e). The examen is an important practice for Jesuits and those affiliated with Jesuit schools, colleges, and universities, and should be introduced to new staff as they begin their careers at a Jesuit university. The examen is expressed in multiple formats and themes, but in its most basic form it involves five steps (University, n.d.-e):

1. Centering. Come to a place of stillness and peace and recognize God's presence with you. Ask for assistance to see yourself and your experiences as God sees.

2. Gratitude. Recall the gifts you have been given and be thankful.

3. Review. Recall the events of the day (or the period to be reflected on), noticing especially experiences that bring up strong emotions, whether positive or negative.

4. Sorrow. Consider any moments of regret or when you fell short. Ask forgiveness for any wrongs done.

5. Response. In light of your reflections, ask for grace for tomorrow and the future.

Ending the day-long orientation for Jesuit student affairs social justice and inclusion with an examen punctuates the importance of the mission and values of the university and stresses the importance of this competency for student affairs professionals.

At the end of the first year of each cohort of new staff members, they will take a post-orientation assessment that determines if they have moved along the social justice and inclusion competence spectrum. Assessments will be analyzed by the director of student affairs research and assessment and presented to each participant by the SSAO. This cycle of assessment can and should be duplicated for continuing staff on a regular cadence of every two to five years.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study points to two areas for continued research. Future researchers should consider expanding the study to include multiple Jesuit institutions to determine if there is a better practice for increasing social justice and inclusion competency among the 28 US and Central American Jesuit institutions, or even globally. Expanding the study to multiple institutions provides even richer data that could reveal a better sense of how this competency's development is being supported or reveal that this could be a systemic problem for Jesuit institutions.

Additionally, this study could be replicated with multiple levels of student affairs staff. The competencies were originally developed in 2010. If this study was done with senior student affairs leadership and/or mid-level student affairs managers, the graduate preparation programs attended would likely not have had an emphasis or even class focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, or diversity. The findings from a study with interview participants

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before the Professional Competencies would likely reveal that these professionals came to have

social justice and inclusion competency through experiences rather than training, or that these

professionals lack social justice and inclusion competence and should consider additional

education to develop it.

Study Participant Recruitment Email

Subject Line: Research Study Interview Request

Dear Colleague,

I hope this email finds you well this spring semester. I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Program at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Education. My dissertation focuses on the support Jesuit higher education provides early-career student affairs professionals in developing social justice and inclusion competence.

I write to solicitate your participation in an interview to fulfill the requirements of my study. The interview will be no longer than 90 minutes and will be conducted via Zoom. Participation in the study is voluntary. The interview will consist of mostly open-ended questions about your experiences as an early-career student affairs professional at a Jesuit university, and your perceptions of the division and university support provided to you. An informed consent form will be sent to you in advance of the interview.

If you are willing to participate in this research study, please choose any interview slot using **this calendar link**. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Lisha K.M. McGrue

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for spending time with me today to discuss your experiences as a student affairs professional at Mission University. Before we begin, I want to inform you of some guidelines and provide context for this interview:

- The purpose of today's interview is to explore the experience you have had at this institution regarding support for the development of your personal and professional social justice and inclusion competency as an early-career level practitioner.

- For the purposes of this interview and further research, I define the term early-career as

  - *Early-career student affairs professionals*: full time employees of a division of student affairs at one or more four-year institutions who have been employed 1-6 years (Hirschy et al., 2015). These positions are as those that involve high student contact through direct individual or group services, and positions that are responsible for program development and conceptualization of direct services (Burkard et al., 2005).

- The information gathered in this interview will be analyzed in aggregate and presented in the context of my doctoral dissertation and dissertation committee. I will keep identifying information confidential. Additionally, I will use your first name and initial of your last name in the transcription. However please feel free to choose your own pseudonym and rename yourself with that name in Zoom if that makes you more comfortable to share. I will try to refer to you as such throughout the interview.

- I will record this interview via Zoom so that I can accurately capture our conversation and refer to at a later time. Please do not hesitate to ask me to stop recording at any time. This interview will be approximately 60 minutes.

- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Personal Values

1. Please introduce yourself with your name or pseudonym, current position, years of service in student affairs in general, and years of service to this institution.

2. What personal values guide your work as a student affairs professional?

3. How do you define social justice and inclusion?
   a. How do you define social justice and inclusion work in student affairs?
   b. In a Jesuit institution?

4. What do you view as SJI work at Mission University?

5. What does SJI mean for you, your functional area, and your institution?

Alignment of personal values with university values

6. How familiar are you with the mission of the university?

7. How familiar are you with the learning goals and outcomes of the division of student affairs?

8. How do you feel the personal values you stated earlier align with the values (mission, learning goals and outcomes) of the university and division?

Views of support from the university

9. In what ways do you feel Mission University's operations, policies and programs advance a deeper and richer understanding of social justice and inclusion?

10. What programs and experiences do you feel help staff to grow in their understanding of social justice and inclusion?

11. How do you feel the University is exercising its role as a public citizen to offer programs and convene discussions on social justice and reconciliation with campus communities?

12. In the president's June 2020 letter to the Mission University community, he declared that MU would be an anti-racist institution, stating that "our Catholic, Jesuit, and Marymount mission demands that we stand in solidarity and hold ourselves and our society accountable for this intolerable lack of progress." Two weeks later, he wrote a follow up letter titled *Beyond Words* where he listed plans to enact his declaration of an anti-racist community on campus.
     a. Are you familiar with these letters and declarations?
          i. *If yes, proceed to follow up questions.*
          ii. *If no, offer a moment for participant to read the letters.*
     b. How well do you feel the elements of the plan are known throughout the campus?
     c. How do feel the elements of that plan have been enacted on campus?
     d. Do you know how the University will measure its progress in combatting institutional racism?

Strategies to approach SJI work

13. How do student affairs professionals become conversant with the values and aims of a Jesuit education?
     a. How are these integrated into your work with students?

14. How are openness and responsiveness evidenced in the institution in its commitments to equity and inclusion, to the elimination of racial, gender and other biases?

    a. How so in the division of student affairs?

15. Do you feel supported by Mission University and the division of student affairs to increase your knowledge about social justice and inclusion?
    a. If so, in what ways?
    b. If not, why?
16. Optional Demographic Information
    a. Age:
    b. Race, Ethnicity, Culture or however you identify with that information:
    c. Gender identity:
    d. Sexual identity:
    e. Geographic location or origin, or wherever you call home:
    f. Area of master's degree:

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