Social Justice and Inclusion as Competency: a Content Analysis of Syllabi in Student Affairs Master’s Programs

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The Graduate School

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION AS COMPETENCY:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SYLLABI IN STUDENT
AFFAIRS MASTER’S PROGRAMS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Higher Education and P-12 Education
Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

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has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in Department of Leadership, Policy, and Development: Higher Education and P-12 Education, Program of Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

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ABSTRACT


This dissertation seeks to explore and discovers how the social justice and inclusion competency set forth by American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in 2015 is achieved in student affairs master’s programs. The idea of an individual being able to achieve competency in social justice and inclusion is problematized. A competency-based approach sets up social justice and inclusion as an attainable skill set instead of an ongoing and lifelong approach of challenge injustice with and for minoritized communities. The literature review provides an overview of the development of student affairs. The overview of the evolution of student affairs is discussed beginning in the idealist years, through the diversification and shifting idealism years, to realism and the seed years of student affairs, followed by pragmatist thought and student development, to the continuation of pragmatism to present day.

A pragmatist and postmodern perspective with a content analysis method is used to respond to the research questions. The research questions were, how do master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs communicate social justice and inclusion in curriculum and how are the competencies of social justice and inclusion conveyed in required coursework? Through the collection and analysis of 49 syllabi from faculty and
program directors across 21 institutions in the U.S. who identified syllabi as having a social justice and inclusion focus, this dissertation analyzed syllabi course titles, learning outcomes, and required coursework/assignments.

Using content analysis, the findings represent how course titles communicated the value of social justice and inclusion within master’s programs. The analysis of syllabi learning outcomes revealed four themes including: (a) the top seven, a common set of words found in the analyzed syllabi including and in no particular order, multicultural, diversity, equity, inclusion, culture, role of social justice, and oppression; (b) the development of self, (c) student development, and (d) the development of student affairs and counseling. Using an active learning framework, the analysis of required coursework of the syllabi brought to light two themes, uninvolved and involved, which spoke to how coursework was completed. These findings are significant to the field of student affairs as they provide a snapshot on social justice and inclusion in the classroom.

From my findings three key implications were identified, (a) the 49 syllabi represented primarily followed a metanarrative of keeping SJI as a process and a goal grounded in self-awareness; (b) findings represented that course titles did not represent SJI and learning outcomes focused primarily on a grouping of concepts to represent an SJI approach; (c) assignments did not have an emphasis on experience. This dissertation concludes with recommendations for graduate students, student affairs professions (both faculty and staff), and the field of student affairs to move away from a competency approach of social justice and inclusion towards an approach of social justice and inclusion as a process, goal, vision and, education as analysis and action.
DEDICATION

¡Pa’ Lante!

Esta disertación es para todas/xs las doctoras Puertorriqueña, Latina/x, y de la Hispanidad quienes piensan en la ganancia de un doctorado, está en el proceso de ganar un doctorado, y a aquellos que han completado y han preparado el terreno para nosotras/xs para saber que podemos también. ¡sí se puede!

¡Pa’ Lante!

This dissertation is for all the doctoras Puertorriqueña, Latina/x, y de la Hispanidad who think about earning a doctorate, are in the process of earning a doctorate, and to those who have completed and paved the way for us to know we can too, ¡si se puede!
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To each and every one of you who listened to me, encouraged me, gave advice, and stuck with me over the last eight years to arrive at this moment, thank you. Whether you know it or not you made a difference and helped me toward becoming Dr. Pérez-Vélez. Gracias.

To my partner and family, I could not have done this without your support, patience, love, and care packages during the difficult moments in my journey. Thank you y los quiero muchísimo.

To my research advisor, Dr. Yakaboski, I could not be at this moment without your patience, support, and guidance through my research. You are an amazing human! When I was in doubt, our conversations reminded me that I could do this and here I am, a postmodern scholar. Do you recall the postmodernist framing from Lather (2006, pp. 38-39); if my “postmodernist paradigm were a public event” I would be an amusement park, which explains my love of roller coasters, right? If my “paradigm were a game it would be Candyland,” does Candy Crush count? If my “paradigm were a sport it would be professional wrestling,” did you know my favorite wrestler was the Undertaker? Lastly, if my drink choice represented my paradigm well, I would be a Zima, who knew.

Dr. Birnbaum, without your guidance and support when I started this journey, as my program advisor, I do not know if I would have made it through the first couple of years. Thank you for picking me up as your advisee and sticking with me.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The paradox of education is precisely this – that as one begins to become conscious, one begins to examine the society in which [they are] being educated. (Baldwin as cited in Winkle-Wagner & Locks, 2014, p. 143)

Student protests of structural racism, injustice, and inequity have rippled throughout U.S. colleges and universities recently. This is visible in many ways through social media and the development of websites like *The Demands*. *The Demands* is a website dedicated to giving voice to the demands of college students and states, “Across the nation, students have risen up to demand an end to systemic and structural racism on campus” (WeTheProtesters, 2015). *The Demands* website documents 80 separate lists of demands and calls for action by students at 80 different U.S. institutions. Similarly, Harvard University’s Voices of Diversity Project brings to light the marginalization and isolation experienced by minoritized students on U.S. campuses (Chun & Evans, 2016).

Another way the active responses to injustices on campus are visible is through Twitter activism. Twitter users have created hashtags/handles such as #studentsofcolormatter/@SOCmatter and #SOCDad/@SOCDad. Students of color at Ethical Culture Fieldston School (ECFS) developed #studentsofcolormatter to speak out against injustices at their school but also beyond their institution (SOCmatter, 2019). ECFS used #studentsofcolormatter as a platform to shed light on and protest a racist video circulating through their school (Lawler, 2019) and locking out school administrators in protest. Developed about the same time #SOCDad/@SOCDad
describes themselves as a “Proud father of woke kids. #studentsofcolormatter” (SOCDad, 2019). This increase in civic engagement and student activism influences campus climate and in the recent years, higher education has seen various institutional and leadership responses to this increased activism with the voices of those on the margin rising. Recent examples of this activism and engagement on campus include but are not limited to:

- The resignation of the University of Missouri President due to racial incidents on campus influenced by Concerned Student 1950 and the #blacklivesmatter movement (Svrluga, 2015; Thomason, 2015).
- A 1,000-student protest at Yale University called the “March of Resilience” in response to racially charged incidents on campus (Wagner, 2015).
- The hunger strikes along with campus protests related to the dismissal of marginalized students’ needs at Claremont McKenna College leading to the resignation of the Dean of Students (Brown, 2015).
- The Ithaca College President’s resignation amid campus wide protests citing a lack of diversity and incidents of racism on campus (Lohmann, 2016).
- Protests at American University after two Black students report having bananas thrown at them (Roussey, Barber, & McCray, 2016).
- Three deaths associated with the White Nationalist march along with lingering racial tensions and counter protests surrounding the University of Virginia in Charlottesville (Heim, 2017).
- Chloe Williams, a student at the University of Minnesota, starting a petition gaining over 4,500 signatures to change the name of the university’s union
bearing the name of the fifth president for segregationist policies carried out by him (Oakes, 2018).

- Student protest at the College of the Holy Cross regarding sex misconduct on campus leading to a professor resigning, another losing his position, and a dean being placed on leave due to allegations (Fernandes, 2019).

- Stephanie Zhang, an Asian-American activist, calling for Emory University to secure an identity-based space for Asian-American students at Emory (Thomas, 2019).

These incidents and the many not listed above on college campuses speak to the contradiction to the belief that “America\(^1\) has attained a color-blind, post-racial society” (Chun & Evans, 2016, p. 48). Therefore, this dissertation seeks to explore and discover the use of the social justice and inclusion competency suggested for master’s student affairs programs within the U.S. Using pragmatist perspective, I focus on how master’s student affairs programs incorporate social justice and inclusion in curriculum between the years of fall 2015 and spring 2019. I also use a postmodern perspective which facilitates the challenging of metanarratives and allows for the emphasis on experience rather than theory.

**A Shifting United States Population**

College student populations have become more diverse both racially and culturally (Flowers, 2003). This is anticipated to increase steadily over time with the Census Bureau projecting the majority of Americans will be people of color by 2050 in

---

\(^1\) While America/an is used, I recognize this is problematic language when trying to refer to the U.S. however I choose this language to be consistent with the source. Throughout this dissertation if the word American is used it is to refer to the U.S. unless otherwise indicated.
addition reports showing that half of the children under 18 are people of color (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development and Office of the Under Secretary, 2016).

Those between the ages 18 and 24 reflect a breakdown of 55% White and 45% people of color identifying as Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native\(^2\) and those identifying with two or more races. These demographic shifts in the U.S. are also leading to shifts in the populations enrolled at U.S. universities and colleges (Chun & Evans, 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). From 1976 to 2014, the enrollment of U.S. college students who identified as Hispanic rose from 4% to 17%, those who identified as Asian/Pacific Islander rose from 2% to 7%, students who identified as Black rose from 10% to 14%, while students who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native rose slightly from 0.7 percent to 0.8 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

The increase in racial and ethnic diversity occurred while simultaneously the percentage of White students dropped from 84% to 58% (Chun & Evans, 2016; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Underlying these enrollment statistics is the societal demographic shift indicating soon in the U.S. there “will be no majority racial or ethnic group” (Center for Public Education, 2012, para. 1). In turn, the student body is trending towards a minority majority (Chun & Evans, 2016). Campuses also have witnessed a growth in bi- and multi-racial students reflected in the U.S. Census Bureau data showing nine million Americans in 2013 identified with two or more racial

\(^2\) The grouping of populations developed by those in power is oppressive to the multiple nations, identities, and people categorized by the U.S. Census generalization of populations. In this dissertation I use the terms consistent with the source(s) for academic purposes rather than assume knowing the naming of a group and/or identity.
categories (Chun & Evans, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2015). This increase in the diversity of college student populations brings to light the experiences of those on the margins with more incoming students identifying as people of color and engaging in civic engagement. The increase in student activism is likely to continue on campus based on the survey findings of the Higher Education Research Institute’s (HERI), *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2015* annual survey (Eagan et al., 2015). This Higher Education Research Institute’s survey found overall an “increased commitment to student activism and augmented interest in community and political engagement among first-time, full-time college students” (p. 5).

**First Year College Students**

The Higher Education Research Institute’s, *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2015* annual survey included 141,189 first-time, full-time students who entered 199 U.S. institutions. The annual survey found the vast majority (96.9%) of the entering student body have witnessed and/or lived through protests and increased civic engagement (Eagan et al., 2015). The survey also reported this engagement was a response of the fall 2015 class, now in their fourth year in college, experiencing and hearing about officer’s shootings of Black men and local/national incidents of bias and discrimination.

The fall 2016 class, now in their third year in college, are following this trend with rising levels of civic engagement (Eagan et al., 2016). The trend of rising civic engagement coupled with a rising shift in demographics will continue to unsettle U.S.

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3 Weights were applied to the data in the HERI’s survey so that “differences of one percentage point in the results published … reflect the characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes of more than 15,000 first-year students nationally” (Eagan et al., 2015, p. 6).
campuses. Although a shift in demographics is often welcomed by universities working to meet their strategic plans of diverse and inclusive campuses, the reality is not of a post-racial society. Shifts including civic engagement and resistance will continue to spill onto and over campus lawns.

The Higher Education Research Institute’s survey (Eagan et al., 2015) further indicated that, overall, about 9% of first year students reported they had a “very good chance” of participating in student protests while in college, an increase of almost three percentage points from the previous year’s survey. When disaggregated by race, Black students were the most likely to have reported a “very good chance” of participating in student protests while in college (16%), alongside approximately 1 in 10 Latino students (10.2%; Eagan et al., 2015, pp. 7-8). Additionally, about 5.8% of Native American and 6% of Asian American/Pacific Islander students reported strong expectations of participating in student protests in college. White students also showed an increase with 7.1% indicating a “very good chance” of participating in protests, a 2.5% percentage point increase as of the fall of 2015.

These evolving shifts in demographics and students reporting an increase in their likelihood of civic engagement and protests speak to the campus incidents highlighted earlier in this chapter. Further, these statistics point to a new student/population on campuses with lived experiences seeing and possibly experiencing violence and injustices on a personal, local and national scale. These shifts are likely to impact the field of student affairs.
Student Affairs Graduate Preparation and Competency

The aforementioned statistics not only show the increased level of civic engagement of the current third- and fourth-year students on U.S. campuses, but also that these students, if they choose, will show up in U.S. graduate programs including student affairs in higher education master’s programs. Student affairs is the professional area within higher education concerned with the development, support, and care of students beyond the classroom. Student affairs claims and grounds itself in serving as the profession responsible for providing academic and social support to students (Walker, 2008).

Generally, student affairs is considered to be the work of student affairs professionals who outside of the formal classroom counsel, advise, support, house, employ students while working to provide safe and inclusive communities students (Love, 2003). Student affairs is also a catalyst for the teaching and development that occurs beyond the classroom to support student learning within the classroom (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], n.d.). The field of student affairs is also more demographically diverse than other college professions with 71% of the student affairs positions held by women (Bauer-Wolf, 2018). In contrast, higher education broadly only has 58% of their positions filled by women.

However, racial demographics continue to be underrepresented in the field. Even though about 17% of students are Hispanic, only about 8% of student affairs professionals are (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). Further, Asian students represent about 6% of the college population but only 3% of student affairs professionals are Asian. Given the increase in diversity and engagement of college students, this change
might include students seeking further education to influence their college campuses through continuing education in student affairs graduate programs.

Student affairs, as a profession, has typically required those entering or in the field to have a master’s degree. The master’s degree is typically a 40-48 semester credit hour program (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2012). However, the field also includes professionals who have not obtained a graduate degree and, in response, two of the largest and leading student affairs professional associations, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), sought to fill this gap by laying out professional competencies (American College Personnel Association [ACPA] & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2015). These competencies indicate those in the field should meet the foundation competencies at minimum whether a degree is obtained or not even if they follow a set of guidelines from a smaller or specialized association. This inquiry has a focus on the use of these competencies within student affairs master’s programs.

There is an agreement in the literature that a need exists for competent professionals to work in an ever-diversifying world (Chun & Evans, 2016; Flowers, 2003; Herdlein, Kline, Boquard, & Haddad, 2010; Pope & Mueller, 2005). What is less clear in the literature is how to go about doing the work of preparing competent new professionals (Chun & Evans, 2016). For higher education, and specifically student affairs, two approaches surface to guide the education of graduate students and upcoming professionals. The first is a competency-based education and the second approach is by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS).
Competency-based education, a resurging paradigm in education (Frank et al., 2010) and is described as “learning progressions based on mastery of content rather than passage of time” (Competency-Based Education, 2017, para. 1.). This approach is somewhat reflected by the boards of NASPA and ACPA putting forward the 2015 Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators in July of that year (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). While these competencies are termed “competency based,” they are not required for graduation with a student affairs degree or for employment without a degree.

Competency education models are multi-dimensional and outcomes-based approaches that integrate the knowledge, skill, abilities, values, and attitudes a practitioner should be able to display in relation to their field (Chun & Evans, 2016; Frank et al., 2010). Multiple professions have used competency-based education including social work, chiropractic, teacher education, medical, and pharmacology to name a few (Frank et al., 2010). From these professions we, as the general public, know what to expect and what the requirements and levels of continuing education are necessary for those professions. The majority of the U.S. population trusts these professions to heal, teach, help, support, and advise them in their daily lives. This is often because these professional fields require practitioners to pass a general board exam to earn their professional roles showing a level of mastery prior to graduation or certification.

The second approach is the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), the “pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs” (Council for the Advancement of
Standards in Higher Education, 2019a). The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education provides a set of general standards for student affairs professionals and a focused set of standards for master’s level student affairs professional preparation programs. However, CAS is not a competency-based approach, rather it is a guiding body which graduate programs can choose to ground their programs. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education also provides a way for programs to assess their effectiveness by providing and encouraging programs to use their rating scale (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019b).

Further the mission of CAS is only to promote the use of their professional standards by graduate programs and other student affairs functional areas. Thus, student affairs programs may be grounded in CAS Standards, the ACPA and NASPA Competency areas, neither or other approaches. Yet, CAS, along with ACPA and NASPA, sought to create a joint document to guide the work of student affairs graduate programs in producing a set of competencies in 2015 (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Specifically, and important to this inquiry, they put forth competency in the area of social justice and inclusion while also reiterating their push for student affairs graduate programs use of the laid-out competency areas from the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators document (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

**The Joint Competencies**

Ten core competencies were produced by ACPA, NASPA, and CAS, collaboratively, in an attempt to standardize professional competencies for student affairs educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). First published in 2010, the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* stated:
These ACPA and NASPA competency areas, and the work of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), provide support for quality assurance in student affairs practice. Standards of practice are generated in student affairs by CAS. CAS is comprised of the directors and alternative directors from nearly 40 member associations who approve each standard through a consensus model. Each CAS standard is comprised of 14 components, several of which address competencies required or suggested for professionals in each functional area (e.g., leadership, residence life, assessment, student activities). In addition, CAS has a statement on characteristics of individual excellence designed for professional self assessment. These ACPA and NASPA competency areas will inform CAS in the next revision of the 14 general standards in 2012. CAS joined with ACPA and NASPA in this collaborative effort to advance quality professional practice in student affairs work. (American College Personnel Association [ACPA] & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2010, p. 7)

While the above quote by the associations seek to express a standard and quality of professional competency, neither are required by graduate programs in student affairs. However, in the counseling programs often coupled with student affairs licensing is foundational.

In other words, ACPA and NASPA based their competency approach on a suggested set of standards by CAS neither of which impact the accreditation or development of student affairs programs, if the program chooses to become accredited. Programs may seek a voluntary accreditation through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP). As of the writing of this dissertation in 2019, using the CACREP search tool and parameters of (a) schools in the U.S., (b) public and private, (c) with program of student affairs; only 10 student affairs programs in the U.S. are found.

Of these 10 schools, only two are voluntarily accredited and the remaining eight have let their accreditation lapse (CACREP, 2019). When student affairs programs are combined with counseling (i.e. Student Affairs and Counseling), 21 results come back
with 19 being voluntarily accredited, two previously accredited and none in process.

These numbers are miniscule given there are at least 250 programs in the U.S. (Graduate Program Directory, 2019). While accreditation is one thing, choosing what is or is not a competency is another. This inquiry further focuses on the subjective move of reframing the previous competency in student affairs of equity, diversity, and inclusion to the current version (as of 2015) of competency as social justice and inclusion.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion or Social Justice and Inclusion Competency**

With the 2010 collaboration, ACPA, NASPA, and CAS endorsed the publication of a document called, the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (American College Personnel Association [ACPA] & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2010). This document set forth 10 competency areas for student affairs including: (a) advising and helping (b) assessment, evaluation, and research (c) equity, diversity, and inclusion (d) ethical professional practice (e) history, philosophy, and values (f) law, policy, and governance (g) leadership (h) personal foundations and (i) student learning and development. The equity, diversity, and inclusion competency is also mirrored as equity and access as it relates to diversity in the CAS standards for master’s level student affairs professional preparation programs (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2014). As shared in the previous quote, CAS used the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) to inform their revision of the General Standards in 2012 naming “Part 7. Diversity, Equity, and Access” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2014, p. 11). This interwoven approach by ACPA,
NASPA, and CAS set a precedent by these organizations through intentionally choosing the language of equity, diversity, and inclusion as key areas for student affairs practitioners. The use of similar language was purposeful to guide the field of student affairs towards the use of an equitable, diverse, and inclusive lens. However, just as soon as these were approved, a shift occurred with the updated ACPA and NASPA competencies released in 2015.

In 2014, the ACPA and NASPA Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards decided to review the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) and recommend changes (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). The *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) did not specify a length of time between reviews, just periodic reviews, so it is unclear why just four years later the competencies were under review. Nonetheless, the task force gathered and in just under one year created and adopted the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators*, an update to the 2010 version that “intentionally preserved most of the work of the 2010” competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 4). This led me to further question the updated *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators*. If these new competencies were released with the intention of preserving the work of 2010, then why update them; and further, why just update two of the competency areas and only add one. The 2015 *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* competency areas included, (a) *personal and ethical foundations* (b) values, philosophy, and history (c) assessment, evaluation, and research (d) law, policy, and governance (e) organizational
and human resource (f) leadership (g) social justice and inclusion (h) student learning and development (i) technology and (j) advising and supporting (ACPA & NASPA).

Such a quick update with limited changes disrupts not only the professional standards set in 2010, but also limits the ability for students and programs to adjust to a nuanced renaming of two competencies. Additionally, these quick shifts do not take into account policies and procedures programs must follow to change curriculum. Curriculum often requires multiple levels of approvals from committees, faculty, and deans which further limit the ability for programs to adapt. This dissertation digs into nuances of one competency, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) competency, which was renamed to Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI) in 2015. The Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators document adopted in 2015 shared,

> When reviewing the literature, we found studies published since 2010 referred to similar knowledge and skill sets as “incorporating diversity into curricular and co-curricular experiences” (Weiner et al., 2011, p. 88), “diversity and social justice” (Hoffman & Bresciani, 2012, p. 31), or “dedication to social justice” (Hickmott & Bresciani, 2010, p. 10) and “understanding diversity” (p. 8). Each of these suggests a shift from awareness of diversity, as implicit in prior competency literature (e.g. Lovell & Kosten, 2000) to a more active orientation (as cited in ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 4).

While this quote seems to signify a shift from awareness of diversity to a more active orientation through competence in social justice and inclusion, I argue this is not enough to signify a need for the renaming of this competency, or that since a more active orientation is found that the competency should be renamed to social justice and inclusion. Additionally, the 2015 competency document speaks to the task force’s intent of wrapping equity, diversity, and inclusion within social justice (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 4).

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4 Italics indicate the two updated competencies and the newly added one.
If the intention is to keep equity, diversity, and inclusion wrapped in social justice it would be better to acknowledge this and keep the naming of competency and add the encouragement of the use of a social justice lens. Further, only four studies are referenced in this section of the document noting a shift in language from equity and diversity to social justice while neither a wealth nor depth of research was presented to support why the Task Force sought to change the competency from EDI to SJI. As I reflected on this, the renaming of the SJI competency became further clouded and unclear in the intent.

I further gleaned from the 2015 ACPA and NASPA competencies that the task force sought to align the new SJI competency with a commonly used definition by Bell (2013), although only part of it is provided stating social justice as “a process and a goal” and “full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (as cited in ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Leaving out the full definition by Bell (2013) assumes an awareness among all student affairs students, faculty, and staff of the definition which actually stated much more. I specifically align with the full definition of social justice by Bell (2016) which stated,

Social justice is both a goal and a process. The goal of social justice is full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. The process for attaining the goal of social justice should also be democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change. Domination cannot be ended through coercive tactics that recreate domination in new forms. Thus, a “power with” vs. “power over” (Kreisberg, 1992) paradigm is necessary for enacting social justice goals. Forming coalitions and working collaboratively with diverse others is an essential part of social justice. Our vision for social justice is a world in which the distribution of resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognized, and treated with respect. We envision a world in which individuals are both self-determining (able to develop their full capacities) and
interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, the environment, and the broader world in which we live.” (p. 3, emphasis in original)

I share the full quote because until I dove into literature surrounding my inquiry and pursued a deeper understanding of social justice, I, too, would say it is just a process and a goal. And indeed, it is much more than a process and a goal. It is analysis to action, participation with and for communities. The above definition also does not read as competency but rather a three-part approach to working towards a socially just and equitable society – like a checklist. First, have a goal, then a process and a vision but action remains missing.

**Competency Rubrics and Challenges**

Following the 2015 update to the student affairs professional competencies, a team consisting of 10 individuals, all with graduate degrees (seven doctorates and three master’s degrees), developed competency rubrics created from the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* document (American College Personnel Association [ACPA] & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2016). In the rubric document, the authors shared that they were motivated by the accountability nature of higher education today or, in other words, the neoliberal approach to education (Ambrosio, 2013) but not in response to the civic engagement seen on campuses today. The competency rubrics are to serve as a tool for professionals to assess their “knowledge, skill, and dispositions across foundational, intermediate, and advanced levels of experience” (ACPA & NASPA, 2016, p. 4).

The Board of Directors for NASPA and the Governing Board of ACPA both approved the revised competencies in “order to assist in designing professional
development opportunities with more focused outcomes and curriculum” (NASPA, n.d.).

Further, NASPA states on their website:

This [2015] set of Professional Competency Areas is intended to define the broad professional knowledge, skills, and, in some cases, attitudes expected of student affairs professionals. All student affairs professionals are expected to be able to meet the foundational outcomes of each competency area, regardless of how they entered the profession (“About Student Affairs,” 2019, para. 2, emphasis added).

Almost the exact same paragraph appears on ACPA’s professional competency page for student affairs professionals (Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners, n.d.). This quote indicates that it is truly left to the individual to decide if they have met each basic outcome through the rubrics and while the guidance is helpful for professionals to consider, there is no accountably to do so.

Further, in the commonly paired program with student affairs, counseling, counselors must earn licensure within the state they practice and meet the required learning and ongoing education requirements for license renewal (Licensure Requirements, 2019). Along with reapplying through state agencies, counselors must have knowledge of the varied competencies including, but not limited to: (a) competencies for counseling transgender clients (b) competencies for addressing spiritual and religious issues, and (c) competency in multicultural and social justice counseling to name a few (Competencies, 2019). Yet, student affairs association such as ACPA and NASPA, along with student affairs masters’ graduate programs and CAS, expect to graduate students and further develop faculty and practitioners, with optional competencies to follow, to be able to support and lead college students through issues like suicidal ideations to stress from academics.
Further, since the student affairs profession does not require ongoing education, professionals in the field are of varied training and experience including those in entry level positions and those in executive positions. For example, at one university the Vice President for Student Affairs, who often serves on the university president’s cabinet, may have a master’s degree or they may not. Further, one who may have earned a Ph.D. and trained in the field in the 1970’s may not be attuned or have interest in learning the newest set of suggested competencies from 2015 by professional associations as it is not required for programs, tenure, or employment in student affairs.

Additionally, the professional competency areas for student affairs educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) and the CAS standards do not accredit programs or certify individuals in master’s level graduate preparation programs of student affairs. Even though both the standards and competencies are encouraged to be used in student affairs programs. As stated by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, the “primary value of the CAS student affairs professional preparation standard is to assist in ensuring that an academic program is offering what the profession, through representative consensus, has deemed necessary to graduate prepared student affairs and student services professionals” (2012, p. 2). This consensus is ultimately a good thing for the profession as it states some level of continuity across graduate programs to prepare student affairs professionals but there is no accountability. If desired, these standards and student affairs competencies could be viewed as some suggestions of how to set up master’s level graduate preparation – or not. Yet, student affairs professionals are still called to do the work “towards racial justice and healing” by ACPA President Quaye (Quaye, 2017, para. 14), while NASPA’s President Kruger
encourages professionals to address racial injustice on U.S. campuses and continue to engage students in difficult dialogues around “race, gender identity, religion, and sexual orientation” (Kruger, 2016).

Further, institutions, by way of society and themselves, remain systemically unequal towards women, those not on the gender binary, people of color, and those of a lower social economic status. As shared by Kang, Lessard, Heston, and Nordmarken (2017) “Institutions are primary sites for the reproduction of gendered, classed, racialized, ableized, and sexualized inequalities” (p. 58). Additionally, a 2013 story from Lederman on InsideHigherEd shared, “Higher Ed: [equals a] Engine of Inequity (Lederman, 2013) reminding higher education of the inequities still present today. These articles also remind students, faculty, and staff in higher education and in the field of student affairs that U.S. institutions were set up to favor the White, male, Christian, and heterosexual individuals because institutions started as places for the privileged to learn and serve in roles of power within government and religious organizations (Carpenter, 2004).

So, the development of student affairs professionals through graduate programs to address these complicated inequities remains unclear. Even though the presidents of ACPA and NASPA have called for faculty and staff to continue to engage in creating diverse and social justice campuses (Kruger, 2017) and responded to the increased calls to work towards the injustices that are occurring on campuses (Quaye, 2017), there has been little guidance in this call to action. A set of competencies with no accountability has the potential to cause harm rather than help. After all, I (or you) can say on a resume,
interview, or website that I (or you) have met the advanced outcomes of social justice and inclusion without having to produce an actionable skill set.

Uncertainty of Graduate Preparation

From research in 2007, there was uncertainty on whether master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs were adequately preparing students for working with diverse populations, let alone what is now termed social justice and inclusion (Gayles & Kelly, 2007). Over the past decade there has been a search for the most appropriate way to prepare graduate students to enter the field of student affairs (Herdlein et al., 2010; Herdlein, Riefler, & Mrowka, 2013). Based on a meta-analysis of student affairs competencies, mid- and senior-level administrators ranked human relations as the most important knowledge gained in preparation programs (Herdlein et al., 2013). Further, Herdlein et al. found the “most frequently mentioned knowledge characteristics were multicultural/diversity issues” (p. 261) as the characteristic of most importance to professionals in student affairs. When I put these ideas together, human relations as the most important knowledge gained coupled with knowledge characteristics on diversity issues, I come to understand the high value placed on what student affairs calls competence in social justice and inclusion.

But what does the fact that institutions are still privileging the White, male norm mean for student affairs in higher education? It means even with calls for action and competencies set forth by the profession, there is still focus and value on the privileged White male on U.S. campuses. It means and proves there is a “disconnection between institutional diversity missions and the lived experiences of students on campus” (Chun & Evans, 2016, p. 9). It means administrators, without direction of/with faculty, have
driven diversity efforts and the lack of systematic attention to diversity across the faculty and administrative realms has created disconnection (Chun & Evans, 2016; Flowers, 2003).

This disconnect can be seen in duplicate and singular diversity efforts across campuses such as cultural centers, students of color in STEM projects, and first-generation student groups, to name a few (Chun & Evans, 2016). In *Demographic Call to Action*, Chun and Evans shared that faculty and administrators need to pay attention to the continuing existence of stereotypes and exclusionary practices on campuses. These practices continue to promote dominant identities and regenerate efforts to operationalize a commitment to inclusion and social justice.

The continued privileging of the White, male norm sets the urgency for campuses to become inclusive so all students can thrive (Eagan et al., 2016). The demographics and activism show a need to re-center the work of student affairs, to develop students for “careers and citizenship in a diverse society” (Chun & Evans, 2016, p. 7). It stresses the need to for faculty, staff, and administrators to prepare students with knowledge, skills, and abilities to work within inclusive spaces (Chun & Evans, 2016; Eagan et al., 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs incorporate social justice and inclusion in curriculum.

**Statement of the Problem**

Setting social justice and inclusion as a competency in the student affairs profession is problematic given the power and influence the ACPA and NASPA organizations have on the field of student affairs. A competency centers on a mastery of
skills rather than a process of gaining and continuing to gain skills over time. These two organizations have the ability to shape the perspective of over 15,000 individual members along with the practice of institutions through 2,100 institutional memberships (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA] Membership, 2019). The power of influence shows, as I know programs who are in the process of shifting curriculum to ground their master’s program in the competencies set forth by ACPA and NASPA.

Additionally, in 2003, it was found that only 74% of master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs required at least one diversity course, 26% did not have the requirement, and 8% were in the process of adding a course to curriculum (Flowers, 2003). This study, in my research, is the closest to providing findings of how SJI, diversity then, is incorporated. The statistic found by Flowers, left me wondering if programs have begun to shift curriculum towards social justice and inclusion or if programs are still working with diversity. Although the findings of Flowers did speak to diversity courses, it did not, at that time, expand to social justice and inclusion. Even though I, and likely many student affairs professionals, in my experience, have heard/used diversity, social justice, and inclusion interchangeably, they are not the same. Stewart (2017) reminded the profession that rhetoric of language matters as each of these terms asks and states a different question and response. Stewart went on to state,

Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?” Equity responds: “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?” Inclusion asks, “Has everyone’s ideas been heard?” Justice responds, “Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?” Diversity celebrates increases in numbers that still reflect minoritized status on campus and incremental growth. Equity celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems and increases in supports for people’s life chances as reported by those who have been targeted. Inclusion celebrates awards for initiatives and
credits itself for having a diverse candidate pool. Justice celebrates getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritized groups.

It is important to challenge the shift of competencies set forth by ACPA and NASPA from diversity, equity, and inclusion to social justice and inclusion, and specifically social justice because justice is about one’s agency to challenge injustice. Social justice is about action and is not a competency nor, I argue, can be taught in a two-year program. A need exists to inquire into how programs are addressing the SJI competency to uncover the impact and provide empirical knowledge classroom pedagogy.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore and discover the use of the social justice and inclusion competency suggested for master’s level student affairs programs within the U.S. by ACPA and NASPA. The 2015 professional competencies do not provide guidelines for achievement of the competencies outside of a paragraph discussing the use of the term “foundational” (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 6). The achievement of the foundational competencies should, as stated in the 2010 professional competencies as well, be obtainable and demonstrated by all student affairs professionals regardless of how they entered the profession (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Using my pragmatist and postmodern perspective, the focus was on how master’s student affairs programs incorporated social justice and inclusion in curriculum between fall 2015 and spring 2019. This span of years reflects the start and graduation of three cohorts of students who have completed or are completing their student affairs master’s degrees during the time of the renaming of the competencies. Using this perspective facilitated the challenging of metanarratives and allowed for the emphasis on experience rather than theory. Methods of inquiry included a content analysis of syllabi collected via
a survey I sent to student affairs master’s program directors and faculty. Syllabi provide empirical data on current approaches and are a written record and agreement of the key lessons, knowledge, and readings deemed vital to the course and topic (Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003).

This dissertation is of importance to the field of student affairs in higher education for several reasons. First, it updates part of the Flowers (2003) study on the requirement of diversity related courses in student affairs graduate programs. Second, it provides additional pragmatic knowledge to the study by Gayles and Kelly (2007) on whether or not graduate preparation is adequately preparing students to support diverse student populations. Third, it offers a response to the call by Herdlein et al. (2013) that “future researchers, program faculty, and practitioners must attempt to discover ways to include the known competency areas into graduate preparation programs” (p. 265) by discovering how the SJI competency is included in programs. Lastly, it is important to bring to light that SJI is not a competency to be mastered, but rather it is a process, goal, vision, education, and action towards injustice by the agency of the individual and community. Highlighting SJI as an achievable competency with foundational, intermediate, and advanced steps infers a checklist to social justice and inclusion rather than “…help[ing] [individuals] develop a sense of agency and commitment…” (Bell, 2016, p. 4).

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the purpose of this study in examining how master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs incorporate social justice and inclusion in curriculum:

Q1 How do master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs communicate social justice and inclusion in curriculum?
Q2 How are the competencies of social justice and inclusion conveyed in required coursework?

Terminology

Given the varied acronyms and terms used in this dissertation, including diversity, equity, social justice, and inclusion, it is important to take a moment to provide context. This dissertation uses the definition of equity as an environment where an individual or a group would be given what they needed to provide equal advantage (Independent School Diversity Network, 2019) and uses the following definitions for diversity, multiculturalism, inclusion, and social justice by scholars in the field of education.

**Diversity.** Diversity is an institutional ethos that accepts and celebrates differences among people, helping to free them of any misconceptions and prejudices (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). Diversity is also the numerical representation of various racial, ethnic, and gender groups on campus (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999, p. 19). Structural diversity defines the changing demographic mix and level of racial/ethnic diversity in the student body at any one university (Caruana & Ploner, 2010, p. 11).

**Multiculturalism.** Multiculturalism is a “goal to reform the schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality…to give male and female an equal chance to experience educational success and mobility” (Banks, 2004, p. 3).

**Inclusion.** There is no single agreed upon definition of inclusion or primary professional association with an agreed upon definition. However, for this study,

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5 I acknowledge the binary approach of the language in this definition however as a direct quote I left in the wording. This also assists in showing the differences among the definitions in this list.
inclusion was defined as, “How diversity is leveraged to create a fair, equitable, healthy, and high-performing origination or community where all individuals are respected and feel engaged and motivated, and where their contributions toward meeting organizational and societal goals are valued” (O’Mara, 2015, p. 268).

**Social justice.** Adams, Bell, & Griffin state that the goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society that is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure (as cited by Social Justice Training Institute [SJTI], 2017).

As it relates to acronyms this dissertation and the field of student affairs, generally speaking, uses a fair number of acronyms. Key acronyms used in this dissertation include the following:

- **ACPA.** The American College Personnel Association is recognized as a leader in student affairs in higher education in the United States. Now known as ACPA–College Student Educators International via their website but is most commonly referred to as ACPA (American College Personnel Association, 2016).

- **NASPA.** The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators is the leading student affairs association and known as NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education via their website (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2016). Though more commonly known in the field as simply NASPA.
• **CAS.** The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education is “the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019a, n.p.).

• **EDI.** EDI is an acronym for equity, diversity, and inclusion which is frequently used throughout this dissertation and is discussed as a student affairs competency.

• **SJI.** SJI is an acronym for social justice and inclusion which is also frequently used in this dissertation and is discussed as a student affairs competency.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I grounded my study in the challenges U.S. colleges and university are experiencing related to issues of injustice and inequity. I also discussed the impact of a shifting U.S. population with a steady increase of individuals identifying as people of color. An overview of civic engagement is discussed along with a description competency-based education and the joint competencies of ACPA and NASPA. The chapter closes with the problematizing of social justice and inclusion as competency. In Chapter II, I provide an overview of the development of student affairs. I also discuss the problem of setting social justice and inclusion as a competency as it relates to the suggested standards of CAS and ACPA and NASPA. Additionally, I discuss the values of student affairs and my views on social justice and inclusion.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of education is broadened to include attention to the student’s well-rounded development—physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually, as well as intellectually. (American Council on Education, 1949, p. 2)

This review of literature provides a brief history of the development of the student affairs profession. I also include a discussion of pedagogy in student affairs preparation programs along with interweaving the tenets of student affairs master’s programs. In doing so I am seeking to provide you, the reader, context of the history of student affairs and the pedagogy. Gaining this context allows for a shared understanding of the development of the field, programs, and professional competencies offered by ACPA and NASPA. This literature review closes by challenging the idea of social justice and inclusion as an achievable foundational competency in two years and whether it is the best method to develop a professional who is able to meet the needs of the changing student body influenced and impacted by intercultural communities of U.S. higher education institutions.

Development of United States Student Affairs

The field of student affairs has had many names including student personnel, student services, and student development (Long, 2012). These varied names show a long history of student affairs within higher education; from the foundational and idealist years of 1636 to 1850 (Carpenter, 2004; Dungy & Gordon, 2011), to the diversification
and continued idealism of 1850 to 1900 (Carpenter, 2004; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Rentz, 2004), on towards the philosophy of realism and the seeds of student affairs in the years of 1900 to 1950 (Carpenter, 2004; Dungy & Gordon, 2011), then towards pragmatist thought and student development from 1960 to 1980 (Carpenter, 2004; Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Rentz, 2004), and the continuation of pragmatism of student affairs from the 1990’s to now (Carpenter, 2004; Dungy & Gordon, 2011). This section situates student affairs from the development of higher education to its current state.

**Foundational and Idealist Years of 1636 to 1850**

Student affairs in higher education is not simply the work of and with students. Indeed, its history, depth, and evolution are often overlooked. Colonial higher education focused on instilling religious beliefs and appropriate social behaviors of the time. The initial Bachelor of Arts degree concentrated in preparation for the ministry (Rentz, 2004), which aligned with the philosophical thought of Idealism, a cornerstone of a “conservative approach to curriculum and education emphasizing essential truths” (Carpenter, 2004, p. 8). This conservative approach held up not only in the classroom, but also in the controlled approach to the lives of the male students attending higher education in the colonial period — not women, people of color, or those not on the gender binary. The controlled approach to lives of men in higher education is student affairs was termed *in loco parentis* and was strictly enforced (Dungy & Gordon, 2011) by “paternalistic dons” (Rentz, 2004, p. 28).

The origin of *in loco parentis* was rooted in British and American common law and came from the legal writings of William Blackstone circa 1765 in which he wrote that a parent,
may delegate part of his parental authority, during his life, to the tutor or schoolmaster of his child; who is then *in loco parentis*, and had such a portion of the power of the parent committed to his charge, viz. that of restraint and correction, as may be necessary to answer the purposes for which he is employed (as cited in Lee, 2011, p. 67).

The strict focus on the whole life of the student sought to create gentlemen who would serve as examples of “Puritan piety and civility” (Rentz, 2004, p. 28) coming from Harvard, charted by Puritans in 1636.

Following in the steps of Harvard, other higher education institutions developed to promote their religious views and prepare literate and educated clergy along with offering degrees (Rentz, 2004). Between the years of 1693 and 1770, eight higher education institutions were established each with its own idealism and its own essential truths (or metanarrative) of the world often founded in religion. William and Mary, established in 1693, sought to spread Christianity through preparing youth and reforming Native Americans. To provide education to Baptist ministers, institutions like the College of Philadelphia in 1740, Princeton in 1748, Kings College in 1754, and the College of Rhode Island in 1764 were all established (Rentz, 2004).

In each of these newly created higher education institutions, Idealism was rampant with the ethical goal of living a moral life. This life would be obtained through religious preparation and strict control of behavior creating young males who could become ideal gentlemen who would serve the church and state (Carpenter, 2004; Rentz, 2004). The idea of *in loco parentis* was the hallmark of colonial higher education through and beyond colonial times (Rentz, 2004). Through the progression of higher education, the idea and policy of *in loco parentis* lessened and eventually ended when
challenged in the seminal case of *Dixon v. Alabama* of 1961, discussed later in this chapter.

Colonial education – that of the “male-centered, private, paternalistic, and residential” (Rentz, 2004, p. 29) with the focus on White, male, Christian, (Davis & Harrison, 2013) and heterosexual students — eventually diversified, through the pressures of society. From the 1770’s through the Civil War, curricular offerings shifted to offer electives; professional education which was enhanced through the establishment of Germanic models of graduate education. Also, more degree programs were offered to meet the societal demand for lawyers, doctors, scientist, teachers, and engineers. Through these shifts, enrollment grew with the inclusion of women, and the first Black higher education institution was established (Rentz, 2004).

**Diversification and Shifting Idealism of 1850 to 1900**

From the pressures in society during the 1770’s through the civil war led to the diversification of higher education and curriculum (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). In addition, the debates of higher education during this period centered on whether higher education should be liberal or practical, religious or secular, and elitist or inclusive. Out of this debate came the diversification of institutions. The first noted diversification began with Johns Hopkins University in 1876 which expanded the curriculum by creating electives. Independent institutions formed with a purpose to teach non-classical subjects such as the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1802, the U.S. Naval Academy in 1845, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1865 (Rentz, 2004).

This period also marked the entry of the federal government on select initiatives to promote higher education (Thelin, 2014). The federal government endorsement of the
Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 were some of the more significant acts that promoted the diversification of higher education. Related to fields of study, the 1862 Morrill Act supported a new approach to the pursuit of liberal and practical education (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Rentz, 2004). Further, “the practical arts and sciences of agriculture, mechanics, and military were now supported along with the liberal arts” (Thelin, 2014, p. 75). The Morrill Act of 1862 promoted initiatives to expand higher education geographically and its fields of study while the 1890 act addressed access.

The Morrill Act of 1890 was passed which expanded programs, established federal research funding and addressed access (Thelin, 2014). The 1890 act is considered a significant achievement as it provided access and institutions for Black students. This partial move towards equity established that if a state refused access to Black students at the established land grant institution it would only be eligible for the federal land grant funds only if the state(s) demonstrated its effort towards a separate public institution that enrolled Black students. This compromise led and supported the development of Black only colleges and universities now known as HBCU’s or Historically Black Colleges and Universities. These efforts to diversify programs and higher education broadly also led to a shifting role of faculty.

A new faculty focus began in the mid-1800’s when U.S. higher education became increasingly influenced by the German universities where faculty were viewed as subject experts focused on the “training of intellect” (Long, 2012, p. 3). Along with this new focus faculty moved away from their previous dual focus of intellect and *in loco parentis*. The need of a sole intellectual focus by faculty came from the societal need to train
scientist and technology professionals but also from the influence of the Germanic model that valued the rational mind above all else (Rentz, 2004).

The concept of academic freedom developed during this time of intellectualism (1855 to 1890) and conveyed two thoughts. First, “a faculty member’s right to engage freely in research or scientific inquiry and to report research conclusions or findings without fear of reprisals” (Rentz, 2004, p. 36). Second, that students were free of administrative and regulatory control. This expanding role of faculty as subject experts and the diversification of degree programs created a need for institutions to employ staff who could address student needs, unrest, and housing — shifting the idea of in loco parentis to “the pioneer deans” (Rentz, 2004, p. 37).

The idea for pioneering deans was further supported by the addition of women in higher education along with the development of women’s colleges (Rentz, 2004). Further a growing undergraduate student body at established universities and students deciding to move off campuses led to a new off campus culture along with the development of extra-curricular programs (Rentz, 2004). These shifts created a need for student personnel administrators to take on student welfare (Dungy & Gordon, 2011) and the coordination of student needs (Rentz, 2004). Thus, began the roles of student affairs administrators, called deans of men and deans of women (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Long, 2012; Rentz, 2004).

The deans of men and the deans of women, henceforth called deans, were an iteration of the idea and policy of in loco parentis. Faculty were focused on their intellectual work and presidents on the running of institutions. Seeking assistance, presidents appointed deans to manage life outside of the classroom for students. These
deans, or deans of students (Rentz, 2004), sought not only to serve as disciplinarians, but also as counselors to students looking after their health and welfare (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The function of deans varied with deans of men often granted a role of counselor and advisor whereas deans of women were often granted administrative and disciplinary functions.

Deans were committed to the development of students beyond supervision (Rentz, 2004). This commitment led to deans of women recognizing additional education was needed as Knock states to “champion the intellectual and personal ambitions of young women” (as cited in Rentz, 2004, p. 39). This led to the development of formal education for deans of women. In 1914 the seeds of student affairs graduate programs were laid with the Teachers College at Columbia University offering the first master’s of arts and diploma of dean of women (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Rentz, 2004). The first text titled *The Deans of Women* was published in 1915 and covered topics including, but not limited to: (a) biology as it related to education including sex education, (b) educational sociology, (c) educational psychology, and (d) management of the corporate life of school (Rentz, 2004). The development of this formal education for deans of women fostered the development of the National Association of Women Deans in 1916.

In 1919, so many men held the position of dean that the National Association of Deans of Men was established in the same year and is now known as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Long, 2012; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2016; Rentz, 2004). Shortly after, in 1924, the National Association of Appointment Secretaries was formed and later changed its name to the American College Personnel Association (Dungy &
The American College Personnel Association is the second oldest and largest professional association, behind NASPA, with both broadly dedicated to the student affairs profession.

**Realism and The Seeds of Student Affairs, 1900 to 1950**

In this time period, students were not left to learn what they wanted, but rather what institutions and student services dictated what was worth knowing (Carpenter, 2004). However, the focus of student affairs is to educate the whole student (American Council on Education, 1937; Long, 2012). Student affairs came into focus in the 1930's (American Council on Education, 1937) through the development of the whole student. This included focusing on the development of cognitive and interpersonal skills, leadership, wellness, ethics, diverse perspectives, and identity, but under the umbrella of realism and defined by metanarratives. But the initial seeds of student affairs were being sown between 1900 and 1930 as well with the earlier development of professional associations for deans.

Between 1900 and 1930 early student affairs professionals gathered to discuss the evolving field and eventually landed on a need for guiding documents (Rentz, 2004). In 1929, at a conference of college student personnel officers from Purdue University and Wabash College, guiding principles were proposed as the foundation of student personal work (Rentz, 2004). At the 1929 conference, J.A. Humphreys then the Dean of Personnel Services at Oberlin College, proposed the following principles:

1. Personnel work is, and should be, first of all an idea rather than a tangible organization. It stands for individualization in college education. Personnel work among college students consists of those activities or procedures which have as their objective assisting the individual student.
2. The logical outcome of this principle is the idea that there should be brought to bear on all student problems, either individual or group situations, the point of view which concerns itself with the individual student. The application of established policies and the forming of new ones ought to be made with reference to individual needs. After all the college exists for the student and not the student for the college. Specific personnel problems arise out of situations, not out of a clear sky.

3. Every member of the faculty, every administrative officer and assistant is a personnel officer in the sense that responsibility for serving the individual student rests upon all those who come in contact with the students.

4. College personnel work is not an activity set off apart from the educative process of the college. True personnel work functions as a part of the educative process. (as cited in Rentz, 2004)

These guiding principles would eventually become the basis for the well-known foundational documents in student affairs, the Student Personnel Point of View.

The foundational documents of student affairs, or student personnel as it was termed then, included the Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 and the Student Personnel Point of View of 1949 (Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Rentz, 2004). The documents came out of the American Council on Education’s desire to study “personnel practices in colleges and universities” (American Council on Education, 1937, p. 1) and clarify the “so-called personnel work, the intelligent use of available tools, and the development of additional techniques and process” (American Council on Education, 1937, p 2).

The committee formed by American Council on Education in 1936 produced the Student Personnel Point of View, published in 1937, and established the first statement on the philosophy, purpose, and methods of practice of student affairs (Rentz, 2004). The Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 described the values and roles of the student personnel profession and emphasized the education of the whole student (Long, 2012). It also shared an importance to paying attention to the individual needs of students.

Although I would challenge this document and say student affairs in higher education
programs put forth a metanarrative of need. Rather than a focus on the whole student and individual need because if the focus was truly on the individual, the student affairs profession would have equitable service and access for all rather than a prescribed approach of theory and practice.

The Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 is considered an important document for understanding the foundations and philosophy of student affairs and is often required reading in graduate programs. It stated, “one of the basic purposes of higher education is the preservation, transmission, and enrichment of the important elements of culture - the product of scholarship, research, creative imagination, and human experience” (American Council on Education, 1937, p. 3), echoing the philosophy of realism (Carpenter, 2004). However, a shift in student services was on the horizon given the start of World War II in 1939 and its end in 1945.

After World War II, a shift occurred in U.S. higher education with the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944, often referred to as the GI Bill (Rentz, 2004). The GI Bill was a federal government effort to address the shifting of society from wartime to peacetime economies (Thelin, 2014). This included absorbing thousands of veterans into higher education through the finical support of the GI Bill in financing their education. Enrollments at higher education institutions increased, the student body diversified, and new ways of serving students were needed.

Recognizing this shift, the American Council on Education revised The Student Personnel Point of View of 1937 and released The Student Personnel Point of View of 1949 to reflect three goals of education: (a) as a way to realize democracy, (b) to focus directly on international understanding, and (c) to use education for the “application of
creative imagination and trained intelligence to the solution of social problems and to the administration of public affairs” (American Council on Education, 1949, p. 2). These three goals guided the student affairs profession for several years and hinted towards a change in philosophical thought towards pragmatism where the student was “thought of as an integrated whole” (Carpenter, 2004, p. 11), where morals were decided by groups, and individuals and the teachers served as facilitators.

**Pragmatist Thought and Student Development from the 1960’s to 1980’s**

The shift in purpose of student affairs from student services to student development started in the 1950’s and came to fruition with the turbulent 1960’s in higher education (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1961 on *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* changed the commonly held policy of *in loco parentis*, ending the institution’s role as parent of students when attending higher education by defining a person over the age of 18 as an adult giving students a right to due process (Long, 2012).

It is from this shift that student affairs changed its attitude towards student development. Institutions no longer decided for students what they could and could not do by serving *in loco parentis* (Rentz, 2004). Indeed, students were no longer silent about their discontent with what was viewed as irrelevant education during the social turmoil of the 1960s. Kirk states that student affairs entered an “identity crisis” (as cited in Rentz, 2004, p. 47) during this period.

During this identity crisis, several documents were released to try and address the relevance of student affairs post *in loco parentis*, World War II, and the shift of the view
of the student from passive to active learner. Additionally, during this time of the mid 1960s, student affairs, then called college student personnel, became a professional field (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Preparation programs were considered an applied science which continued to draw from the fields of sociology, management, and psychology to name a few. During this time as well, professional associations began to further develop guidelines for the preparation of professions in the field of student affairs.

In 1968, a group of individuals from several professional organizations created the Committee on Professional Development of the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education (COSPA) with the goal of stating guidelines for the preparation of student affairs professionals (Rentz, 2004). This committee started the shift from that of student personnel perspective to student development by framing its published five focused statements in the development of students. The Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education published its five statements sometime after the group dissolved which is often referred to as the COSPA Report (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, n.d.). The statement of guidelines for professional preparation from the COSPA Report include:

1. The orientation to student personnel is developmental.
2. Self-direction of the student is the goal of the student and is facilitated by the student development specialist.
3. Students are viewed as collaborators with the faculty and administration in the process of learning and growing.
4. It is recognized that many theoretical approaches to human development have credence, and a thorough understanding of such approaches is important to the student development specialist.
5. The student development specialist prefers a proactive position in policy formulation and decision-making so that a positive impact is made on the change process. (as cited in Rentz, 2004)
These statements began to shift the field into a development role and suggested the developmental work be done by a specialist, suggesting competencies for mastery during preparation programs (Rentz, 2004). This report could have been the start of setting student affairs on the course of competency-based education but the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education dissolved within seven years.

A second committee, also formed in 1968 by ACPA, was called the Tomorrow’s Higher Education (T.H.E.) Project (Rentz, 2004). The Tomorrow’s Higher Education Project also sought to rethink student services, identifying another set of five student development concepts shared by Brown, including:

1. Student characteristics when they enter college have a significant impact on how students are affected by their college experience.
2. The collegiate years are the period for many individual students when significant developmental changes occur.
3. There are opportunities within the collegiate program for it to have a significant impact on student development.
4. The environmental factors that hold the most promise for affecting student developmental patterns include the peer groups, the living unity, the faculty, and the classroom experience.
5. Development changes in students are the result of the interaction of initial characteristics and the press of the environment. (as cited in Rentz, 2004)

This first part of the Tomorrow’s Higher Education project ended with the establishment of three core student development principles (Rentz, 2004). They saw development as continuous and cumulative, as a matter of moving from the simple to the complex, and development as stages. The dialogue of student development, while slow moving and experiencing bumps along the way, continued with a Phase II of the Tomorrow’s Higher Education Project and in 1987, NASPA stepped back into the conversation with their publication, *A Perspective on Student Affairs: A Statement Issued on the 50th Anniversary of the Student Personnel Point of View* (Rentz, 2004).
The main focus of the 1987 NASPA publication was that of diversity and its growth in the U.S. (Rentz, 2004). It also reemphasized the focus of the whole student, involved learning, the importance of the campus environment, and the effect of personal circumstances on learning (Carpenter, 2004; Rentz, 2004). This focus in 1987 was likely the result of civil rights cases and legislation. In 1972, Congress passed Title IX, which addressed protection against sexual harassment and equal opportunity, and Title VII, which amended the 1964 Civil Rights Act addressing the rights of all employees in higher education (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). In the seminal case, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* in 1978, affirmative action was addressed and the quota systems at universities within their affirmative action policies was abolished (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). However, the ruling allowed latitude in providing access to higher education to minoritized groups.

Continuation of Pragmatism of Student Affairs from the 1990’s to Present

The profession continued to tease out its role, value, and purpose through another series of statements and documents working to describe, defend, and emphasize the work of student affairs. Publications, such as the 1994 *Student Learning Imperative* and the 2004 *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience*, were produced and distributed. This development, over time, also created a set of values for the field of student affairs.

Becoming aware of the values of student affairs creates understanding toward how competencies for the student affairs field developed from the many foundational documents. Young (1993) described five values of the student affairs profession
including: (a) educating the whole student; (b) care for students; (c) service to students and to the university; (d) community; and (e) equality and social justice. Educating the whole student echoed the foundational documents of student affairs and their focus on helping students learn interpersonal skills, ethics, career goals and who they are through programming and services (Long, 2012).

The understanding in student affairs is that each student is an individual with specific needs, and that caring for students is a value of the profession where students are paid attention to, respected, and treated fairly (Long, 2012). Care is also demonstrated by the profession’s effort to support minoritized communities and encourage students to care for one another and their campus communities. Developing community has been known to have educational benefits including increasing student retention, providing leadership development for students, and instilling a sense of empathy and responsibility (Hotchkiss, Moore, & Pitts, 2006; Long, 2012; Vivian, 2005).

Similar values were echoed in the fifth edition of the book Student Services: A handbook for the profession (Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Associates, 2011). Chapter five in this text speaks to the values and philosophies of the student affairs profession highlighting the work by Young and Elfrink stating,

Student affairs practitioners with overwhelming consensus identified the following seven values as essential to the profession:

- **Altruism**, or concern for the welfare of others
- **Equality**, or ensurance that all people have the same rights, privileges, or status
- **Aesthetics**, or qualities of objects, events, and persons that provide satisfaction
- **Freedom**, or the capacity to exercise choice
- **Human dignity**, or the inherent worth and uniqueness of an individual
- **Justice**, or the upholding of moral and legal principles
- **Truth**, or faithfulness to fact or reality (as cited in Reason & Broido, 2011)
These updated and detailed values of our profession set a tone of care but also lay out a choice. These values, while shared in a book that is common in graduate programs, are not read by all student affairs professionals, since not every role that works with students requires a student affairs master’s degree. These values can inform our practice towards social justice and while the specific mention of the value of social justice is missing in the historical documents of student affairs, practitioners should consider social justice a guiding principle of the profession (Reason & Broido, 2011).

In 1994, ACPA published the Student Learning Imperative calling for a shift towards student learning and personal development (Carpenter, 2004; Rentz, 2004). In 1995, NASPA published Reasonable Expectations: Renewing the Education Compact Between Institutions and Students, focusing on high expectations and mutual respect along with an emphasis in communication and integrity reminding student affairs of its pragmatic philosophy (Carpenter, 2004).

Meanwhile a critique of the student development movement arose in a 1994 monograph, Reform in Student Affairs: A Critique of Student Development by Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (Reason & Broido, 2011; Rentz, 2004) challenging the profession to rethink its mission from student development towards student learning in aligning the profession closer to the educational mission (Rentz, 2004). This call for change had a response in the form of the Student Learning Imperative by ACPA and by both ACPA and NASPA in their statement of the Principles of Good Practice released in 1997 reemphasizing the focus on student learning with a focus on the whole student and diversity (Carpenter, 2004). Building on the focus of student learning, the American

The *Powerful Partnerships* report was a visionary document which sought to achieve student learning through the partnerships of faculty, student affairs professionals, students, parents, boards, and governing bodies (Carpenter, 2004). What was unique about this document was that it took what had been discussed separately, as shown above in the various student affairs documents, student development, and student learning, and linked learning and development as a “common enterprise” (Carpenter, 2004, p. 21). Further it did not privilege learning over development or development over learning.

In 2004 NASPA and ACPA went a step further in their publication of *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience*, redefining learning as “a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development” (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA] & American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 2004, p. 2). *Learning Reconsidered* argued for the integrated use of all higher education resources in the preparation and education of the whole student with the use of learning goals and outcomes (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The learning goals and outcomes are often sought from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education and the ACPA and NASPA competencies.

**Council for the Advancement of Standards**

Competencies have been written and rewritten as knowledge shifts and changes over time. The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) is “a consortium of professional associations in higher education, [that] promotes the use of its professional
standards for the development, assessment, and improvement of quality student learning, programs, and services” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2014, p. 1). The council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education lists 14 topical areas higher education programs should follow along with guidelines for 43 functional areas within higher education. For the purpose of this study, I will not discuss all 14 topics but rather focus in on number seven, “Diversity, Equity, and Access” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2014, p. 11).

I dedicate space below to the full statement by CAS on diversity, equity, and access because it was used as a guiding document for the student affairs competency areas for practitioners (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) and built upon for the updated student affairs competency areas for educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Further, it is important for the reader to have this understanding moving forward. The Council for the Advancement of Standards is referenced five times in the student affairs competency areas (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) and is the only external document listed. Specifically, the Council for the Advancement of Standards lays out the following for higher education institutions on diversity, equity, and access:

Within the context of each institution's mission and in accordance with institutional policies and applicable codes and laws, programs and services must create and maintain educational and work environments that are welcoming, accessible, inclusive, equitable, and free from harassment. Programs and services must not discriminate on the basis of disability; age; race; cultural identity; ethnicity; nationality; family educational history (e.g., first generation to attend college); political affiliation; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; marital, social, economic, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws.

Programs and services must,

- advocate for sensitivity to multicultural and social justice concerns by the institution and its personnel
- ensure physical, program, and resource access for all constituents
• modify or remove policies, practices, systems, technologies, facilities, and structures that create barriers or produce inequities
• ensure that when facilities and structures cannot be modified, they do not impede access to programs, services, and resources
• establish goals for diversity, equity, and access
• foster communication and practices that enhance understanding of identity, culture, self-expression, and heritage
• promote respect for commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts
• address the characteristics and needs of diverse constituents when establishing and implementing culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, procedures, and practices
• provide personnel with diversity, equity, and access training and hold personnel accountable for applying the training to their work
• respond to the needs of all constituents served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs, services, and resources
• recognize the needs of distance and online learning students by directly providing or assisting them to gain access to comparable services and resources (2014, pp. 11-12)

The Council for the Advancement of Standards, through this statement, lays out what programs should be doing in regard to diversity, equity, and access indicating what programs and services must do and/or offer. Yet, in the list of 11 musts, there is only one mention of social justice among common words interchanged with social justice, such as diversity and equity. A list such as this leaves the reader, student, practitioner, and faculty with little guidance of its use. While there is an emphasis on the espoused values as seen through the use of inclusion, diversity, equity, access, and social justice, it is set within the context of institutional missions, polices, and applicable laws. Therefore, while there is a statement of must, it is rather optional.

The above outline of CAS for higher education institutions centers on diversity, equity, and access. The Council for the Advancement of Standards offers less in the Master’s Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs guidelines (Council
for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2012). The Master’s Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs guidelines share that programs should have a mission and objectives, but it leaves what those might be to the individual programs, only listing social justice as one of five or more options with no mention of inclusion or intercultural work. Further, part six of the Master’s Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs guidelines, Equity and Access, focuses on equal opportunity and fostering inclusive communities where diversity is an ethical responsibility while going on to emphasize a non-discriminatory approach. The Master’s Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs guidelines leave much to interpretation by ending the Equity and Access section with the statement that programs, “should recognize the important educational opportunities that diversity among its students and faculty brings to student affairs preparation. Therefore, programs should encourage the recognition of and adherence to the diversity of all who are allied with the educational program” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2012, p. 16).

**Student Affairs Competencies**

As previously discussed, student affairs matured through the 1980s and 1990s with the updating and revising of foundational student development theories through textbooks such as *Student Development in College* followed by its second edition in 2010, which is still in use today. During this time, higher education institutions also experienced an increase of diverse students attending colleges and universities through the 2000’s. The number of underrepresented populations grew, and women students
increased to over 60% nationwide (Long, 2012). Thus, a strong foundation in diversity and social justice becomes essential for student affairs professionals and faculty.

In 2009, ACPA and NASPA collaborated to establish a common set of professional competency areas for student affairs educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). The joint task force on professional competencies and standards was formed out of this 2009 collaboration with members from both organizations (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). The task force reviewed 19 core documents produced by ACPA, NASPA, and CAS from which 10 core competency areas emerged and were adopted by ACPA and NASPA in a joint meeting in 2010. The 19 documents are listed in Table 1.
This initial 2010 competency document for student affairs professionals shared its purpose was to define the “broad professional knowledge, skills, and for some competencies, attitudes expected of student affairs professionals, regardless of their area of specialization or positional role within the field” (ACPA & NASPA, 2010, pg. 4). The document further stated that each student affairs professional should be able, at
minimum, to demonstrate an ability to meet a listed outcome of a competency regardless of how they entered the field. This statement indicates to me that whether you have entered the professional through experience only, not obtaining a graduate degree, or if you have multiple graduate degrees it is an expectation of the ACPA and NASPA professional organizations, student affairs professionals have foundational competence.

The Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners does state that the document could serve as a guiding tool for professionals or practitioners, terms the document uses interchangeably, in their choices of professional development (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). However, the document, in its purpose, assumes a level of equity among student affairs professionals; that all have the same opportunities afforded by departments to take part in professional development. Further, the 2010 document acknowledges that the competency areas may not adequately fit all areas of work and therefore professionals should consult with their supervisor (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). Yet, the competency areas may still be used in employee evaluations or the creation of job descriptions. Again, sharing that the competencies may help student affairs professionals in determining additional education or training that may be needed to achieve success within the individual’s roles.

The Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) closed with listing the 10 areas of competency which included: (a) advising and helping; (b) assessment, evaluation, and research; (c) equity, diversity, and inclusion; (d) ethical professional practice; (e) history, philosophy, and values; (f) human and organizational resources; (g) law, policy, and governance; (h) leadership; (i) personal foundations; and (j) student learning and development. While each of these
competencies likely warrant a critical eye, I turn to that which is most pressing in the
U.S., local communities, and individual institutions. The competency of equity,
diversity, and inclusion which was renamed in the Professional Competency Areas for
Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) to social justice and inclusion.

**Student Affairs Competencies at Present**

The Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (ACPA &
NASPA, 2010) were set aside until 2014 when a new task force set out to review and
update competency areas as the field of student affairs continued to grow and develop.
Through a similar process of committee and member feedback, the Professional
Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) retained
much of the previous work from the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs
Practitioners (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). The Professional Competency Areas for Student
Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) kept all 10 competency areas from 2010
version but renamed two and added one. From the above Professional Competency
Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) the only ones changed
in the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA,
2015) were (a) personal foundations and ethical professional practice became personal
and ethical foundations, (b) equity, diversity, and inclusion became social justice and
inclusion, and (c) technology was added.

It is important to note that what was considered a “substantial change” (ACPA &
NASPA, 2015, pg. 4) was the nuanced renaming of two competencies including the
equity, diversity, and inclusion competency to social justice and inclusion. The
Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015)
The document further states that the shift came from reviewing literature. However, only three sources are cited, as seen in the quote in Chapter I, page 11, as informing the renaming due to recognizing a shift in the literature from equity, diversity, and inclusion to social justice and inclusion (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). This is hardly enough reason or proof of development in the field to rename a competency to the complex idea of social justice and situate social justice as an achievable competency. Further it sets the competencies in a format of what appears to me as levels of achievement—a checklist; after foundational outcomes are reached there are listed intermediate and advanced outcomes to achieve.

The foundational outcomes listed in the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) are (see Appendix A for intermediate and advanced outcomes):

- Identify systems of socialization that influence one’s multiple identities and sociopolitical perspectives and how they impact one’s lived experiences.
- Understand how one is affected by and participates in maintaining systems of oppression, privilege, and power.
- Engage in 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.
- Integrate knowledge of social justice, inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power into one’s practice.
- Connect and build meaningful relationships with others while recognizing the multiple, intersecting identities, perspectives, and developmental differences people hold.
- Articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and inclusion within the context of higher education.
- Advocate on issues of social justice, oppression, privilege, and power that impact people based on local, national, and global interconnections. (p. 30)

Beyond the above, little direction is given towards the process of obtaining the professional competency areas nor do the rubrics (ACPA & NASPA, 2016) clearly offer
how to achieve the above stated foundational outcome competencies. However, the rubrics do reiterate the idea of achievable competencies by sharing the rubrics are a way to help assess the competency of individuals. Along with stating that the “mastery of outcomes in each dimension can be tracked [through] … pre- and post-tests and case studies” (ACPA & NASPA, 2016). But the rubric (see Appendix B) also states “they [the rubrics] are not valid instruments for measuring growth or comparing the performance of others” (ACPA & NASPA, 2016, p. 5).

**The Value of Social Justice and Inclusion**

Social justice and inclusion as values of the profession are not clearly owned or stated and similarly, the events related to social justice in higher education are often left out (Davis & Harrison, 2013). Even with two of the largest student affairs associations claiming needed competence in equity, diversity, and inclusion in 2010 followed by social justice and inclusion in 2015 the value of these ideas is not well represented. In reviewing foundational books of the profession for graduate preparation, *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession* only mentioned social justice three times in a text of over 500 pages. Similarly, inclusion was mentioned three times over the span of four pages but nestled under a header of cultural border crossing (Schuh et al., 2011).

While *the Handbook of Student Affairs Administrators* (McClellan, Stringer, & Associates, 2016) is the newest textbook with over 600 pages, its subject index has no mention of social justice, inclusion, or equity. The subject index does include roughly 12 pages containing text on diversity related to challenges, as a global issue, conclusions, definitions, recommendations, and scholarly works. Multiculturalism is shown in the
subject index with roughly 17 pages highlighted covering topics from a page on competence to a section on complex issues.

Although social justice and inclusion were left out in these foundational texts, higher education, through several legal cases has been required to value equity and justice to students. For example, in *Florida ex rel. Hawkins v Board of Control* (1956) the relevance of *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) was affirmed in higher education. It was affirmed that “no public institution may discriminate in admissions on the basis of race” (Kaplin & Lee, 2007, p. 321). The Educational Amendments of 1972 on Title IX prohibited discrimination, by public and private institutions receiving federal funding, based on sex (Kaplin & Lee, 2007). The federal laws of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibited discrimination against individuals with disabilities on campuses (Kaplin & Lee, 2007). In addition to these legal cases, social movements on campuses by students have pushed for the events of social justice and inclusion within higher education to not be left out but rather centered and valued.

For example, the social media movements of Concerned Student 1950, #blacklivesmatter and #studentsofcolormatter along with student protests on the ending of DACA, formally known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (USA Today, 2017), have pushed higher education to include the events of social justice on their campuses by demanding action (Rosenblatt, 2017). Related to the protests on DACA, college campuses have begun to respond to student activism and their value of social justice. Campuses across the U.S. experienced protests and walkouts along with petitions to declare themselves as sanctuary campuses (Reilly, 2016). Sanctuary campuses would
pledge to do what is possible to protect students from deportation (Reilly, 2016) due to
the Trump Administration indicating they would end the program (Rosenblatt, 2017).

The above examples highlight that while the field of student affairs states the
development and support of the whole student is central to the work, the commitment to
action is limited. This limited action is seen in the varied and many campus protests of
injustice policies and practices on college campuses by students. Student affairs faculty
and staff must remember with awareness of the need of social justice it must also have
action. Social justice, as stated in the definition, is both a process and a goal. The
process and goal of social justice is beyond awareness and as Anyon shares,

information, readings, and discussion does not by itself induce them [individuals]
to participate in transgressive politics [or campus issues] … To activate people to
create or join a social movement, it is important to actually involve them in a
protest activity of some kind (as cited in North, 2008).

Therefore, looking into how the student affairs curriculum is engaging in social justice
and inclusion as an active competency is the focus of this dissertation.

**My Views on Social Justice and Inclusion**

I have found the competencies put forth by ACPA and NASPA to be admirable,
but vague. At times, they seemed to be ignored in programs if not for some faculty
introducing them intentionally. As I critically reflect on my education and observe
master’s students matriculate and graduate from various student affairs programs, I do
not see an active orientation provided through coursework. The work, development, and
action of social justice and inclusion requires continual reflection and dedication to
working through tough topics and understanding internal bias(es) *in addition* to actively
engaging with justice.
Yet, more often than not, when social justice and inclusion is centered in practice or teaching, I have experienced students and staff push back and/or harm is involved. For example, graduate students and staff ask why my training and development curriculum continues to center minoritized populations. I have experienced a call by a campus leader to show up and represent the diversity of faculty at my institution as a person of color. I have seen graduate students take concepts from the classroom related to inclusion, in an effort to bring theory to practice, cause harm to students. Through these and other professional experiences, along with my education in student affairs, I still wonder how the competency of social justice and inclusion is taught (or can be) as it does not often appear in my work or experiences with student affairs practitioners and faculty.

I do hear at conferences and in courses that we are doing this work — the work of social justice and inclusion (Henning, 2017). While there is often a statement to doing the work of social justice and inclusion at almost any given institution and student affairs program, issues of power and race are often ignored (Bondi, 2012; Cross, 2005). As we know by the work of Flowers (2003), only 74% of programs in the study required a three-credit diversity course of 40 to 48 credit hour programs. Indeed, it is likely not many more are requiring a course on competency for social justice and inclusion. Further, since student affairs, as a profession, does not always require competency, proof of the mastery of concepts related to the profession, it is likely issues of power and race will continue to be ignored. The concern is that social justice and inclusion are more trendy terms rather than a focused value or action of student affairs programs or services.

Social justice, as a term and guiding vision, has gained momentum since 2008 in educational spaces, teacher activism, education policy documents, and scholarly
conferences (North, 2008). However, when employing this term, individuals and organizations, like student affairs associations, often are limited in giving social justice a foundation and set of implications. Educators often do not challenge the distorted and incomplete perspectives given and repeated through history, limiting the available understanding of social justice (Davis & Harrison, 2013). This incomplete perspective can be seen in the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) document where only three sources are cited in renaming the competency and only a fraction of the definition of social justice is provided and neither is provided for inclusion.

The term, social justice, is not static (North, 2008), yet the foundational competency of social justice and inclusion for student affairs master’s level graduate programs lists static outcomes. Further, the teaching of social justice often appears in curriculum as static approaches. As Britzman shared, this leaves student affairs at “learning about” rather than “learning from” (as cited in North, 2008 p. 1196) or learning “with groups outside the white norm” (Cross, 2005, p. 273 emphasis in original).

Learning about, provides facts and qualities that can be reshaped and is static learning, while learning from/with provides experience and insight. The focus of learning about has been my experience with the curriculum of student affairs as a faculty member, program advisor, and supervisor of graduate assistants. This is no surprise given that student affairs programs are not grounded in one cohesive vision on what the education of a student affairs professional should be.

As it has been described earlier, student affairs programs have professional organizations such as CAS, ACPA, and NASPA that encourage a framework for the
grounding of programs. Yet, these recommended frameworks still remain suggestions. Similarly, the accreditation of student affairs programs remains voluntary. Program faculty and/or directors choose the amount of credits required, usually 40 to 48, and what the curriculum will consists of which may or may not require a social justice and inclusion component. Further, while faculty and/or program directors choose the courses and credits, the curriculum must still go through several approvals from curriculum committees and provosts. Additionally, to be hired in the field of student affairs, graduate preparation is not a universal requirement.

While I acknowledge that student affairs faculty must have a graduate degree to teach within programs, most of the time, it is important to note that there is also not a required program or degree. As I have seen, and see on program websites, faculty can be campus leadership, doctoral students, or faculty with related doctoral education such as counseling or organizational development. Each are valid but lend to the impossible nature of all faculty valuing social justice and inclusion or programs seeking to adhere to the ACPA and NASPA program competencies.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter literature was reviewed covering the development of student affairs from the early 1600s to present day. The review of literature provided context for the development of CAS Standards and ACPA and NASPA as leading associations of what student affairs master’s programs should be grounded in even though these associations do not accredit programs. Further, the competencies are discussed in depth followed by a review of the values of student affairs. This review of literature provides a historical context of student affairs and the literature within the field to guide the methodology in
Chapter III. In the next chapter, I detail my methodological choices and steps for conducting this study including my postmodern pragmatist perspective and content analysis method.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Every thinker puts some portion of an apparently stable world in peril and no one can wholly predict what will emerge in its place. (Dewey, 1925, p. 172)

In this chapter the purpose and research questions are revisited, followed by my positionality which informed my choices for my dissertation. I also guide the reader through the pragmatist paradigm and postmodern framework I use. Next, the data collection methods are described along with data analysis approach of content analysis. The chapter concludes with addressing issues of validity and relatability, ethical considerations, and the limitations and delimitations of this inquiry.

Revisiting Purpose and Research Questions

My dissertation sought to uncover how the social justice and inclusion competency is being addressed in student affairs master’s programs. Using the lens of pragmatism and postmodernism facilitated the challenging of metanarratives and allows for the emphasis on experience rather than theory in this inquiry. Through collecting 61 syllabi via a survey to student affairs program directors/faculty, I was able provide empirical data on current approaches including the analysis of the key lessons, learning outcomes, and assignments deemed vital to the course and topic (Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003). The research questions that guided my work on examining how master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs incorporate social justice and inclusion in curriculum were:
Q1 How do master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs communicate social justice and inclusion in curriculum?

Q2 How are the competencies of social justice and inclusion conveyed in required coursework?

While the research questions guided my formal methods and analysis, my positionality also informed my choices. Positionality is a reflexive process that requires me to understand how my experiences and identities position me with my research. Positionality, my realities and views, come from my lived experiences as a student affairs graduate student, faculty member, and practitioner. For me it is important to acknowledge my experiences followed by how they have informed my methodology.

My Realities, My Views

In 2007, I was in the second semester of my master’s preparation program, and I recall that we read, *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (Tatum, 1997) and I clearly, as if it were yesterday, remember thinking is this it? Is this the only book we will read in my one social and cultural diversity course speaking to the experiences of people of color? Turned out, yes it was. Even worse to me at that time was the grouping of Latinos, American Indians, and Asian Pacific Americans into one chapter, 36 pages. It was as if we were not worth the space in this book by the touted writer Tatum.

Let me note, first and foremost, I recognize at the time of my program I, society, along with student affairs, was different. I am able to now reflect and realize Tatum’s focus on black and white racial identity and its value. However, I cannot ignore that if I had not decided to seek further education through my doctoral program or professional development, this book would have been and was, for some, the only exposure to
difference in a master’s program. Since my reading of Tatum’s 1997 book I have seen the field of student affairs using varying terms such as diversity, equity, inclusion, multiculturalism, and now focused on social justice and inclusion.

My Realities

I am fully aware that diversity, equity, inclusion, multicultural, and social justice are not the same things, after all I have defined them each previously. I argue that in my experience, and maybe yours, there has been a tendency to group or use these terms interchangeably within courses and the field of student affairs. Further, I believe the field of student affairs has lost sight of what SJI is through simply repeating it is a process and a goal. I also see and hear this from graduate students when trying to reference their definition, from colleagues and faculty stating — it is a process and a goal. Yes, it is but it is also much more and when student affairs professionals and faculty lose sight of the whole and only provide part or pieces, they enter the space of potentially causing harm.

As faculty and staff, we must deepen our teaching of social justice and inclusion as we teach the graduate students who will carry on the work of student affairs. Social justice must move from the common phrase of, a process and a goal, to a robust understanding of its intent. Its goal intent is to be the “full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shared to meet their needs” (Bell, 2016, p. 3). The process should be democratic and participatory including respectfully learning with diverse groups and individuals (Bell, 2016; Cross, 2005; North, 2008).

Inclusion must also move from being an attempt to including all to the vision of equity or as I refer to it, the vision of social justice. The vision of social justice is the
sharing of resources equitably and through ecological sustainable means. The vision is also were all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognized, and treated with respect (Bell, 2016) — not just included. It is for these reasons, and for the betterment of me, my students, my colleagues, and my profession, that I am drawn to a deeper understanding of what is being done in graduate education for student affairs as it relates to teaching social justice and inclusion while also problematizing SJI as a competency.

**My Why**

I am further drawn to the topic of examining what SJI competency looks like through syllabi because I am a professional and faculty member in the field of student affairs. I also recognize that, at some point, I have caused harm in my efforts to be a socially just educator. I have also seen and heard of harm done by graduate students, all levels of staff, and faculty when trying to work from a socially just framework. Now, I do not speak to the idea of the SJI competency as not giving space for student affairs professionals and faculty to *step in it*, as it is often said, when individuals mess up in the work.

Although, I do speak to the idea that when student affairs faculty do not fully express the totality of what social justice is through graduate preparation programs, graduate students can, will, and have caused harm. If I truly belong to a profession that asks its students, staff, and faculty to be socially just then the profession and preparation of professionals must center on SJI. Rather than have it as an additive or primarily focused on reflection and awareness in classrooms, it must also be participatory and action oriented. As Bell (2016) shares, “The goal of social justice education is to enable
individuals to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand the structural features of oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems” (p. 4). I believe graduate programs make a valiant effort towards this goal based on the data found in this inquiry as there is a focus on self-awareness and critical reflection of self. This focus on awareness and reflection meets the additional ideal of social justice education by helping folks develop awareness and process issues of injustice personally and reflect on their communities and institutions they have been a part of (Bell, 2016). However, social justice must still be actionable. Social justice education further,

aims to connect analysis to action; to help participants develop a sense of agency and commitment, as well as skills and tools, for working with others to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part. (p. 4)

When the profession misses this piece of social justice education to teach skills and provide tools to interrupt oppressive behaviors, harm is ever present when I, you, and/or the profession tosses around SJI as a competency that can be reached at a foundational, intermediate, or advanced level. But who am I to speak to this inquiry you may be thinking? I am a student affairs scholar-practitioner worthy of disseminating knowledge and of my privileged and subordinated identities situated within the postmodern perspective.

**Postmodernist**

Postmodern thinking allows me to challenge modernism, to challenge the idea of universal thought or metanarratives (Jagger, 2014; Rolfe, 2001). It argues that items exist only “as humans ‘construct’ them through language and discourse” (Jagger, 2014, p. 343). Hence, current understandings for both language and discourse are subject to change thus changing what once was true is possible. Further, truth and meaning of
language is relative and is a product of its context, “truth is whatever power proclaims it to be” (Tong, 2014, p. 194). In other words, what I may know as truth is only a product of the life and situations I have been exposed to, my context, which is likely different from another. Postmodern thinking moves away from empiricist views of objective truth, such as the competencies of social justice and inclusion, and deconstructs socially constructed categories (Hesse-Biber, 2014). As a postmodern thinker, I am attempting to present a different perspective a different truth on and of the world — and of social justice and inclusion.

As the narrator in this inquiry I am in agreement with postmodern theorists and Lather that a “narrator’s experiences and historical and cultural location in the society shape all narratives” (as cited in Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014, p. 13). I write the next few sentences in my familial language, a dialect of Spanish, to recognize who I am beyond the singular, to honor my family, and for the first time recognize my language as scholarly within the dominant framework of the English/U.S. language.

Soy Karla Pérez-Vélez. Hija de Juana y Crispin. Hermana de Tania y Kathy. Soy mujer, tía, prima, amiga, educadora, profesional, y conocedora. Mis experiencias y intereses se reflejan en esta investigación y se ven influenciadas por ser mujer socializada, Puertorriqueña, de clase media, feminista, capaz, persona heterosexual que a sido exotizada, discriminada, perjudicada, examinada, dudado, una predicción estática de que no lograría más allá de la escuela secundaria, mucho menos que de muestre con un doctorado como la Dra. Pérez-Vélez. Yo soy Dra. Pérez-Vélez la erudita posmodernista. [I am Karla Pérez-Vélez. Daughter of Juana and Crispin. Sister to Tania and Kathy. I am woman, aunt, cousin, friend, educator, professional, and knower. My experiences and interests are reflected in this inquiry and are further influenced as by being socialized woman, Puerto Rican, middle class, feminist, able-bodied, heterosexual person who has been exoticized, discriminated against, harmed, examined, doubted, and statically predicted to not achieve beyond high school let alone show up with a doctorate as Dr. Pérez-Vélez. I am Dr. Pérez-Vélez a postmodernist scholar.]
Postmodernism allows me to challenge modernism, to challenge the idea of universal thought such as those laid down to me by course work and professional organizations on what SJI is (Jagger, 2014; Rolfe, 2001). Postmodernism argues that items exist only as we construct them through our language and current understandings for both language and understanding are subject to change (Jagger, 2014). As a postmodernist, I pursue this inquiry to present a different truth on what social justice and inclusion education looks like within student affairs master’s programs. I recognize how curriculum may reflect power structures and “pedagogical practice might unwittingly marginalize some students and privilege others” (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014, p. 20). Further, I understand how failing “to elaborate the substantive meaning of social justice education and the implications of its use” (North, 2008, p. 1182) impacts student affairs education.

Those in power have changed the profession’s language from diversity, equity, and inclusion in preference of the newer language, or metanarrative, of social justice and inclusion. A metanarrative may be wrong and/or have a filtered view or have been taught through a filtered lens. As an example, ACPA and NASPA have laid out a metanarrative of what social justice and inclusion competence is at a foundational, intermediate, and advanced level followed by putting forth rubrics to measure achievement of these. This shift moves social justice and inclusion from the personal, emotional, and learning with and from individuals and communities, to a competency of learning about.

As Britzman’s and Kumashiro’s scholarship demonstrates, “student empowerment and unlearning oppressive beliefs and practices require more than knowing how to think critically or act politically because fears and desires — and the
performances of them — influence what we are willing to learn and do” (as cited in North, 2008, p. 1197). Social justice and inclusion in practice cannot simply be taught through critical reflection while students, faculty, and staff sit in a chair and switch between social justice readings and social media — it must be lived and consider the whole person.

When speaking of the whole person or a holistic approach, the philosophical approach of pragmatism surfaces along with its philosophical heritage to student affairs (Carpenter, 2004). Pragmatism does not allow for truth to be made up as a metanarrative but rather speaks to inquiring on the experience of the whole person. In pragmatism, a problem is identified, information is gathered, and the best solutions are suggested aimed at providing truth for that time to solve the problem.

**Pragmatist Approach**

Pragmatism in social research is often distilled to a view of a “what works” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046) because it does not hold to a singular or objective truth. As Teddlie & Tashakkori share it is also often cited as the paradigm allowing for “(a) rejection of the need to force a choice between contradicting epistemologies, (b) more importance … placed on the research question instead of the method or paradigm, and (c) the acceptance of ‘a very practical and applied research philosophy’” (as cited in Jones, Torres, & Armino, 2006, p. 144). However, this limited view of a pragmatist paradigm ignores the pragmatist scholar’s choice on inquiry pursuits and its meaning to the field (Morgan, 2014).

There is an assumption that pragmatic scholars avoid the metaphysical discussion on truth, ontology, and epistemology as criticized by Lincoln (2010), “pragmatists tell us
nothing about their ontology or epistemology” (p. 7). I would argue that the work of Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) in their seminal document update on *Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradiction, and Emerging Confluences* is a metanarrative of what researcher views on inquiry should be. What is further troubling is the established perception that pragmatism is applicable only in mixed methods research. That it is devoid of broader philosophical underpinnings, similar to the confusion of “some paradigmatic claims that qualitative methods must be connected to constructivism and quantitative methods must be connected to post-positivism” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1045). However, views shifted during the “paradigm wars” (Gage, 1989, p. 4; Morgan, 2007) acknowledging that while there may be a preference to connecting paradigms and methods, there is not a “deterministic link” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1045) that pushes particular sets of paradigms with particular sets of epistemologies or methods. Nor does the pragmatic approach adhere to any one system of philosophy and reality similar to postmodernism (Creswell, 2014).

Researchers from metaphysical paradigms experience the world of research differently, thus leading to different beliefs and actions (Morgan, 2014). The most common concept of paradigms is of “shared beliefs within a community of researchers who share a consensus about which questions are most meaningful and which procedures are most appropriate for answering those questions” (Morgan, 2007, p. 53). After all, Morgan stated that we are in the midst of a “new paradigm shift that will replace the metaphysical paradigm as a dominant belief system for discussing core issues in social science research methodology, just as it replaced positivism” (p. 60), and I am inclined to agree.
Thus, a need arises to address the use of pragmatism as a new approach, rather than paradigm, to avoid confusion with the metaphysical paradigms and as a direct challenge to these paradigms (Morgan, 2007). One that stands next to or “replaces the older philosophy of knowledge” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1045), is the metaphysical paradigms set forth by Guba (1990), Guba and Lincoln (2005), Lincoln (2010), and Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) which focus on ontology, epistemology, and methodology. I am of the view and agreement with Morgan (2014) in interpreting a pragmatic approach as more than a *what works*, but rather as understanding pragmatism as a philosophy for social research. With a heritage in student affairs, pragmatism is not “willy-nilly” (Carpenter, 2004, p. 11) or what works, but a situational process chosen through logic. It recognizes reality as determined by the student who has experienced it and what is of value and should be centered is decided by groups and individuals through consensus and is dynamic.

**Philosophy of Pragmatism**

Garcia states, philosophy can be interpreted as “a set of ideas or beliefs, concerning anything, that an ordinary person may hold; as a view of the world, or any of its parts, that seeks to be accurate, consistent, and comprehensive; as a discipline of learning” (as cited in Carpenter, 2004, p. 4). Or, as shared by Harrison, pragmatism is a recognition of the fallibility of knowledge; an emphasis on the outcomes of knowledge rather than on the relationship of knowledge to ‘truth’; an emphasis on experience rather than on abstracted theory; a rejection of the dichotomies of modern science and philosophy (such as theory/action); the centrality of community and social relationships; and a recognition of the importance of language in creating realities and in shaping social practice (as cited in Zack, 2008, p. 53).
In the metaphysical paradigms, such as constructivism and post-positivist philosophy, that which guides research is categorized as: (a) ontology, which asks what is real, (b) epistemology, which asks how knowledge is constructed, and (c) axiology, which asks what is of value (Carpenter, 2004). However, pragmatism as a philosophy is not constrained or organized in this manner; its broad philosophy and problem-solving orientation is rooted in the work of John Dewey (Morgan, 2014) which built from the works of C. S. Peirce and William James (Cherryholmes, 1992; Denzin, 2012; Morgan, 2014; Zack, 2008).

**Peirce pragmatism.** Charles Sanders Peirce, or C.S. Peirce, is considered the founder of pragmatism, and his view of philosophy is considered the spirit of experimentalism (Murphy, 1990). In his writing, Peirce discusses doubt, belief, and thought. Doubt to Peirce is an uneasy state, a dissatisfied state, in which a person struggles to remove themselves from and in turn, causing action towards creating a belief or disbelief. This struggle to Peirce is the process of inquiry; and it is the objective of inquiry to settle an opinion whether it be true or false for “the most that can be maintained is, that we seek for a belief that we shall think to be true” (as cited in Buchler, 1955, pp. 10-11).

For Peirce, it is the production of belief that is the sole function of thought (Murphy, 1990). In other words, doubt or questioning an idea or experience is what unsettles someone and moves them towards finding a belief, an opinion settled on whatever it was they were questioning, and this process is a function of thought, referring to inquiry. While Peirce derived the first thoughts of pragmatism, he remained unknown
and unacknowledged for his work until the works of successors, William James and John Dewey (Crotty, 1998).

**James pragmatism.** James is seen as the individual who brought pragmatism to philosophy (Murphy, 1990). James spoke of thought in action (research) and thought of rest as belief (research conclusions) thus, the purpose of thought in action is to obtain belief. His point is that “belief exists for the sake of action” (Murphy, 1990, p. 42, emphasis in original). When a researcher’s belief is unsettled, they seek thought in action. After the researcher’s thought in action, their thought comes to rest in their belief. This belief then provides guidance to respond to the unsettled belief allowing the researcher to move forward in their actions, firmly and safely. For Dewey, thought in action (research) and thought at rest (research conclusions) were less abstract. Rather, Dewey sought to emphasize human experience and asked, “What are the sources of our beliefs?” and “What are the meanings of our actions?” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046) to center his concept of experience.

**Dewey pragmatism.** Dewey sought to promote “pragmatism by reorienting philosophy away from abstract concerns and turning it instead toward an emphasis on human experience” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046). It was Dewey’s view of experience and his concept of inquiry that outlined his pragmatism and established it as a philosophical approach. Pragmatism is based on the philosophy of knowledge to resolve challenges that arise in the course of an individuals’ or groups’ social experience (Zack, 2008). To understand the broad outlines of Dewey’s concepts of experience and inquiry, I used the next two sections to detail each.
Experience. Experiences involve interpretation, which is done in a cyclical manner with a researcher using their beliefs to guide their actions followed by the researcher’s actions guiding their beliefs (see Figure 1; Morgan, 2014, p. 1047).

Figure 1. Dewey's Model of Experience.

In this view, many experiences are those of habit, a series of experiences that require little decision making such as eating breakfast. Dewey viewed all experiences as social in nature and recognized from infancy experiences in the world are shaped socially, by others. Even private thoughts are shaped socially, given they are influenced by beliefs — and in turn, cyclically influence action.

This is the foundation of pragmatism as a philosophy and as a paradigm. Rather than the metaphysical paradigm approach to the nature of truth and reality with a philosophy of knowledge, pragmatism is rooted in life itself, “a life that was inherently
contextual, emotional, and social” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047) with a process approach to knowledge. Further, an experience or problem that requires thoughtful decision making is described as inquiry; like research, inquiry requires thoughtful decision making all which occur in a specific context typically a social context.

*Inquiry*. Dewey’s process approach to knowledge meant that inquiry was a process that arose when beliefs have been challenged or became problematic and are examined (Morgan, 2014). Thus, scholars seek to resolve it through action, or inquiry. It is important to note here the distinction between inquiry and research. Dewey intentionally used *inquiry* rather than the term *research* because research in his time, and I would argue still, is viewed to have a boundary between “everyday life and research” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). Thus, the use of inquiry was to refer to research, but with a different meaning. Inquiry was a process of knowledge that was performed thoughtfully and consciously to resolve a question or problem — it is an inquiry rather than a habitual decision or resolution to a problem or question. Dewey’s process approach to inquiry lays out five steps that are influenced by the cyclical action of beliefs influencing action and actions influencing beliefs. Inquiry is not a step by step process, but rather a social experience that is continuous, involving cycles between actions and beliefs towards the resolution of a problem or question (see Figure 2; Morgan, 2014, p. 1048).
When pursuing an inquiry, scholars take action in choosing a topic based on their beliefs of a problem, seeking a solution, recognizing implications, and taking action. Understanding and using pragmatism as a philosophical approach in inquiry involves Dewey’s five steps as cited by Morgan:

1. Recognizing a situation as problematic;
2. Considering the difference it makes to define the problem one way rather than another;
3. Developing a possible line of action as a response to the problem; 
4. Evaluating potential actions in terms of their likely consequences; 
5. Taking actions that are felt to be likely to address the problematic situation (2014, p. 1047)

While these steps are outlined, it is important to recall the aforementioned quality of pragmatic inquiry being social, rooted in life, context, and emotion (Morgan, 2014). Indeed, it is through feeling and experience that scholars find their studies. It is through my feeling of the impossible task and nature of reaching SJI competency through a two-year graduate program and my experience of it and with it — with students, professionals, and faculty claiming so – that I have found my inquiry.

**Pragmatism and Postmodernism**

Dewey’s pragmatism aligns with postmodernism as a way of talking about the power of ideas (Crotty, 1998), research focused on “societal critique” to raise consciousness (Merriam, 2009, p. 23), and experience. Dewey’s focus on growth and social intelligence are founded in a “critical commitment to meaningful democracy” (Kadlec, 2006, p. 541) of the freedom of inquiry to develop by an individual towards the shared interests of community. Therefore, offering a way of talking about what is incorporated in master’s level student affairs programs to raise consciousness of pedagogy, learning outcomes, and assignments speaks to the use of a pragmatism and postmodern approach.

In setting out this inquiry, I hoped to expand the knowledge of pedagogical approaches used towards social justice competence in U.S. master’s level student affairs programs while looking to what consequence may come from their use (or not) (Cherryholmes, 1992). While other scholars may find the use of post-positivism or
constructivism as a preferred paradigm, I chose pragmatism. Choosing pragmatism allowed me to show an alternative paradigm. As Feilzer explains and I agree with,

Pragmatism, when regarded as an alternative paradigm, sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality, accepts, philosophically, that there are singular and multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry and orients itself toward solving practical problems in the “real world” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, pp. 20-28; Dewey, 1925; Rorty, 1999). In that sense, pragmatism allows the researcher to be free of mental and practical constraints imposed by the “forced choice dichotomy between postpositivism and constructivism” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 27), and researchers do not have to “be the prisoner of a particular [research] method or technique” (Robson, 1993, p. 291). (as cited in Feilzer, 2010, p. 8)

Using the frame by Feilzer (2010) allows me as a scholar to move beyond proving and to inquire about a challenge that has arisen from me as a scholar in social justice education. It allows me to be free, to move through the inquiry in the best way possible through my lens of postmodernism, to solve the issue of stating SJI as an achievable competence, a metanarrative, for graduate students, or any individual really. Social justice education is more than knowing the definition and being a self-defined warrior or ally. It is not a game of who helped who more and who does more than another.

It is also important to note as Gage (1989) did that educational research is not simply an intellectual game, a way to tenure, or a path to becoming a “big shot” (p. 10), but that it has moral obligations. The U.S. public supports seeking a better education for everyone, particularly the young, minoritized, and disadvantaged. Therefore, scholars must reflect and challenge what is presented in higher education classrooms as competence and knowledge. The hope, then, is that scholars and intellectuals will refrain from getting “bogged down” (Gage, 1989, p. 10) in a no person’s land of metaphysical paradigm preferences. A pragmatic approach moves beyond metaphysical approaches and offers the opportunity to integrate methodologies recognizing the value of both
quantitative and qualitative research towards deepening understanding of social and societal problems (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2007).

**Operationalizing the Pragmatist Approach**

In situating my study within pragmatism, I employed the aforementioned five steps from Dewey. First, “recognizing a situation as problematic” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). I have recognized that the use of social justice and inclusion, with a more often focus on social justice rather than inclusion is problematic. Student affairs competencies by the professional associations fuels an assumption by students entering graduate programs that student affairs curriculum is, and should be, SJI focused as outlined in Chapter I. I state this with the awareness that some programs use CAS Standards, but professional associations are much more accessible to incoming students than CAS Standards given pipeline programs such as the Next Gen and NUFP programs. ACPA’s Next Gen program for undergraduates (Get Involved in ACPA, n.d.) offers a day and half event at the annual conference and “…sessions are organized around several Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators, as outlined by ACPA and NASPA. These outcomes and related sessions build a foundation for aspiring Student Affairs Professionals” (Curriculum and Schedule, 2019). NASPA’s Undergraduate Fellows Program (NUFP) offers a semi-structured program [that] diversifies and broadens the pipeline of our profession. Students and mentors apply as a pair. If accepted into the program, students are then known as Fellows and have opportunities for scholarships, on-campus mentorship, and professional development events” (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Undergraduate Fellows Program [NUFP], 2019).
Through Dewey’s lens, I sought this inquiry to raise the consciousness of student affairs master’s programs curricular formats for the shared understanding of what is used as SJI in curricula in master’s level graduate student affairs programs.

Second, “considering the difference it makes to define the problem one way rather than another” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). This inquiry could be problematized in multiple ways, but I chose to define and center it on the issue of teaching SJI as a competency to student affairs graduate students. In Chapter II, I discussed the literature that supports my choices in defining my problem as I have chosen recognizing the importance of communicated language, such as written syllabi, in creating social practice and the reality of students within student affairs (Zack, 2008).

Third, “developing a possible line of action as a response to the problem” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). In my inquiry, I developed a pragmatic content analysis approach as a line of action to examine the pedagogical methods used in master’s level student affairs programs to inform student affairs programs on SJI as discussed earlier in this chapter. This is the process of seeking action to settle a thought as the pragmatist James would share. I used codes and built thick descriptions to connect my findings to expand the empirical knowledge base (Kadlec, 2006) of what is known about the teaching and learning of SJI in student affairs.

Fourth, “evaluation of potential actions in terms of their likely consequences” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). The analysis of findings for this dissertation (Chapter IV) could potentially impact how social justice is taught in graduate programs. The analysis also brings to light the strengths and limitations of curriculum based on setting social justice and inclusion as a competency. Based on my findings, actions I would consider
are publishing this dissertation in academic and informal publications to make the knowledge accessible to as many folks as possible. I would also take action to present my recommendations for practice and scholars at the annual conferences of professional associations including ACPA and NASPA. I also anticipate my inquiry to move the work of social justice education forward within student affairs.

Fifth, “taking actions that are felt to be likely to address the problematic situation” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). In Chapter V, I provide conclusions and recommendations to address the problematic nature of assuming competency in social justice and inclusion through coursework. Actionable suggestions are offered for graduate students, professional staff, faculty, and the field of student affairs.

**Research setting.** In choosing my setting, I gave thought to where students and others may seek information about student affairs programs and came up with what I used when searching for my master’s program — the ACPA and NASPA graduate program directory websites. Additionally, I chose these association websites as the setting to gain access to a list of student affairs programs because of their dominance as professional associations in the field of Student Affairs with NASPA having over 15,000 members (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA] FAQ, n.d.) and ACPA with over 7,000 members (American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 2018), and each with undergraduate activities to lead students into the field and student affairs master’s programs.

**Participants.** To gain respondents for the survey, I used a cluster sample design that involved stratification (Creswell, 2014; Flowers, 2002; Mertens, 1998). A cluster design allowed me to choose organizations to obtain names of individuals to sample. I
selected survey participants using the ACPA and NASPA graduate preparation programs lists found on their websites. Participant experience was limited in this inquiry to correspondence with departmental staff and/or faculty to gain access via e-mail to request submission of course syllabi to the researcher. Participants were adults, over the age of 18, who worked in the front offices of academic departments or faculty of the course the researcher was seeking syllabi from for inclusion in the study.

Sample selection. I first reviewed the NASPA website in October 2018, which had a list of over 350 programs that I narrowed down by selecting the following parameters for my search from their list options. I selected all the locations offered which were (a) Far West, (b) Great Lakes, (c) Mideast, (d) New England, (e) Plains, (f) Rocky Mountains, (g) Southeast, (h) Southwest, and (i) online. I also chose to include public and private institutions since student affairs programs are offered at both types of institutions. The final parameter selection was the degree option which I selected for programs that only awarded master of arts (MA), master of science (MS), or master of education (MSEd) in student affairs and their related program titles such as college personnel, higher education administration, student affairs, and counseling, etc.

Options I chose not to select were GRE requirements, options to defray costs, areas of focus, program offerings, institutional settings, and institutional size. These, to me, were categories that would narrow the findings possibly limiting the transferability of results and selecting these would not change whether a program used professional competences or CAS to guide their program or the types of syllabi used. This yielded a list of 213 institutions offering 257 student affairs related program options.
From the NASPA list of 257 programs, I removed 17 programs that were unrelated to student affairs but listed with an institution giving a program sample of 240 and an institutional sample from NASPA of 213 to contact for my survey. As an example of how a program was removed, I eliminated an institution which had a master of science in higher education administration but also listed their master of science as campus public safety administration. So, I ruled out the public safety one as it did not meet the parameters of this study seeking specifically named student affairs programs such as college student personnel, higher education administration, student personnel administration, etc. Other programs I removed were internationally based or unrelated to student affairs but on the NASPA list, such as English and communication programs listed. The listing of unrelated programs is likely due, in my opinion, to the fact that the list is not maintained. I came to this conclusion based on the amount of emails I received back through autoreply e-mails on individuals having moved institutions and some faculty replying they had been retired for over two years.

I then searched the program directory offered by ACPA to account for any programs that were missing from the NASPA list. The American College Personnel Association had a list of 123 programs in October of 2018, however I did not have the option to select parameters of programs to include or exclude so I did a line by line comparison to see which programs I needed to add into my inquiry. I compared the ACPA and NASPA lists and found 75 of the programs were already found in the NASPA list leaving 48 programs to examine inclusion in the study. From the examination of the 48, I added eight institutions to my list thus removing 40 as not meeting the parameters of being U.S.-based, public or private, and awarded MA, MS, or MSEd in student affairs
and their related program titles. Adding the 213 from NASPA and the eight from ACPA
 gave me a total sample size of 221 institutions to contact with my survey requesting
demographic and program data along with submitting their syllabi.

**Survey development.** To aid in the development of my survey questions I
reached out to Dr. Lamont A. Flowers. Dr. Flowers developed a survey in 2003 of
student affairs master’s programs diversity requirements. This survey was adapted by Dr.
Flowers from the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ national survey on
diversity in the undergraduate curriculum in the year 2000. Dr. Flowers provided me
with a copy of the survey he developed and used in his study; a national study of
diversity requirements in student affairs graduate programs published by NASPA in their
*Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*. Using this survey as a guide, I adapted
the questions to reflect the needs of my inquiry while also updating the language for
diversity to social justice and inclusion. My survey was then reviewed by my committee,
followed by IRB, which provided approval of my inquiry’s survey design. However,
prior to sending out my survey to 221 institutions, I decided to complete a pilot study.

**Pilot Study**

For my pilot study I chose three colleagues at three different institutions in three
different states in the U.S. to take my survey and provide feedback. Although my survey
was vetted through my institutional IRB and my research committee, I felt completing a
pilot would add to the strength of my inquiry. Completing this step prior to sending out
the survey to hundreds of schools also allowed me to get feedback and adjust my survey
as needed to ensure I was gathering the data I intended from the intended faculty/program
directors.
After sending the pilot study out in August 2018, I received one response stating the survey was done well and the faculty and/or program director completed the survey to use in my data set. The second school gave a review of the e-mail I planned to send to the 221 institutions stating it was written well. However, this second institution did not participate in the survey after reaching out multiple times. The third and final school did not respond at all to the pilot study request but did participate in the inquiry after the second request was sent to institutions in November 2018. With the feedback from the pilot study and the IRB approval of my institution I moved forward with my survey method and design.

**Survey distribution and design.** Having identified the 221 institutions to contact, I contacted each program coordinator via e-mail using the blind carbon copy feature. In October 2018, the first request to participate in my inquiry was sent to 221 student affairs programs. From this initial request, 37 responses were recorded, and 36 syllabi were uploaded representing 12 universities. In November 2018, the second request for participation was sent to 193 student affairs master’s programs. The number changed from 221 to 193 because I removed programs who already responded. I also removed undeliverable emails and replaced some e-mails with referrals I received through the survey question which asked for an e-mail referral for syllabi if the individual I contacted was not the primary contact. The second round garnered an additional 15 responses giving a total of 52 responses. The final request for participation went out to 181 e-mails in January 2019 receiving another 14 responses for a final total of 66 survey responses.
My e-mail message requested their consent (see Appendix C) and participation in the study by clicking on the survey link provided at the bottom of the e-mail. The e-mail message also shared that no identifying information about specific universities/colleges or faculty would be revealed (see Appendix E) as the focus of the study was on the course syllabi content and not the program or faculty. Once the participant clicked on the survey link in the e-mail, they were taken to the first page of the survey, developed in Qualtrics, clearly asking for consent prior to the survey questions being populated. I created the page to clearly indicate that a yes indicated consent and prompted the participant to the next question in the survey. While the selection of no indicated the participant did not want to be included and directed to a page in the survey showing their response of no was recorded.

After consent was recorded, the survey populated a single question at a time and used open and closed ended questions, display logic questions, and document uploads. The survey included 33 questions with a mix of demographic information and program information. One of the survey questions also asked for the uploading of social justice and inclusion course syllabi or to provide the names of faculty who have access to these syllabi (see Appendix D). If a participant provided the names of faculty, I then reached out to these named faculty via e-mail requesting their course syllabi related to social justice and inclusion. Of the 66 responses, I received only two declined consents resulting in 64 recorded responses. In refining the data, I found 46 respondents who completed the full survey as indicated by those who answered the final survey question giving a response rate of 21% while total responses (partial and full) had a response rate of 30% with 61 syllabi uploaded for analysis.
Important to note is the survey did not use a forced choice option where a participant could not move on without a response. This decision was made to not make the survey cumbersome on the participants and to acknowledge that not all questions may be of relevance to the individual responding to the survey. Thus, not all questions received responses. Also, some questions offered the opportunity to select all that apply to a question. The survey additionally included four display logic questions.

Display logic is when questions are layered depending on how the participant responds to the first question displayed. Due to the use of display logic the survey did not have an ascending or descending order but rather a mix of question numbers that were not displayed to the participant. However, as the researcher I organized the data, after downloading it from Qualtrics, into groupings that flowed together including program characteristics and display logic questions.

**Program characteristics.** Questions 10, 11, and 15-19 (see Appendix D) asked a variety of questions to describe the type of institutions, programs, and cohort counts of the program with 46 participants responding. The 46 participants responded their role in the program being (a) Program Chair/Coordinator/Director, N=9 (b) Program Faculty, N=9 (c) Program Chair, Coordinator, Director, & Faculty, N=27 (d) none indicated they were a Program Administrator/Administrative Assistant, and (e) one as an interim Program Director.

Of the 46 participants (see Figure 3) who responded to their institutional type, 33 were four-year public, while 13 shared they were a four-year private institution. Of these institutional types, participants classified their program as 20 large research, 4 small doctoral granting, 20 comprehensive, 1 baccalaureate, and 1 selected *other* — stating
“medium sized R1.” The program enrollment (see Figure 3) at 23 of these institutions were 30 or more, 13 had enrollment of 20 – 29 students, nine had enrollments of 19 students or less and one indicated other sharing, “We actually have two cohorts at two different campuses; both fall into the 0-19 category however.”

![Institutional Type](image_url)

*Figure 3. Institutional Type.*
Figure 4. Program Enrollment.

When asked of the focus of the required courses on social justice and/or inclusion (see Figure 5) of the 46, 27 participants indicated the focus was on the U.S. followed by nine sharing they focused on the U.S. and internationally. Six indicated they did not have a required course, and none focused solely internationally. Four participants selected the other option stating, (a) “We do have an elective on diversity and inclusion, but it is an elective. Issues are always present;” (b) “no required courses other then an attempt to infuse throughout curriculum;” and (c) “integrated across entire curriculum, but primarily centering on a US context” and “integrated course content among several course; focuses on domestic and international populations.”
Course requirement. Question 11 asked if participants were currently or planning to revise the programs social justice and/or inclusion requirements, 28 indicated “no” without further explanation. Eleven of the participants wrote in responses that I coded as “yes,” and their explanations are in Appendix H, pulled directly from survey data with no edits made to their text. In reflecting on the statements, I was not able to come to a set of codes beyond yes, they are attempting to make changes. What is challenging about these responses is that, as of the writing of this dissertation, there are at least two programs who are still deciding on making their social justice and inclusion course required. Two have added a unit or cognate and two are looking at infusing a social justice/inclusion perspective.

Also, in Question 11, five of the participants indicated “no” but an explanation was included as to why they are not currently or planning to revise the programs social justice and/or inclusion requirements. These statements really speak to revisions having been done recently but the core of what was changed is not spoken to. Similar to the yes
responses above, one program is also looking to add in a diversity course incorporating SJI.

Of note is question 18, which asked for the institutional region of responders based on the U.S. Census map (Appendix F). As seen in Figure 6 there is diversity in regional location of responses given strength to this study in that not all respondents were from one particular region.

![Institutional Regions of Respondents](image)

*Figure 6. Institutional Regions.*

**Display logic question 5.** Question 5 asked, *how is your program curriculum set up to include social justice and/or inclusion courses? Select all that apply.* Participants had 10 options to choose from with four of the 10 options having display logic that took participants to another question. So, if a participant selected the response of, *we integrate social justice and inclusion in all of our required course work* then the survey took them to the display logic question of, *how does your program achieve integrating social justice*
and inclusion in all of the required coursework in the program? Below is Figure 1 which visually represents all the responses to question five.

Figure 7. Question Five Responses on How Participant Programs Include SJI Courses.

In responding to question five, one participant of the two who indicated having a cognate shared they were (a) college student development, (b) inequality in higher education, and (c) diversity, inclusion, and equity in higher education. Fifteen of the 21 participants responding to question five expanded on how they integrated social justice and inclusion in all of their required coursework. Some of the responses included (a) “we have program learning outcomes that must be reflected in all approved courses,” (b) “social justice and inclusion are learning goals and intentionally designed as a distributed requirement among our courses,” and (c) “social justice and inclusion is a core value of the program. We seek to ensure diversity of voices in the classroom through instructional pairings, readings, and assignment opportunities” and (d) “faculty put a focus and integrate it into their course offerings.”
The three participants who selected *we do not offer a course focused in social justice and/or inclusion* in question five expanded stating, (a) “issues of equity and inequality are included in several of our courses across the graduate curriculum, rather than requiring a single course in this area;” (b) “the reason we do not currently have a specific course on social justice and/or inclusion is that many of the concepts are incorporated into all of our core and many of our track courses. We have chosen to weave aspects in this way versus one stand-alone course. Additionally, there is a large focus on this in the theories course with focus on identity;” and (c) “we integrated readings, discussions, and assignments among a variety of required courses. Social justice is a holistic worldview, not an insular perspective only to be introduced in a single class.” The final question five display logic allowed participants to select, *other.* A total of eight responses were recorded speaking to (a) “social justice is incorporated in many of the courses,” (b) “there is a required course along with a three-credit elective,” (c) “social justice is a new initiative,” and (d) “a study abroad course is offered as elective.”

**Display logic question 13.** Question 13 was also a question set up with display logic. It asked, *does your program incorporate the 2014 Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS Standards)?* Of the responses collected 84.78% (N=39) indicated *yes* while 15.22% (N=7) indicated *no.*

**Yes to question 13.** Those who selected *yes* to question 13 were then asked question 33, *since your program incorporates the 2014 CAS Standards is it in place of the ACPA & NASPA 2015 Competencies?* Six participants indicated *yes* to question 33, which confirmed that CAS Standards are used in place of the ACPA and NASPA 2015 Competencies for their programs. The remaining 32 participants indicated *no,* their
program incorporates CAS Standards, but it is not in place of the ACPA and NASPA competencies.

The 32 who indicated no to question 33 where then asked question 35, since your program incorporates the 2014 CAS Standards and it is not in the place of the NASPA & ACPA 2015 Competencies, do you use both frameworks to situate your program? Of the total 32, there were 29 who responded yes to question 35 that their program incorporates both frameworks to situate their programs, one responded no and two responded other. Of the 29 who selected yes, two provided additional context stating, (a) “Yes - we went through a major curriculum revision over the past two years and attempt to follow both frameworks” and (b) “We use them as guiding documents to complement one another. We subscribe to the various standards/competencies and we emulate them as well — we are, however, not very intentional in terms of incorporating them into the overall curriculum.” The participant who selected other provided this additional statement, “The CAS standards inform the structure of the curriculum. The ACPA/NASPA 2015 professional competencies are what students are expected to demonstrate for graduation”.

No to question 13. Respondents who selected no, 15.22% (N=7), to question 13 were then asked question 34, since your program does not incorporate the 2014 CAS Standards do you use the ACPA & NASPA 2015 Competencies? In pulling this data N=5 indicated yes, they use the ACPA and NASPA Competencies in place of the 2014 CAS Standards. Intriguingly, N=3 indicated no, meaning they do not use the 2014 CAS Standards or the 2015 ACPA and NASPA competencies leaving me to wonder how the three of these programs are grounded for graduate study in student affairs.
Syllabi questions. The second to last question of the survey asked if respondents had access to syllabi for the SJI courses of their programs and if yes was selected participants were directed to a display logic question requesting the upload of syllabi, up to 14 individually or through the use of a single zip file upload. Syllabi were identified by faculty/program directors and shared with me as to which courses, they use to teach the social justice and inclusion competency. The choice of up to 14 syllabi was to account for programs having multiple offerings and/or programs selecting *we infuse SJI throughout our program*. If a participant selected no, indicating no access to syllabi, a display logic question populated requesting the input of the e-mails for the faculty member(s) who last taught the SJI course for their program, N=26. The 26 new names provided were emailed in my second round requesting participation in my inquiry.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is situated within qualitative approaches even though characteristics of the text may be represented in a numerical fashion because ultimately the reading of all texts is qualitative (Krippendorff, 2013). The quantitative approach of content analysis is situated in the use of descriptive statistics where characteristics of the data are reported numerically, such as the use statistics for sample size. The qualitative approach of content analysis has roots in social science and critical scholarship. It is often characterized by the close reading of text involving the analysis of text into a new narrative for a scholarly community.

Content analysis gets to my inquiry questions by allowing for the analysis of text in syllabi of how social justice and inclusion is intended to be taught in program courses. The syllabi allowed for the coding of the curriculum through learning outcomes written
by faculty of the course. Syllabi analysis further allowed for the coding of assignments and open-ended survey responses regarding the use of social justice in student affairs courses and programs.

In this study, I used my postmodern and pragmatist approach to develop the codes and connections into a narrative of what is being taught by faculty to students as demonstrated by student affairs syllabi. As a content analyst, the goal of my research was to benchmark the status of social justice and inclusion curriculum currently, to inform decisions on social justice and inclusion curriculum within syllabi, and to help conceptualize if the realities of certain groups and individuals are represented (Krippendorff, 2013). I did this through the focused purpose of the study’s research questions for programs that would look to revamp curriculum.

This inquiry used syllabi as the artifact to analyze the communicated messages of how faculty articulated, emphasized, and included social justice and inclusion in the required curriculum of student affairs masters level programs within the U.S. Other researchers use content analysis of agriculture, counseling and counseling psychology, multicultural counseling, and criminology course syllabi (Ball & Knobloch, 2005; Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009; Priester et al., 2008; Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003; Sweifach, 2015) to provide empirical data on current approaches and as a written record and agreement of the key lessons, knowledge, and readings deemed vital to the course and topic (Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003). Further, syllabi were an ideal source of analysis for this study because they are a text which is produced by an individual in a position of authority to have meaning, value, and beliefs for someone else and these meanings should not be ignored as rich and valid data points (Krippendorff,
Additionally, course syllabi are considered learning contracts between students and faculty (Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003).

**Components of Content Analysis**

**Method**

Content analysis is a research method with multiple components, typically six design steps, which led me as a researcher through the process of putting forth a reliable research method. The six components include unitizing, sampling, recording/coding, reducing, inferring, and narrating (Krippendorff, 2013). Unitizing is the process of deciding what will be observed and how those observations will be coded and set as data. I decided the selective approach of using social justice and inclusion syllabi as identified by faculty and/or program directors would be what I would observe. For the coding of the units of study, I employed thematic distinctions, further discussed in data analysis, as the method of analysis to allow for the descriptive richness of themes which emerged from the analysis of social justice and inclusion syllabi (Krippendorff, 2013). The process of reducing, relying on methods for reducing, or simplifying data, for this study included simplifying syllabi from taking the whole syllabi as it was submitted to the parts which made up the social justice and inclusion syllabi such as assignments, readings, etc. — a stratified sampling approach. These first four components speak to “data making” which come together to “create computable data from raw or unedited texts” (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 84).

The remaining two components, inferring and narrating, relate to the abductive or inference/inferring to the best explanation (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017) and narrating or sharing out of findings — Chapters IV and V for the purpose of this inquiry. The results representation includes counts also known as frequencies and
thematic coding as a way of categorizing text to establish a framework of findings (Gibbs, 2007). Additionally, open coding was used to pull out from the data, in this case syllabi, what was happening, and coding focused on observing the strategies, activities, and participation set forth in the syllabi.

Analysis of qualitative data is continual and reflective throughout the research process (Creswell, 2009, 2014) and through this process, I used the analysis technique of coding (Gibbs, 2007; Saldana, 2016). Coding helps to define what the data being analyzed are about (Gibbs, 2007) and often is a word or short phrase that symbolically ascribes an attribute for visual or textual data (Saldana, 2016). Coding allows for categorizing of text to establish a thematic framework (Gibbs, 2007). For this study, a data-driven open coding approach was used, which calls for the researcher to not start with preconceptions but to simply start reading and teasing out what the data are saying (Gibbs, 2007). For open coding, an approach of descriptive coding was used to get to an index of the data’s contents (Saldana, 2009). The next level of analysis was “theking the data” (Saldana, 2009, p. 139) as it is more applicable to participant-generated documents and artifacts such as syllabi. Generating themes assists in reporting out data into findings and for analysis.

Coding

My coding process included five rounds based on the model by Saldana (2016) shown in Figure 8, examples of my coding are show in Figures 9 and 10. I decided the best way to get to theming my data was to start with cycle one which was descriptive coding of the raw data. Next, I moved to cycle two which was the process of pattern coding from the descriptive codes list. In cycle three, I moved from pattern codes to
emerging themes by cleaning or the refining of my pattern codes. Lastly, I refined my emergent themes through combining categories which led to the themes of my data.

Figure 8. Model of Data Coding by Saldana (2016) and Used for My Coding Process.

**My analysis of codes.** Prior to the first cycle of coding, I reflected on what I saw in my review of course titles and their descriptions. What I came to realize was that some syllabi did not meet my parameters in focusing on social justice and inclusion which I identify as a U.S. construct. Thus, I removed five syllabi due to their primary focus being on international regions or countries. I removed an additional five syllabi for not being within my program year parameters of six academic years, fall 2015 to spring 2019, which represents three graduate cohorts starting in 2015 when the newest ACPA and NASPA competencies were adopted.

I then began analyzing each of the 49 syllabi and providing a descriptive code for every title, course learning outcomes, and course assignments by cataloging them using a codebook. The use of a codebook is a common way to track and manage codes (Saldana, 2016) and is a necessity when dealing with over 200 lines of descriptive codes. Figure 9
and Figure 10 are visual representations of my coding process; however, it is not a full representation as my codebook exceeds 25 pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Codes (raw)</th>
<th>Pattern Code, Doing Assignment</th>
<th>Pattern Codes, Passive Assignment</th>
<th>Emergent Themes, Con Emergent Themes, Simple</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>Multicultural Competence Issue Paper and Program</td>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>Facilitate/Training (1)</td>
<td>Essay/Paper (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Common Assignment 2- Each One, Teach One</td>
<td>Program Design &amp; Assessment</td>
<td>Self Assessment Paper</td>
<td>Reading facilitation</td>
<td>self assessment paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Assignment A: Multicultural Competence Issue Paper and Program Design</td>
<td>C: Design Your Own</td>
<td>Reading Facilitation</td>
<td>Journal Entries/Reflection Papers</td>
<td>Training facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Program Design &amp; Assessment</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Assessment Paper</td>
<td>Training Facilitation</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Educational advising scenario</td>
<td>counselor observation paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Facilitation</td>
<td>Policy Brief and Presentation on an Injustice in Education</td>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>national institute of health training paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Facilitation</td>
<td>&quot;Knowing Ourselves&quot; Cultural Interview/Identity Box</td>
<td>Theoretical Orientation Paper</td>
<td>development, PR, and Outreach work</td>
<td>ethics in Educational research paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Assessment Group Design Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>Counselor Observation Paper</td>
<td>Case study facilitation</td>
<td>curriculum fact finding paper</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Design/Facilitation Multicultural Assessment/Issues Paper</td>
<td>Final Reflection Paper</td>
<td>leadership interview and paer</td>
<td>educational philosophy paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News of the Day Contributions Therapeutic Orientation Application</td>
<td>Demonstration/Theory Presentation and Discussion</td>
<td>Research Biography</td>
<td>social justice training/facilitation - create an experiential 30min activity for classmates on Sn book you read</td>
<td>organizational issue paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Reports/Presentations Cultural Proficiency</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Contradictory Studies Paper</td>
<td>topic facilitation group project</td>
<td>campus climate paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Values and Behaviors Reflection Ethical Dilemma</td>
<td>Research Journal and Proposed Research Topic</td>
<td></td>
<td>informed contributing self assessment paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9.** Snapshot of Codebook for Assignments.
In coding the learning outcomes of each of the syllabi, I began with descriptive codes with each learning outcome listed on a syllabus having its own code. From this method, I gathered 267 descriptive codes. From this list, I then moved into pattern coding where I read the descriptive codes over 20 times and reflected over a weekend to gain a sense for the data. I began writing out names of patterns I saw through the continual review of the descriptive codes and started out with 11, but quickly arrived at 23 patterns. The top five patterns I identified based on the amount of codes in each pattern group were, (a) oppression with 30 descriptive codes, (b) multicultural, diversity, and equity with 29, (c) culture with 24, and with 19 descriptive codes each were (d) self-development/awareness, and (e) social justice advocate/role.
Although these are the first five, I did end up with 23 pattern codes/groupings and I again reviewed them, reflected, and considered what the best groupings would be to build my emergent themes for the learning outcome codes.

My pattern codes led me to seven emergent themes. To get to these seven themes, I went through the 23 patterns and grouped what read to me as codes that if thought of in a broader category could be an emerging theme of the codes. For example, I decided that diversity, equity, multicultural, inclusion, and culture emerged as a theme. These five words represent what I believe to be taught in most student affairs graduate program courses, which is reflected in the learning outcomes producing this first emergent theme. I chose to separate out social justice in the emerging theme phase because it is a focus of my inquiry. In doing so, I developed a second emergent theme of social justice and included the pattern code of oppression which also included the pattern codes of history of higher education, access, and environment.

I grouped the history of higher education, access, and environment with oppression because I read these as oppressive. Oppression is the unjust infliction of hardship on minoritized populations and the history of higher education, access, and its environment is oppressive. The syllabi often spoke to oppression as systematic including institutional and cultural dimensions in addition to the historical exclusion of folks and the experience of marginalization. Oppression also speaks to me as what social justice is set out to dismantle. Through social justice, oppression is undone by the full and equitable participation of those marginalized through the process of democratic and participatory processes.
The remaining four emergent themes spoke to parts of social justice education. For example, the need for self-awareness in social justice work showed up as (a) self-development/awareness and leadership, and (b) skill development, theory to practice, and competence. When speaking the action or participatory requirement of social justice and inclusion work, emergent themes from the learning outcomes arose as (c) student development, student affairs development, and counseling, and (d) active learning, practical approaches, and critique/analyze. These six emergent themes led me to develop four themes from the learning outcome data on what courses in graduate student affairs programs seek for students to learn. The four themes, in no particular order are: (a) The top seven, a common set of words found in the analyzed syllabi including and in no particular order, multicultural, diversity, equity, inclusion, culture, role of social justice, and oppression; (b) The development of self & student; (c) student development, student affairs development, and counseling; and (d) Active learning and practical approaches. The findings related to these four themes are further developed and discussed in Chapter IV.

**Promoting Validity and Reliability**

Several researchers, including Creswell (2013) and Merriam (2009), speak to the need and role of validation in research. Each cite the importance of a version of validity, credibility, transferability, fairness, crystallization, and/or reliability and while it was important to note the depth of scholarship in this area, I employed a blended perspective from Merriam (2009) and Creswell (2013). Merriam shared,

regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study’s conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented. (2009, p. 210)
Using this framework as the approach to validity and reliability, this inquiry was carefully conceptualized by me as the researcher, through the use of a dissertation committee and research advisor for the development of the inquiry, a pilot study, and the use of the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix G) to vet the purpose, data collection, and analysis approaches. Further, this study used five of the eight listed “strategies for promoting validity and reliability” (Merriam, 2009, p. 229).

The five strategies I employed were: (a) adequate engagement in data collection, (b) researcher reflexivity, (c) peer review, (d) audit trail, and (e) thick descriptions (Merriam, 2009). Adequate engagement in data collection is the process of spending enough time in data collection to reach a point of saturation. To achieve saturation of my data collection I worked to collect data from the 221 programs over a four-month period, October 2018 to January 2019, and spent five months, November 2018 to March 2019, in the analysis of the data provided by the participants and syllabi.

As a researcher, reflexivity or reflecting critically on my role as the researcher regarding my assumptions, worldview, and relationship to the inquiry was important to me. Earlier in this chapter I spoke to my views and my realities which provided readers an understanding of how I situate myself in the world. Further, speaking to my views and reality place my perspective and what may be viewed as bias by readers in the spotlight. This allows readers to know where I situate myself as a scholar and how my lens impacts my inquiry along with my coding and conclusions. I sought to remain reflexive throughout this inquiry in grounding my findings and results in the research design and analysis through a critical pragmatic approach using content analysis.
The use of peer review was completed through the use of a research committee, research advisor, pilot study, and discussion with colleagues of my inquiry regarding my choice of methods, analysis approach, and conclusions. Tied to peer review, for me, was the use of an audit trail, via a researcher journal, that allowed for the tracking of my decisions and approaches decided throughout the inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). This was a necessary approach to account for the decisions made related to data collection and analysis which occurred over an eight-month period.

Lastly, for the data collection, analysis, and findings I used thick descriptions, providing depth and detailed context for the reader of the collection decisions and process. The analysis method and decisions along are shared in an effort to provide enough detail for the reader to see and decide for themselves if the analysis, which inform Chapters IV and V, are inciting enough to begin to engage in the discussion of the problematic use of social justice and inclusion as competency.

**Ethical Considerations**

There was much to consider when it came to the ethics of research, from the researcher approach and methods to the study design itself. Through the detailed sections of this chapter on my methodological choices, survey design, and some initial responses it is my hope readers see the strength of this inquiry. Additionally, knowing I would need to defend my scholarship to an established committee of scholars, I sought to provide a clear representation of the rationale, need, and varied strategies for promoting validity and reliability. The validity and reliability of an inquiry also rely on the personal ethics of a scholar.
My inquiry was guided by the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), my choice of academic professional association, which lists the following ethical principles of their members:

(a) take full responsibility for all aspects of their work and other professional activities, (b) value and demonstrate the highest levels of honesty and accuracy in their work, (c) accurately represent the extent of the originality in their work, as well as its dependence on their own or others’ previous work, (d) maintain professional respect and civility in their relationships and interactions with others, (e) fairly and carefully judge the merit of others’ work and qualifications on their own merits, without discrimination or prejudice related to personal characteristics or professional bias, (f) aim to advance the study of higher education and its contributions to its constituents, including through participation in and service to ASHE, (g) have a principal responsibility to serve as best they can the best interests of their clients and of the public interest, and (h) declare any possible conflict of interest that emerges from any financial interest they may have with regard to any particular professional decision or judgment (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2003, emphasis added).

I took each of these statements to heart and sought, through the transparency of my writing and detailed appendices, to take responsibility of my work through honesty and the originality of my inquiry. I worked to respect the data by not omitting or changing responses while also representing it fairly by not reporting partial results in order to advance my field of student affairs while noting that I do not have a conflict of interest with the study or the participants.

My personal approach to ethics further guided my research as I used Kitchener’s (1984) five ethical principles, foundational to the work of student affairs: (a) act to benefit others, (b) promote justice, (c) respect autonomy, (d) be faithful, and (e) do no harm (as cited in American College Personnel Association, 2006). Each principle is wrapped in an ethic of love and care, which is an approach of service to others and a deep level of care and responsibility to my field, fellow scholars and practitioners, and students of higher education (Bell, 2014; hooks, n.d.). These ethics are echoed in the methods I
shared above along with using a researcher journal to track my decisions ensuring I was faithful not only to my data, but myself as a scholar.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

A limitation to this study involved programs that stated they embed social justice and inclusion throughout their program which in turn they may not be able to single out a particular syllabus. To address this, I offered a question in the survey for program administrators and faculty to respond if they do embed social justice and inclusion throughout and reporting out how many schools selected this option in the survey for potential further research studies. Another limitation was the use of e-mail as the only communication method for the study and sending out of the Qualtrics link. A limitation found through coding was that not all syllabi were fully complete as noted by a note indicating, add this article here or this video here but the reference was not mentioned. Another limitation of this study was that the social justice and inclusion competencies were relatively new (from 2015 with a rubric published in 2016) and they may not yet have been in place in preparation programs.

A delimitation to this inquiry was that I imposed a limit on the graduate programs selected for participation based on the lists of ACPA and NASPA only. However, given the transferability of the findings I hope to have addressed this concern. Also, a delimitation was that the survey did not require forced choice (could not leave any answers blank) and included partial responses so means and data points may be skewed. Also, that this is a review of MA curricula only, not PhD. Finally, since the competencies are relatively new being published in 2015, schools may not have adapted their curricula to address them yet.
Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed each of my methodological choices. I shared how Dewey’s model of experience and inquiry guided this study and how it applied to my postmodern pragmatist approach. A section is provided on the operationalization of pragmatism for this study along with the results from the pilot study. How I used content analysis is also described providing a guiding discussion on how I used the steps to code my data as descriptive, pattern, towards emergent themes in the data and finally the main themes. I close this chapter with the ethics of validity of the study along with the limitations and delimitations. Chapter IV discuss how the methodology brought the study to fruition through a discussion of the findings.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The trail of the human serpent is thus over everything. (James, as cited in Morgan, 2014, p. 1048)

In this chapter, I narrate how I coded social justice and inclusion syllabi using content analysis for the 49 course syllabi across 21 participating institutions in my survey in the U.S. My findings are through my lens as a postmodern pragmatist, the lens of my chosen methods of analysis and interpreted through the lens of my lived experience and feelings (Morgan, 2014). In turn, my trail and perspectives are interwoven in my dissertation, but it also is wrapped around an ethic of love (Bell, 2014; hooks, n.d.). My ethic of love is rooted in the idea that I hope my dissertation findings begin a “collective transformation of [student affairs SJI] society” (hooks, n.d., p. 1). Through reporting out my findings and providing a look into how course titles, learning outcomes, and required coursework share the value and represent SJI, I hope to begin a dialogue and recommend efforts to collectively transform the idea of SJI as a competency for student affairs. My findings also bring to light some of the strengths and limitations of curriculum based on setting social justice and inclusion as a competency. Beginning with a look at how course syllabi identified as having an SJI focus speak to (or not) achieving competency in SJI.

I first share out the findings of my first research question, how do master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs communicate social justice and inclusion
in curriculum? I represent my findings to this first question in the form of three themes, *top seven, the development of self & student development, development of student affairs and counseling*, which emerged from the analysis of learning outcome statements. To represent the findings from the course titles of the 49 syllabi I use wordles to represent the frequency counts of course titles. For my second research question, how are the competencies of social justice and inclusion conveyed in required coursework? I represent my findings through a final theme of *active learning and practical approaches* which stem from the analysis of the required coursework. I close this chapter with a summary.

**Findings of Research Question One**

**Research Question One**

Q1   How do master’s level graduate preparation programs in student affairs communicate social justice and inclusion in curriculum?

My first research question stems from having been unsettled by my experiences with graduate students in the classroom and how ACPA and NASPA set forth an SJI competency for student affairs masters programs. To answer this question, I specifically looked to the listed learning outcomes and course titles of the syllabi. I view learning outcomes as what faculty seek to communicate to students as important takeaways from their courses. Additionally, I looked at course titles as another way values and the message of SJI is communicated to graduate students. Often the title of a course is what draws a student to enroll.

**Course Titles**

I view course titles as a way programs communicate what their curriculum is about and focused on. While I know that course titles must go through levels of approval
to change, I found it important to represent the titles in findings because, often when students look at programs, course descriptions or assignments are not listed. It is the titles that communicate what the curriculum is until master’s students are in the actual course.

To represent the titles, I decided the best way to do so was using frequency counts of words by creating a wordle. A wordle is a graphic representation of the frequency count of words in a document and provides a visual of the most salient words (Saldana, 2016). The wordles used in Figures 11 and 12 are a representation of the frequency of words used as shown by the size of the word and color. Smaller words with similar colors indicate words that show up less frequently while larger words represent greater frequency. To create the first wordle in Figure 11, I used the full 196 words of all the 49 course titles. The second wordle, Figure 12, used 145 words from the titles by removing common words such as higher education and student affairs.

**Education wordle.** In the Figure 11 wordle, the centered word or most salient word is education. This made sense to me given that most courses tend to have education listed. For example, social justice in higher education settings, diversity in higher education, culturally responsive practices in higher education, and diversity & multiculturalism in higher education were a few of the course titles. The takeaway from this finding is the overarching message to graduate students is *education*. While not a magical finding, this wordle does represent the most salient words after education as well. Following education is *higher*, then *student*, *social*, and *diversity*, next are *college* and *justice* followed by *counseling*, *development*, *theory*, and *leadership*. While not surprising, the wordle shows some connection to the 10 ACPA and NASPA
competencies generally. However, as my dissertation seeks to specifically identify how SJI is centered it is of note that the courses identified by participating institutions have a greater focus elsewhere rather than SJI. This wordle represents that the most communicated message by the title of the 49 courses I analyzed were not SJI.

Although the words of social justice made the top five, they were not paired together or in the same grouping. Through the messages of course titles I found that social justice as a cohesive phrase is not represented. Further, inclusion as the counterpart to the social justice and inclusion competency does not show up in frequency until group six out of seven groupings from the wordle. After reflecting on this finding, I began to wonder what would happen if I removed common words such as student affairs and higher education.

![Figure 11. Education Wordle.](image)

**Social wordle.** When I removed the commonality of words like higher education and student affairs, a different set of words rose to the top. Now centered in the wordle (Figure 12), is *social* as the most salient word. Following social were *diversity* and
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student, then college and justice, followed by leadership and development and rounding out the top five were theory and counseling.

![Image of a social wordle]

*Figure 12. Social Wordle.*

The social wordle, along with the education wordle, now demonstrate neither social justice nor inclusion are the most salient or front facing terms graduate students see. Rather, diversity has a more prominent representation among both wordles as it relates to a full phrase, so to speak, based on the course titles of 49 syllabi identified as social justice and inclusion focused by faculty/program directors. Prior to realizing this finding, I expected that social justice and inclusion would be the most prominent. Even if courses have been revamped to have curriculum reflect social justice as to avoid bureaucracy this shift should be reflected in the learning outcomes and assignments, yet it is not as I discuss later in this chapter.

I view not having SJI as the focus through titles as potentially a more accurate representation of what is being done in courses. As master’s graduate students enter student affairs programs, this may be the better place to start rather than setting forth foundational competency outcomes of SJI. But it also reflects a possible tension point where students may enter with an assumed SJI framework of master’s programs based on
information from ACPA and NASPA, only to realize that is not where most programs may start.

This finding reminds me of the work of Flowers (2003), when the centered word/phrase was diversity. It is possible that while our language has evolved to our current use of SJI, the curriculum has perhaps not caught up. Or it is possible programs have realized and held to the idea of “diversity still matters” as Winkle-Wagner and Locks (2014) state in every chapter of their text, *Diversity and Inclusion on Campus: Supporting Racially and Ethnically Underrepresented Students.* Potentially there is an unrealized need faculty and staff are able to see more clearly than national associations who press forward without setting a holistic and foundational approach to the complexity of SJI. These wordles left me with more questions on how SJI is showing up in master’s programs syllabi identified as having an SJI focus. To dig further into how SJI is communicated through curriculum I went through the process of theming the learning outcomes of the 49 syllabi.

**Learning Outcome Themes**

Using content analysis methods for the theming of syllabi learning outcomes, I identified three themes. I decided to use learning outcomes as part of my analysis to speak to how student affairs master’s programs communicate the value of SJI in curriculum. The first theme I developed from the learning outcomes I named *top seven.* The top seven reflect a common set of words found in syllabi and in no particular order, the seven words are multicultural, diversity, equity, inclusion, culture, role of social justice, and oppression. The second and third themes are *the development of self & student development.* The theme of development of self, stemmed from the learning
outcome messages stating, repeatedly, a need for self-awareness and leadership. The student development theme emerged from the student development theory course syllabi submitted as having a focus on SJI and an approach of theory to practice. The fourth theme is *development of student affairs and counseling*. This final theme from the learning outcome data is shaped by the foundations of student affairs as a field. Each of these themes are detailed in the following section.

**The top seven.** The naming of my first theme as the top seven came from my experiences working in the field of student affairs. The top seven reminded me of what is often called the big eight\(^6\) as seen in figure 13 (Columbus State Community College, 2015; Independent School Diversity Network, 2019). I was also trained to use the big eight in my professional practice along with other student affairs colleagues who I have worked with over the years.

While I have not found a direct source to whom developed the big eight, in a Google search of *the big 8 social identity groups*, over 130 million results return. The top result is from the University of Southern California school of social work highlighting a “Diversity Toolkit: A Guide to Discussing Identity, Power, and Privilege” (Goldbach, 2017, para. 1). The second result is the source used for Figure 13, the Independent School Diversity Network. The big eight is further found from the Google search on a variety of mediums including, a training document from Appalachian State University, a big eight image and culturally responsive teaching certificate at Columbus State Community College, and on StepUP! a bystander intervention program offered at over 490 colleges and universities.

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\(^6\) The big 8 has evolved with new identities added and may now be known as the big 10 or the big 12. I use the big 8 as this is how I first learned of the grouping of social identifiers.
In the last 10 years of my career, I know I have taken or facilitated an exercise on the big eight (Independent School Diversity Network, 2019) over 20 times to undergraduate and graduate students, community members, and faculty and staff. The big eight is often represented as a wheel or list of the most salient social identities often discussed within higher education as reflected in the Google search results. Most commonly the big eight would show up as a self-reflective identity wheel where a participant would read through the privilege and oppressed identities. After doing so the participant would write in on their circle their corresponding identity and usually also listing if it is an oppressed or privileged identity.

![The Big 8](image)

*Figure 13. The Big 8, Adapted from the Independent School Diversity Network and Columbus State Community College.*
While the top seven do not speak to identity, they parallel the setup of the big eight (Independent School Diversity Network, 2019). The parallel shows up in that the big eight are a collection of social identities that are at one time the most commonly known social identifiers. Similarly, the top seven in my data are the most common words described and/or used in the written learning outcomes found on the syllabi to represent courses focused on SJI. This finding shows that while the syllabi uploaded for my survey were to be courses that represented SJI, they more represented a grouping of words. The grouping of words being those of the top seven; social justice, inclusion, multicultural, diversity, equity, culture, and oppression.

Further, with all seven of these words showing up in the codes and emerging as a theme, the findings demonstrate a few things may be happening. First, it may be that courses use the top seven as a set of words to describe SJI within their course. Or it may be that the top seven are used within courses similar to how the big eight are used as mentioned above — a discussion is had on how are the pieces that make up SJI, possibly. The top seven similarly may be a way to discuss the most salient ideas or evolution of ideas related to what is now called SJI. What I find reflected in this data, and as the takeaway, is that SJI does not just show up on its own, but rather syllabi seem to be speaking to many facets of what I identify as terms that make up SJI in a holistic view. I identify this takeaway as the top seven.

**The development of self.** This theme, development of self, represents the focus of learning outcomes leading master’s students to deeper self-awareness. This message is communicated through learning outcome phrases such as, (a) “to develop increased self-awareness,” (b) “explore their own cultural identities,” (c) “articulate their own
development journey,” (d) “ability to reflect on, assess, and evaluate personal and professional development,” (e) “describe how our own learned behaviors and actions can affect social inequalities,” (f) and “gained an understanding of yourself and your personal biases, privilege, and attitudes.” This approach of a deeper self-awareness speaks to part of the idea of SJI, but the full expression of social justice does not shine through. In this theme I found there is a missing link of “connecting analysis to action” (Bell, 2016, p. 4). What the learning outcomes show to be missing is an actionable approach.

An actionable approach would reflect work with and for an individual or group towards addressing injustice rather than just the awareness or understanding of self or injustices. Learning outcomes from syllabi reflect a static state, denoting students will (a) “develop a deeper understanding of both privileged and oppressed social identities,” (b) “recognize and value group identities,” (c) and “describe the role of social justice educators in this country and beyond.” These outcomes could be taken to an actionable approach through moving from developing a deeper understanding to linking this outcome to participating in a campus dialogue. Rather than recognizing and valuing group identities, students could connect with the groups that are being studied in class to learn about the values of said group. In addition to describing what the role of social justice educators is, master’s student should participate with social justice educators on their campus and in their community. The takeaway of this theme is that there is a strength and a limitation to a primary focus on SJI. The strength is master’s students are gaining a deeper awareness of self, but the limitation is it remains in an individualistic approach. Moving toward a more actionable approach within the classroom would bring the idea of theory to practice to life.
**Student development.** Theory to practice is a common concept within the field of student affairs. The theory portion is often tied to a foundation course in master’s programs often titled, student development theory. This course is often when master’s students learn about the developmental models of groups of students commonly based on a few of the big eight (Independent School Diversity Network, 2019) social identifiers. Within my study, student development theory and related courses such as *The American College Student* represented nine of the 49 syllabi in my study and brought to light the theme of student development.

Having the student development theory course submitted as a course focused on SJI left me wondering how so. From my analysis of the syllabi these courses primarily used the second and third editions of the text, *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*, a common text used in student development theory. This text was the most used reading assigned across my 49 syllabi. I found this troubling as a submitted course focusing on SJI because this text has a focus on learning about rather than learning with and from student groups with limited practical approaches.

Generally, *Student Development in College: Theory, Research, and Practice*, has a focus on learning about social identity models. In the second edition, 100 pages (27% of the text) are dedicated to master’s students learning about social identity development. The table contents list six sections, (a) social identity concepts, (b) racial identity development, (c) ethnic identity and acculturation, (d) multiracial identity development, (e) sexual identity development, and (f) gender and gender identity development. The third edition released in 2016 dedicated even more of this foundational text to social identity development. Similarly, the third edition has 409 pages and dedicates 216 pages,
52% of the text, to social identity development. The table of contents lists similar identity models with minimal changes. The changes include the removal of the multiracial identity development model but now also include (a) development of faith and spirituality, (b) disability identities and identity development, and (c) social class and identity.

While this may read as an increased commitment to the work of SJI, I see it more as awareness, but also it is a method of learning about. I cannot help but make the connection that this text has moved to include more identities (an increased diversity of identities) but not a set or approach of actionable efforts. While not a bad or wrong approach, the idea that unsettles me is this approach reminds me of my one text in my master’s program. That this course and its contents will be, possibly, the singular learning point of diverse groups and it is framed in learning about via theory and without an actionable approach.

In taking a closer look at this theme, I decided to revisit my pattern codes and the learning outcomes of this set of courses. I wanted to gain clarity on how learning outcomes were communicating ideas of SJI. This closer look, however, did not reveal approaches that would “integrate knowledge of social justice, inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power into one’s practice” (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, p. 30). Learning outcomes spoke to (a) “understanding of the theoretical foundations of student development through theories,” (b) “students will understand the major components of…student development theories,” (c) “describe key characteristics of the current college going population,” (d) and “identify major theories focused on college student development.” Each of these outcomes, again while not bad or wrong, keep the learning
frame of about and not towards an actionable approach that would assist in the
development of an SJI framework. The takeaway I offer readers is that while these
learning outcomes speak to a need of learning foundational student development theories,
each could be reframed with an SJI approach. For example, in addition to student
gaining an understanding of major compence’s and key characteristics of college
students, outcomes could further express an associated action such as meeting with
students to discuss these foundational social identity theories and how master’s students
could advocate for groups of students.

**Development of student affairs and counseling.** This theme from the learning
outcomes reflects the work of a student affairs professional which is focused on the
development of students, the field, and the contributions of counseling in grounding
student affairs practice. In the literature review of this dissertation, I provided depth in
how the development of student affairs came to be. Therefore, it was not surprising to
see this third theme. The history of higher education and introduction to student affairs
are often foundations of master’s programs (Council for the Advancement of Standards in
Higher Education, 2012) which center knowing how the field came to be. This is
reflected in my findings through the submission of history of student affairs and higher
education syllabi as syllabi with an SJI focus. Where I found this to show up in the
learning outcomes is within the submitted syllabi that had a historical or legal focus.
These syllabi, rather than reflecting a view of SJI, provided a historical representation of
SJI with learning outcomes reflecting the need for understanding case law and historical
markers within the field that led to a more inclusive and equitable college campuses.
Master’s program which ground their program in student affairs and counseling often have a counseling or helping skills course, or two, as part of the required curriculum. I found that of the 49 syllabi submitted to represent SJI, 11 were grounded in a student affairs and counseling approach. Although, this theme does not speak to my first research question in uncovering how SJI is communicated in student affairs curriculum, I felt it was important to note that of the syllabi submitted, faculty and/or program directors identified counseling, history, and the development of students as part of what makes up SJI. This theme brings to light that faculty/program directors who uploaded syllabi saw a connection of the work of student affairs being tied to social justice and inclusion, whether it be an actionable approach or not – which I did not expect.

**An Absence**

In reflecting on my findings, I have been able to share the takeaways thus far, but I have also been left with a sense of absence. In starting out and moving through my data collection and findings I thought I would see a stronger approach to SJI. While I am aware of that student affairs master’s programs do not all share a set of required outcomes, I expected to see a stronger approach to SJI because program directors/faculty identified the syllabi uploaded for use in my study as such. I find myself at this point wondering where the pragmatist approach is as part of the foundation of the field of student affairs development. I found, missing, the emphasis on experience and as Harrison shares the “centrality of community and social relationships” (as cited in Zack, 2008, p. 53). Further, I see a reproduction of the metanarrative and SJI is a process and a goal with focus on self-awareness. I also hoped to find not just readings and discussions,
but an approach to actively involve master’s students in justice and equity work (North, 2008) which did not come through as I found in responding to my second research question.

**Findings of Research Question Two**

**Research Question Two**

Q2 How are the competencies of social justice and inclusion conveyed in required coursework?

To address this question, I analyzed the required assignments listed in all 49 syllabi. Since course assignments should be tied to the intended learning from the course, assignments should then represent a way to see if the foundational outcomes of SJI competency are reflected in an actionable format. From the 49 syllabi, I provided a descriptive code (see Figure 9) for each required assignment which gave me 159 codes. The list of 159 codes developed into eight pattern codes with four patterns under each of my emergent themes. My emergent themes were *uninvolved* and *involved* which reflected the goal and/or process of the assignment.

In contemplating what my theme would be from my emergent themes, uninvolved and involved, I sought out a learning framework that would help ground my findings. Given the focus of this research question on coursework in student affairs master’s programs, I reflected on my graduate work. I recalled a consistent theme of active learning as a framework for learning in class. Active learning is often broken into two parts, active participation and active reading. Active participation shows up in the form of reflective writing/journaling, pair and share activities, groups of students working through a case study, and/or site visits to name a few (Active Learning, 2019). Active
reading asks students to make note of important points to them in their readings, along with noting inconsistencies and their questions (Yakaboski, 2011).

Using an active learning framework allowed me to represent the theme of the findings as *active learning*. In this framework “simple” known as uninvolved in my emergent theme and “complex” known as involved in my emergent theme, represent assignments on a continuum (see Figure 14) (Active Learning, 2019, n.p.).

![Active Learning Strategies](image)

*Figure 14. Active Learning Continuum of Assignments from Simple (Uninvolved) to Complex (Involved).*

The active learning continuum supported my findings in that of the assignments found in the syllabi a majority were in the uninvolved or simple end of the continuum. This finding echoes the theme of the learning outcomes where the focus is primarily on self-awareness and development. However, it should not be framed as bad or wrong but
rather as a representation that while there is an espoused goal of SJI in the syllabi submitted in for my study, the assignments are limited in reflecting an actionable approach. The actionable approach is what I have consistently found to be missing which attributes to a more individualized focus of SJI through the majority of learning reflecting on self.

**Uninvolved Assignments**

Assignments that represented an uninvolved approach were the most prominent in the syllabi for this study. Of the 163 assignments identified, I coded over half as uninvolved. The assignments reflected a mix from the continuum including reflection, self-assessment, pair and shares, case studies, and discussion. The most common assignment was for students to reflect. Reflections focused on (a) “your understanding of multicultural competence and its application,” (b) using a “weekly journal to reflect on your learning, to record your responses to going deeper questions in the text, and to articulate your thoughts and reactions to class discussion,” and (c) “reflect[ing] on your development and identities up to this point in your life” to cite a few. As stated prior, this is not bad or wrong but a finding that represents SJI main in the realm of a process and a goal.

**Involved Assignments**

The involved assignments were limited, as shown by 20 assignments being experiential or inquiry based. These 20 assignments, though in the realm of involved/complex learning, still remained in a theoretical bubble. As an example, a majority of the involved assignments were in the category of inquiry learning meaning writing a research or concept paper. However, the research paper assignment guidelines
were closer to a brainstorming activity whereby students were asked to write a (a) “researcher biography” which is another approach of self-reflection, (b) “proposed research topic” from personal journal entries (c) and “on one aspect of diversity in higher education” to list a few. While the above speaks to involved assignments remaining focused on self and a reflection of action in theory, three assignments from three different syllabi met the holistic approach of SJI of connecting analysis to action.

The first assignment offered students a two-part project. The first part focused on the learning and development of awareness. Students were asked to “review at least 3 research or scholarly publications about an [a] group” then the second piece completed the assignment. Students then were to “interview with at least 2 members of the group” (emphasis added). Another option was to “attend a workshop or presentation about your group,” and then followed by “participate in a training session with the group.” This assignment represents an approach to assist students in gaining skills toward meeting the goal of SJI. I expected to see more of this type of assignment given the push by associations, and broadly in the profession, for SJI competence to be through the preparation and field of student affairs.

Two additional assignments I categorized as connecting analysis to action required master’s student to reflect then engage. The first, required students to first develop the awareness of their surrounding community based on the location of the university. Then students were required to connect this to the action of visiting a local museum “given its connection to our course and the history of education [at our university]” and to interact for “three hours” with the exhibits representing the experiences of oppressed groups in their community and society.
The second I grouped as the practicum or site visits courses. To me the experience of a site visit or completion of a practicum naturally falls into the idea of analysis to action. Site visits and practicums in student affairs programs, as seen through the syllabi, typically occur after students have completed a set of courses to then show their learning in action. The practical approach is supported by programs generally and CAS (2014) states all student affairs masters programs should include supervised practice furthering the importance of experience to the process of learning. However, I believe we could extend this approach from a singular course to a curriculum focused on SJI in which all courses had an analysis to action approach.

It is also important for me to acknowledge that my study is based in written communication and syllabi cannot communicate changes and the impact of faculty on SJI. Syllabi do not account for the impromptu conversations and discussion about social justice and inclusion or change in assignments. But they do confirm among these 49 syllabi that social justice and inclusion remains primarily a classroom experience rather than a participation activity with, and from, communities towards justice and inclusion.

A Troubling Note

On a more troubling note for me was finding a couple of assignments requiring students to participate as a minority. The first assignment required students to choose another identity or situation that would categorize them as a minority, “you must place yourself in a situation in which you are the minority.” Students must then spend a “minimum of sixty minutes … up to one day” in this chosen minority identity. Then to write up this experience and respond to prompts such as “what made you a minority in the group” and “what were your experiences during this activity.”
Finding an assignment like the above in a student affairs master’s program required me to remain focused on my scholarly voice in trying to communicate the level of anger this assignment brought up for me. As an individual with minoritized (and privileged) identities, it is difficult for me to comprehend why an assignment would require students to experience marginalization of another group, “as if they could” (Leah, personal communication, 2019). Assigning students to choose an experience where they could be a minority for 60 minutes and then write about it is not social justice and inclusion — it is the othering of minoritized individuals lived (and living) experience.

The second assignment has similar tenets to the first of requiring an experience of the other, but this time through culture. This assignment required students to “attend an [one] event within a culture that is different from your own” but does not require participation or engagement with the event or group. Rather, students are required to pick, without an established relation, an experience such as “a trip to a cultural center” or “visit to a reservation” with the idea to “be around and interact with other people” culturally different. While seemingly harmless, an assignment like this privileges and communicates that a student has the power to just invite themselves into another culture and spend time poking around and being around different and other groups from their own. This is problematic given part of graduate education is to learn strategies to teach others how to work with students and diverse populations on campus. Assigning an experience like this sends a message of if it is for education then it is OK to enter into this community that is different from me because I want to learn about them — this is objectifying.
These assignments are important for me to name because they do not align with social justice and inclusion. These assignments teach othering and the learning about rather than with minoritized populations in the U.S. Although small in number, in the represented 160 assignments of 49 syllabi, one could extrapolate that this is not only happening at two institutions. Further, these learned experiences open a path to graduating students to replicate these approaches. These assignments, to me, further the oppressive practices within student affairs. And remind me of a quote that has resonated and remained with since 2016,

whether you want to acknowledge it or not — the cultural values of our profession [student affairs] don a counterfeit mask of social justice and it is past time that we address the illusive execution of what’s considered social justice in student affairs (DuPree, 2016, para. 1).

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the finding of my study. The frequency counts of course titles are represented through wordles and discussed. The learning outcomes analysis emerged with the themes of the top seven, the development of self, student development, and the development of student affairs and counseling. An absence is noted in the representation of social justice and inclusion within the syllabi. The findings from the assignments show a focus on self-awareness and development which is part of social justice and inclusion but leaves out the actionable approaches. A few troubling assignments are found with a focus of student trying to experience being a minority as required coursework. These findings lead to Chapter V with a discussion on the findings
and recommendations for graduate students, student affairs professionals, and the field of student affairs.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Of course, I am not saying researchers should not try to answer questions. The problem is ending with answers — being unaware of or uninterested in the ethical questions generated or avoided. The “answers” to research questions do not end things but offer new circumstances for exploring the persistent questions of what is good for people. (Hostetler, as cited in North, 2008, p. 1197)

In this chapter, I provide a narrative of how my findings show through the lens of postmodernism and Dewey’s pragmatism. The focus of my dissertation was to explore and discover how the social justice and inclusion competency put forth by ACPA and NASPA came to light in the syllabi collected representing an SJI focus as 21 institutions. In reflection on my actions of this dissertation, I have chosen to believe, using the model of experience of Dewey’s (Morgan, 2014), that what I found is a metanarrative of social justice and inclusion. Rather than a focus towards social justice and inclusion, the 49 syllabi represented primarily followed a metanarrative of keeping SJI as a process and a goal grounded in self-awareness. Findings represented that course titles did not represent social justice and inclusion and learning outcomes focused primarily on a grouping of concepts to represent an SJI approach. Further assignments did not have an emphasis on experience.

Dewey’s concept of experience speaks to two main questions (Morgan, 2014). First, what are the sources of our beliefs? Second, what are the meanings of our actions? The syllabi of my study represented only the first question of Dewey’s model of experience, with students asked to focus on sources of their beliefs through reflection,
self-awareness, and self-development. The assignments did not allow for a development of students meaning of actions since actions were limited to theoretical approaches through assignments, thus limiting the ability for students to engage in Dewey’s model of inquiry. If given the opportunity to work through Dewey’s model of inquiry, students would not only gain an ability to reflect on actions to choose new beliefs, but also work in the realm of involved/complex active learning work. I would recommend to not only students, but also faculty, staff, and the field that rather than an approach to competency in SJI there should be a focus on a model of inquiry and of experience.

To faculty and staff (student affairs professionals), I offer expanded knowledge on how courses across 21 institutions are communicating social justice and inclusion via learning outcomes and assignments. To students, I hope for a tangible takeaway in expanding their and their community’s knowledge of the what, how, and the robust impact of social justice and inclusion. To the field of student affairs, I strive for a space to welcome an additional narrative, my narrative that is beyond the teaching and assumption of social justice and inclusion as a competency for mastery or simplified to a process and a goal. Additionally, the findings offer insight into current pedagogy used in courses identified as communicating competence in social justice and inclusion in the curriculum. Through using syllabi, the findings show what a sample of student affairs programs have deemed relevant and important towards teaching social justice and inclusion (Ball & Knobloch, 2005).

**Recommendations for Graduate Students**

The takeaways I hope to provide graduate students through this inquiry are twofold. First, I hope my work is providing them a tangible takeaway. That the work of
social justice and inclusion is not a competency nor limited to the idea of a process and a goal. It is not a list of foundational, intermediate, or advanced outcomes that are achieved in a master’s program or doctoral program. It is the full-bodied experience of working with and for a community, group, and/or individual. It is about walking with and for communities who experience the heavy hand of oppression daily. Thus, I recommend students should take responsibility for their growth and learning to be with communities rather than expecting or relying on only their master’s programs to provide competence through theses or portfolios.

I encourage students with a desire for a social justice and inclusion focus to interrogate their choices for graduate preparation. While often the most accessible means is through a website, student, or trusted mentor — programs and their values change as faculty and leadership do. As shown in survey responses, curriculum shifts to incorporate social justice and inclusion if faculty/council decided to do so. Some programs have changed curriculum in the last year or two years ago while others are still deciding if requiring a course on social justice or a top seven is needed. Therefore, I recommend students first take ownership of their desired experience and second, seek to understand how a chosen program might assist them in working towards their development and taking actionable steps to interrupt injustice.

I also hope my conclusions show students that social justice and inclusion should not be measured by a suggested list of ideas or practices from national associations nor by assignments of their programs. There is ownership needed by students (and professionals) to take action and work towards changing oppressive practices. Social
justice and inclusion should be rooted in the process, goal, vision, and education of social justice.

**Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals**

For student affairs professionals (faculty and staff), I encourage a different frame of social justice and inclusion. Rather than a focus on solely social justice and inclusion, student affairs professionals should seek to center the top seven. The top seven provide a robust approach to learning and understanding social justice and inclusion within the U.S. Centering the top seven gives space and access to social justice, multiculturalism, diversity, equity, inclusion, culture, and understanding oppression. After all, my findings indicate that rather than SJI rising to the top in the communicated messages, the top seven do. The top seven remind student affairs professionals of both the growth needed and the continued oppression within the systems and polices of higher education and the profession.

For faculty, I would recommend to not only include SJI as CAS and ACPA and NASPA recommend, but also work to include levels of engagement around diversity, multiculturalism, diversity, equity, inclusion, culture, and knowledge of oppression. To take an inclusive approach to many factors, in my view from the findings, the top seven offer in development an informed social justice and inclusion framework and practice. As it relates to the learning process via assignments, I recommend faculty seek to provide more guided opportunities for students by engaging communities and groups into their coursework for students. To gain experience and learn with communities about their needs and then moving forward with plans to support those needs identified by the community’s.
For staff, I recommend an approach to missions, visions, values, and trainings reflecting the top seven rather than only social justice and inclusion. While important, the efforts put forward by staff to provide equitable housing, diverse experiences, and opportunities to engage with culture add to the experience and of being able to produce an SJI framework and practice. For learning opportunities, student affairs staff have the unique opportunity to guide students through learning how to work with diverse staffs and varied personal and cultural beliefs. Student affairs staff should consider the opportunity presented for master’s student through assistantships or practicums to engage in action against injustice.

**Recommendations to the Field of Student Affairs**

Expanding the knowledge base for student affairs, to me, is also a focus of my dissertation. This section offers recommendations to the field, but I also write this section to the individuals, groups, and communities in the field of student affairs. This study began in 2015 for me, as soon as the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) were released. I knew then I could not move forward in my work or scholarship without addressing the larger issue at hand for the field of student affairs — I was completely unsettled. Social justice and inclusion cannot be communicated as achievable through competency at foundational, intermediate, or advanced levels.

Competency assumes an expert level, yet, the campus activism and engagement in Chapter I shows college campuses are not at a foundational level. There does not appear to be much advocating for “issues of social justice, oppression, privilege, and power that impact people based on local, national, and global interconnections” (ACPA & NASPA,
The ACPA and NASPA student affairs associations are two of the largest and most influential within the field speaking broadly to over 15,000 professional members. Listing social justice and inclusion within the 2015 competencies as one which is obtainable through three levels of outcomes is a misuse of the power of these associations and layers in a new metanarrative that SJI can be mastered.

While I am in agreement, the association should illuminate issues of injustice and oppression through centering social justice and inclusion as a daily practice of professionals, the issues should be through the holistic goal of social justice education. What is considered to be socially just and equitable cannot be from the voice of the ivory tower. It must be through the full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. This is a process that is “participatory and respectful of human diversity and group differences” (Bell, 2016, p. 3). It is “inclusive and affirming of human agency and the capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change” (Bell, 2016, p. 3). This goal and process of social justice is towards a world in which the “distribution of resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognized, and treated with respect” (Bell, 2016, p. 3).

Further while we must allow and encourage critical self-reflection — the field of student affairs must not get stuck in the theory of SJI in the classroom or staff meeting. There must be a connection from “analysis to action” (Bell, 2016, p. 3). Even if ACPA and NASPA do not influence some programs to ground their curriculum in the competencies, they do influence some. In my view, more harm could be done by saying the field has this competency in social justice and inclusion.
I recommend the following for the field of student affairs and leading organizations:

- Remove the idea of the ability to achieve competency at a foundational, intermediate, or advanced level with associated rubrics and restate SJI as a skill that requires analysis to action with and for communities;
- Provide guidance on what SJI looks like in action and offer the opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to engage in forums and action to help oppressed communities in ways they deem helpful. In addition, the field and association should show an active effort of SJI to help guide and lead the field; and
- Provide learning guides for faculty and staff to incorporate into classrooms and assistantships developed by regional communities.

It is my belief, and hope, that I am not alone in having been unsettled by the idea of social justice and inclusion being touted as an achievable competency. The faculty, staff, and students who are willing and see a level of agreement with my findings, should vocalize the problematic nature of teaching social justice and inclusion as a competency. I would recommend advocating for a revising of the competencies, discussing the issue within their circles of influence, and seeking additional scholarship and articles furthering this inquiry. Last, it would be astute of programs to consider a revision, or at least a review, of how their program is situating social justice and inclusion within their programs, if indeed it is through a lens of competence.

**Recommendations for Research**

My dissertation demonstrated, through the content analysis of 49 syllabi of 21 student affairs master’s programs, that like Flowers’ (2003) work, some programs require a single course, do not have a course, or are considering adding a course as it relates to social justice and inclusion. Although Flowers’ survey focused on diversity courses, this inquiry shows courses which focus on injustice and oppression can still be considered as electives or not part of the core curriculum. Future research should look to updating the
work of Gayles and Kelly (2007) inquiring on the attitudes of students, faculty, and administrators’ perceptions on the need of requiring a diversity type course, what courses should be included, and how to link theory to practice. Researchers should seek an update to the work of Flowers, as it nears its 20th anniversary since publication, to garner a larger sample to potentially allow for the generalization of findings on the teaching of social justice and inclusion in student affairs master’s programs.

Additionally, my pragmatist research framework, postmodern lens, and content analysis method have shown that student affairs research does not need to prove itself worthy through notable journals and research awards. While helpful, the work of student affairs is grounded in holistic development and support of students. The profession’s research, in turn, should reflect this approach to aid changing of approaches, curriculum, and policies though a pragmatist lens. We should ask ourselves what is unsettling in our work and move towards providing data to speak to the injustice(s) to push the field and institutions towards SJI. I hope readers of my dissertation and forthcoming articles are able to learn how a pragmatist framework is beyond a what works approach and gain an understanding of how being in action with research can produce change in the field. The central moral value that Dewey (1925) advocates for his version of pragmatism, and I agree with, is freedom of inquiry, in which individuals and social communities are able to define the issues that matter most to them and pursue those issues in the ways that are the most meaningful to them.

**Future Directions**

As I close this dissertation with consideration for my emerging researcher agenda, I seek to follow three lines of inquiry. First, while I would consider being the scholar to
update the work of Flowers (2003) and Gayles and Kelly (2007), I have also kept potential future inquiries and articles as part of my researcher journal. The three lines of inquiry that have left me unsettled at the time of the writing of this dissertation are,

- Furthering the work of my current research agenda through a deeper analysis of all of the components of the syllabi. Due to life and time constraints, along with my initial interests in required course work and assignments, my data set would allow me to look further into the coded messages of assigned readings vs suggested readings as an example.
- Researching and conceptualizing a model for the top seven. I would like to expand my theory that the top seven could serve as a holistic understanding of all the pieces that challenge oppressive systems and policies (see Appendix I).
- Complementing this research through asking students, faculty, and staff to work with me towards answering the question of how students, faculty, and staff experience social justice and inclusion as a competency within graduate classrooms.

Concluding Thoughts

In setting out to complete this inquiry, I often reflected on my concerns of causing tension amongst scholars and the field of student affairs. But having now completed this inquiry, I hope I have offered students, faculty, and staff an expansion of their knowledge. This study provided a glimpse into how 21 programs and 49 courses are communicating social justice and inclusion through titles, learning outcomes, and assignments.

It is now known that most assignments, while active for a classroom setting, often do not offer an experience of participating in justice with and for an oppressed group or individual. I would recommend faculty, staff, and student’s focus on ways they could participate in action with and for minoritized communities. While I could name, participate in a protest or march or layout a socially justice syllabus, it is not for me to suggest what an individual, group, or community needs. Nor would it be just of me to say this is how one would do a socially justice syllabus. This would be unjust, exclusive
and rather presumptive of me. Rather, I would recommend that those in power reconsider how their work may be causing unrealized oppression. One way to achieve this would be to use a teaching resource guide offered by British Columbia Teachers' Federation (2019). This guide uses a social justice lens and discusses access, agency, solidarity action, and advocacy with a focus on equity. I found this guide to be a reflexive approach setting forth definitions, examples, and questions, for educators and students alike to move towards a socially just and inclusive approach.

The theming of learning outcomes has shown there is not a central focus on social justice and inclusion, but rather it is one of the top seven foci in a larger umbrella of terms to describe the difference among populations. This inquiry also highlighted some problematic assignments that would be worth giving some additional thought to should the program a faculty/staff member is a part of require an assignment of participation in a marginalized experience of another. Finally, as a scholar who has spent the last few years bringing this inquiry to life, it is my responsibility to publish my findings in service to my student affairs community – which I look forward to achieving in the upcoming years through ACPA–College Student Educators International, NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and the Association for the Study of Higher Education.
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APPENDIX A

FOUNDATIONAL, INTERMEDIATE, AND ADVANCED OUTCOMES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION COMPETENCY AREA
Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI)

For the purpose of the Social Justice and Inclusion competency area, social justice is defined as both a process and a goal that includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups and seeks to address issues of oppression, privilege, and power. This competency involves student affairs educators who have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context. Student affairs educators may incorporate social justice and inclusion competencies into their practice through seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus communities.

Foundational Outcomes

- Identify systems of socialization that influence one’s multiple identities and sociopolitical perspectives and how they impact one’s lived experiences.
- Understand how one is affected by and participates in maintaining systems of oppression, privilege, and power.
- Engage in 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.
- Integrate knowledge of social justice, inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power into one’s practice.
- Connect and build meaningful relationships with others while recognizing the multiple, intersecting identities, perspectives, and developmental differences people hold.
- Articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and inclusion within the context of higher education.
- Advocate on issues of social justice, oppression, privilege, and power that impact people based on local, national, and global interconnections.

Intermediate Outcomes

- Design programs and events that are inclusive, promote social consciousness and challenge current institutional, national, global, and sociopolitical systems of oppression.
- Effectively facilitate dialogue about issues of social justice, inclusion, power, privilege, and oppression in one’s practice.
- Engage in hiring and promotion practices that are non-discriminatory and work toward building inclusive teams.
- Identify systemic barriers to social justice and inclusion and assess one’s own department’s role in addressing such barriers.
- Advocate for the development of a more inclusive and socially conscious department, institution, and profession.
- Provide opportunities to reflect and evaluate on one’s participation in systems of oppression, privilege, and power without shaming others.
• Provide opportunities for inclusive and social justice educational professional development.
• Effectively address bias incidents impacting campus communities.
• Implement appropriate measures to assess the campus climate for students, staff, and faculty.

**Advanced Outcomes**

• Ensure institutional policies, practices, facilities, structures, systems, and technologies respect and represent the needs of all people.
• Assess the effectiveness of the institution in removing barriers to addressing issues of social justice and inclusion.
• Take responsibility for the institution’s role in perpetuating discrimination or oppression.
• Advocate for social justice values in institutional mission, goals, and programs.
• Create ongoing strategic plans for the continued development of inclusive initiatives and practices throughout the institution.
• Link individual and departmental performance indicators with demonstrated commitment to social justice and inclusion.
• Provide consultation to other units, divisions, or institutions on strategies to dismantle systems of oppression, privilege, and power on campus.
• Foster and promote an institutional culture that supports the free and open expression of ideas, identities, and beliefs, and where individuals have the capacity to negotiate different standpoints.
• Demonstrate institutional effectiveness in addressing critical incidents of discrimination that impact the institution.
• Ensure campus resources are distributed equitably and adequately meet the needs of all campus communities.
APPENDIX B

FOUNDATIONAL, INTERMEDIATE, AND ADVANCED OUTCOMES RUBRIC
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION COMPETENCY AREA
While there are many conceptions of social justice and inclusion in various contexts, for the purposes of this competency area, it is defined here as 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. This competency involves student affairs educators who have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context. Student affairs educators may incorporate social justice and inclusion competencies into their practice through seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus communities (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of Self and Navigating Systems of Power</th>
<th>Foundational</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of concepts of power and privilege in relation to identity, intersexuality, and gender. Ability to operationalize methods to respond to social dynamics in an equitable manner. Dispositions to be flexible in practice, to account for differences, and advocate for more equitable practices.</td>
<td>Able to articulate one’s identities and intersexuality. Identify systems of socialization that influence one’s multiple identities and sociopolitical perspectives and how they impact one’s lived experiences. Articulate a foundational understanding of social justice and inclusion within the context of higher education.</td>
<td>Identify systemic barriers to social justice and inclusion. Assess one’s own department’s role in addressing such barriers.</td>
<td>Ensure campus resources are distributed equitably and adequately meet the needs of all campus communities. Provide consultation to other units, divisions, or institutions on strategies to dismantle systems of oppression, privilege, and power on campus.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Critical Assessment and Self-Directed Learning</th>
<th>Foundational</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of how to conduct a critical assessment of the micro and macro contributors to institutional inequities. Ability to practice continual self-reflection and consistently seek out opportunities for continued learning. Dispositions to foster a culture of reflection; to seek out and include the perspectives of marginalized groups.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Evaluate one’s participation in systems of oppression, privilege, and power without blaming others. Provide opportunities for inclusive and social justice educational professional development. Implement measures to assess the campus climate for students, staff, and faculty.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
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### Social Justice and Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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| **Engaging in Socially Just Practice**  
Knowledge of behaviors and practices that promote inclusion. Ability to incorporate knowledge of inequities, social justice frameworks, and social trends through daily interactions, behaviors, and work processes. Disposition to dismantle bias, engage in consciousness raising and lead by example in a way that allows for learning and progress. | • Integrate knowledge of social justice, inclusion, oppression, privilege, and power into one's practice.  
• Connect and build meaningful relationships with others while recognizing their multiple, intersecting identities, perspectives, and developmental differences.  
• Advocate on issues of social justice, oppression, privilege, and power that impact people based on local, country, and global interconnections. | • Facilitate dialogue about issues of social justice, inclusion, power, privilege, and oppression in one's practice.  
• Design programs and events that are inclusive, promote social consciousness and challenge current institutional, country, global, and sociopolitical systems of oppression.  
• 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, and where individuals have the capacity to negotiate different standpoints.  
• Advocate on issues of social justice, oppression, privilege, and power that affect people based on local, country, and global interconnections. |

| **Organizational Systemic Advocacy**  
Knowledge of the manifestation of institutional oppression and strategies to create equity. Ability to build an active network of campus stakeholders dedicated to facilitating change. Disposition toward institutional and personal accountability, while empowering others to do the same. | • 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.  
• Advocate for the development of a more inclusive and socially conscious department, institution, and profession.  
• Ensure institutional policies, practices, facilities, structures, systems, and technologies respect and represent the needs of all people.  
• Demonstrate institutional effectiveness in addressing critical incidents of discrimination that impact the institution.  
• Take responsibility for the institution's role in perpetuating discrimination or oppression.  
• Create ongoing strategic plans for the continued development of inclusive initiatives and practices throughout the institution. |
APPENDIX C

CONSTENT FORM
CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: An Epistemic Critique of Student Affairs Masters Graduate Programs
Social Justice & Inclusion Competency

Researcher: Karla Perez-Velez, M.A.E., Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership
Ph.D. Student, 410.903.5346, pere0670@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor: Tamara Yakaboski, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Higher Education &
Student Affairs Leadership, 970.351.1156, tamara.yakaboski@unco.edu

Purpose and Description:
The purpose of this content analysis is to examine how masters level graduate preparation
programs in student affairs incorporate social justice and inclusion in curriculum. This
uses syllabi as the artifact to analyze the communicated messages of how social justice
and inclusion is articulated, emphasized, and included in the required curriculum of
student affairs masters level programs. Similar studies (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner,
Collins, & Mason, 2009; Priester, Jones, Jackson-Bailey, Jana-Masri, Jordan, & Metz,
2008; Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003; Sweifach, 2015) have used course syllabi to provide
empirical data on current approaches and as a written record and agreement of the key
lessons, knowledge and readings deemed vital to the course and topic (Sullivan &
Maxfield, 2003). Your participation in this study request you to send your course syllabi
to the researcher via email or through an upload link via a Qualtrics survey.

This study would provide empirical knowledge of the amount and structure of social
justice and inclusion courses and pedagogy used in master’s level student affairs graduate
preparation programs. Faculty of preparation programs would gain knowledge of how
nationally, programs are using the social justice and inclusion competencies within
preparation programs. This study will give advisors and supervisors context of how U.S.
graduate preparation programs attempt to prepare new professionals on social justice and
inclusion, while providing guidance on where the professional should pick up the
continued work for social justice and inclusion. Further, this study will illuminate agreed
upon resources such as books, articles, and experiential learning, as demonstrated through
the frequency of use in syllabi, that are relevant and important to teaching towards social
justice and inclusion (Ball & Knobloch, 2005).

I believe there is no risk to being in this study. Participants role in the study is limited to
providing the research with identified syllabi via email or link upload. The survey will
take you approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Identifiable information will be
redacted, data will be reported in aggregate, and will not hinder the faculty or program
director status. Participants who share their syllabi as data will benefit in adding foundational knowledge to the curricular studies for graduate students in student affairs in higher education graduation programs.

*Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.*
APPENDIX D

THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION IN STUDENT AFFAIRS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SYLLABI IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS SURVEY
Survey Flow

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<th>Block: Default Question Block (1 Question)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Block: Block 1 (5 Questions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard: Block 3 (1 Question)</td>
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<td>Standard: Block 4 (1 Question)</td>
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<td>Standard: Block 5 (4 Questions)</td>
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<td>Standard: Block 7 (1 Question)</td>
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<td>Standard: Block 8 (1 Question)</td>
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<td>Standard: Block 9 (1 Question)</td>
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<td>Standard: Block 10 (1 Question)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard: Block 11 (1 Question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block: Block 2 (16 Questions)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q1 Thank you for taking the time to respond to my survey. Your efforts will help provide empirical knowledge on the integration of social justice and inclusion content within masters level graduate programs. My study intends to use syllabi as artifacts to analyze the communicated messages of how social justice and inclusion is articulated, emphasized, and included in the curriculum of student affairs masters level programs. Similar studies (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009; Priester, Jones, Jackson-Bailey, Jana-Masri, Jordan, & Metz, 2008; Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003; Sweifach, 2015) have used course syllabi provide empirical data on current approaches and as a written record and agreement of the key lessons, knowledge and readings deemed vital to the course and topic (Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003). The focus of my study is on course syllabi content, not on specific programs or faculty and this information will be kept confidential if provided and will not be included in the study findings. By clicking on "yes" below you are indicating your agreement to participate in this study and are aware that this study has been approved by the University of Northern Colorado Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions regarding this study please contact me at, pere0670@bears.unco.edu or my research advisor, Dr. Tamara Yakaboski at tamara.yakaboski@unco.edu. Kindly, Karla Karla Perez-Velez, Ph.D. Candidate Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership University of Northern Colorado, pere0670@bears.unco.edu

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)
Q5 How is your program curriculum set up to include social justice and/or inclusion courses? Select all that apply.

☐ One required course (1)
☐ Two or more required courses (2)
☐ Courses offerings focus on diversity and multiculturalism (3)
☐ Course offerings focused on internationalization (10)
☐ Social justice and/or inclusion courses are electives (4)
☐ We have a cognate students can take on social justice and inclusion. A cognate in this context means a group of courses students would take to meet the social justice and inclusion requirement for a program. (5)
☐ We offer a study abroad option that fills the social justice and inclusion course requirement (6)
☐ We integrate social justice and inclusion in all of our required course work (7)
☐ We do not offer a course focused in social justice and/or inclusion (8)
☐ Other, please fill in. (9)

Display This Question:
If Q5 = We have a cognate students can take on social justice and inclusion. A cognate in this context means a group of courses students would take to meet the social justice and inclusion requirement for a program.

Q6 Which courses make up the cognate? A cognate in this context means a group of courses students would take to meet the social justice and inclusion requirement for a program.

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
Q7 How does your program achieve integrating social justice and inclusion in all of the required coursework in the program?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Q8 How does your program achieve competency in social justice and/or inclusion? Or please share about the decision as to why a course is not included.
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Q9 If you selected other, please share why.
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 3
Q10 Please select the focus of the required courses on social justice and/or inclusion.

- Focused on the United States (1)
- Focused on the United States and Internationally (2)
- Focused Internationally (3)
- We do not have a course(s) (5)
- Other, please fill in. (4)

End of Block: Block 3

Start of Block: Block 4

Q11
Are you currently or planning to revise the programs social justice and/or inclusion requirements?

If yes, please share anticipated upcoming revisions.

If no, please write in "no".

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5

Q13
Does your program incorporate the 2014 Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS Standards)?

- Yes (3)
- No (4)

Skip To: Q33 if Q13 = Yes
Skip To: Q34 if Q13 = No
Q33 Since your program incorporates the 2014 CAS Standards is it in place of the NASPA & ACPA 2015 Competencies?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (3)

Skip To: Q35 If Q33 = No
Skip To: End of Block If Q33 = Yes

Q34 Since your program does not incorporate the 2014 CAS Standards do you use the NASPA & ACPA 2015 Competencies (https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/ACPA_NASPA_Professional_Competencies_FINAL.pdf)?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (3)

Skip To: End of Block If Q34 = Yes
Skip To: End of Block If Q34 = No

Q35 Since your program incorporates the 2014 CAS Standards and it is not in the place of the NASPA & ACPA 2015 Competencies, do you use both frameworks to situate your program?

○ Yes (1) ________________________________________________

○ No (2) ________________________________________________

○ Other (3) ________________________________________________

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 7

Q15 Please select your institutional type. Select one.

○ 4-year public (1)

○ 4-year private (2)

○ Other, please fill in. (4)

________________________________________________________

End of Block: Block 7
Q16 Please select your annual program enrollment for you masters level graduate program. Select one.

- 30 or more  (1)
- 20 - 29 students  (2)
- 0 - 19  (3)
- Other, please fill in.  (8)

Q17 How would you classify your institution? Select one.

- Large research  (1)
- Small doctorate granting  (2)
- Comprehensive  (3)
- Baccalaureate  (4)
- Other, please fill in.  (6)
Q18 Please select your institutional region based on the U.S. Census regional map. Select one.

- Pacific (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington) (1)
- Mountain (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming) (2)
- West North Central (Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota) (3)
- West South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas) (4)
- East North Central (Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin) (5)
- East South Central (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee) (6)
- Middle Atlantic (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania) (7)
- South Atlantic (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia) (8)
- New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont) (9)
- Located outside the United States. Please fill in location. (10)

End of Block: Block 10

Start of Block: Block 11

Q19 My role within the program of which I respond to the survey questions is,

- Program Administrator/Administrative Assistant (1)
- Program Chair/Coordinator/Director (2)
- Program Faculty (3)
- Program Chair/Coordinator/Director & Faculty (4)
- Other, please fill in. (5)

End of Block: Block 11

Start of Block: Block 2
Q2 I have access to course syllabi and am able to upload syllabi of all courses focused on social justice and/or inclusion within my program.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**Display This Question:**
If Q2 = Yes

Q3 Please upload the syllabi of all courses focused on social justice and/or inclusion between 2014 and 2018.

If uploading individual files you will are able to upload one file here and up to 14 more individual files on the next survey questions.

Multiple files can be uploaded at once if in a Zip File. [How to create a zip file.](#)

**Display This Question:**
If if Please upload the syllabi of all courses focused on social justice and/or inclusion between 2014 and 2018. If uploading individual files you will are able to upload one file here and up to 14 more... File Is Uploaded

Q20 Syllabus 2

**Display This Question:**
If if Syllabus 2 File Is Uploaded

Q21 Syllabus 3

**Display This Question:**
If if Syllabus 3 File Is Uploaded

Q22 Syllabus 4

**Display This Question:**
If if Syllabus 4 File Is Uploaded

Q23 Syllabus 5
Q24 Syllabus 6

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 5 File Is Uploaded

Q25 Syllabus 7

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 6 File Is Uploaded

Q26 Syllabus 8

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 7 File Is Uploaded

Q27 Syllabus 9

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 8 File Is Uploaded

Q28 Syllabus 10

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 9 File Is Uploaded

Q29 Syllabus 11

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 10 File Is Uploaded

Q30 Syllabus 12

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 11 File Is Uploaded

Q31 Syllabus 13

Display This Question:
If If Syllabus 12 File Is Uploaded
Display This Question:  
If if Syllabus 13 File Is Uploaded

Q32 Syllabus 14

Display This Question:  
If Q2 = No

Q4 Please provide the name(s) and e-mail address(es) of the faculty member who last taught the social justice and/or inclusion course(s).

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

End of Block: Block 2
APPENDIX E

RECRUITMENT E-MAILS
First e-mail sent October 2018

Greetings,

By way of virtual introduction my name is Karla Perez-Velez and I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Northern Colorado in the Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership (HESAL) program. I am reaching out to you as the listed representative for your Student Affairs in Higher Education related program, found on the NASPA and/or ACPA Graduate School Directory, for your participation in my dissertation research. If you are no longer the contact please forward this e-mail to the individual who is, if you are able/willing. The purpose of this content analysis is to examine how masters level graduate preparation programs in student affairs/higher education incorporate social justice and inclusion in curriculum.

This study intends to use syllabi as the artifact to analyze the communicated messages of how social justice and/or inclusion is articulated, emphasized, and included in the curriculum of student affairs/higher education masters level programs. Similar studies (Pieterse, Evans, Risner-Butner, Collins, & Mason, 2009; Priester, Jones, Jackson-Bailey, Jana-Masri, Jordan, & Metz, 2008; Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003; Sweifach, 2015) have used course syllabi to provide empirical data on current approaches and as a written record and agreement of the key lessons, knowledge and readings deemed vital to the course and topic (Sullivan & Maxfield, 2003).

It is my hope you are willing to contribute to this study by clicking on the survey link below indicating your agreement to participate in this study and provide the requested information in the survey link. The survey will ask for a document upload(s) of syllabi and questions to report out descriptive statistics. The survey will take you approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The focus of the study is on the course syllabi content and not the program or faculty and this information will be kept confidential nor included in the study findings – no identifying information will be revealed. This IRB project (1232083-2) has been approved with exempt status by the University of Northern Colorado and the consent form is attached for your review.

Having reviewed the consent form, if you are willing to participate in this study please click on or copy and paste the survey link below. If you have any questions regarding this study please contact me at, pere0670@bears.unco.edu or my research advisor, Dr. Tamara Yakaboski at tamara.yakaboski@unco.edu.

Survey Link: https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bsK1oc368KdMhoh

Note: Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of
Kindly, 

Karla

Karla Perez-Velez, Ph.D. Candidate 
Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership 
University of Northern Colorado, pere0670@bears.unco.edu

Tamara Yakoboski, Ph.D. 
Associate Professor, Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership 
University of Northern Colorado, tamara.yakoboski@unco.edu

Note: Attached was the consent form to each e-mail sent
Second e-mail sent November 2018

Good morning,

I am reaching out to you as the listed representative for your Student Affairs in Higher Education related program for your participation in my dissertation research. If you have already had the opportunity to fill out the survey, thank you! If you are no longer the contact please forward this e-mail to the individual who is, if you are able/willing. The purpose of this content analysis is to examine how masters level graduate preparation programs in student affairs/higher education incorporate social justice and inclusion in curriculum.

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Survey Link: https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bsK1oc368KdMhoh

Note: Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Kindly,
Karla Perez-Velez, Ph.D. Candidate
Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership
University of Northern Colorado, pere0670@bears.unco.edu

Tamara Yakaboski, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership
University of Northern Colorado, tamara.yakaboski@unco.edu
Third and final e-mail sent January 2019

Good evening,

I am reaching out as a third and last request for your participation in my dissertation research. If you have had the opportunity to participate already, thank you. I truly appreciate the time and effort you took to do so!

If you have not yet had the opportunity to participate using the link below I would greatly appreciate your participation. Please see the previous emails below of my first and second requests for additional context. My survey will close a week from today on Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 6:00pm MT.

Thank you for taking a moment to read and consider my request. All the best in the Spring semester.

Kindly,

Karla

Karla Perez Velez, Ph.D. Candidate
Higher Education & Student Affairs Leadership
University of Northern Colorado
pere0670@bears.unco.edu
APPENDIX F

UNITED STATES CENSUS MAP
APPENDIX G

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
DATE: May 2, 2018

TO: Karla Perez-Velez
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1232083-2] An Epistemic Critique of Student Affairs Masters Graduate Programs Social Justice & Inclusion Competency
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification
ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: May 2, 2018
EXPIRATION DATE: May 2, 2022

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB’s records.
APPENDIX H

YES EXPLANATIONS FROM QUESTION 11
1. We are currently reviewing our course offerings, relative to our program outcomes.

2. Yes. We are in the midst of a program revision that will add a cognate track focused on diversity, equity and justice.

3. We are in discussions about making our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion course a required course.

4. Yes, one of the changes that we're hoping to make is to include more non-Western perspectives within our curriculum, particularly our counseling courses. We've started to do some of this work, but we are continuing to identify texts and other materials that can help our students think about counseling students outside of the dominant White norms that have historically been used in psychology and counseling. Additionally, we continue to monitor our signature assignments to see if they are helping our students' learning around their own sense of identity and working through difference with others. We've just begun to have some conversations about these and trying to move away from exercises and assignments that are about interviewing someone with a different identity than you to develop some opportunities that are more long-term and sustainable in terms of developing ongoing relationships.

5. We will be doing some curriculum review over the next 1.5 years so changes may be coming.

6. We are working on a certificate that includes invisible populations, thus revise a few program requirements. In addition, we are strategic planning around infusing socially just perspectives across all courses.
7. Yes. Currently, students choose between a more U.S.-focused diversity and inclusion course and an internationalization of higher education (with a short-term study abroad option) course. We are considering making the U.S.-focused diversity and inclusion course a requirement and offering another option than the internationalization course since not all students can afford the additional time and cost of participating in a study abroad experience.

8. We are reviewing but no changes in near future

9. We did build in a social just unit into the assessment course. This was a formal inclusion into that course curriculum.

10. Yes, the current course is a multicultural counseling course. I would like to create a new stand alone student affairs focused course. I include SJ deeply in all of my courses, but I am not sure if other people do so beyond acknowledging diversity.

11. This is a new requirement that we just started, so no changes anticipated to the requirement, but changes will be made to the course itself.

No – Explanations

The responses were as follows:

1. Not for the master’s program, but for the PhD program.

2. No, we did this in fall 2013-spring 2015; this was only at the master's level, however. We have not done this transformation at the doctoral level, so yes, we may do this next year, fall 2019-spring 2020.

3. No - We recently added an elective Diversity course and an elective International-focused course (and incorporated updated SJI ACPA/NASPA competency in other courses)
4. no, it has been foundational since outset with recent (past 2 years) revision of outcomes

5. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, our program is being discontinued. :-(

6. No, Updates are part of the a three year course and five year degree review

7. No - this was just done in the last 18 months
APPENDIX I

INITIAL THEORY/CONCEPT MODEL OF TOP SEVEN