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# Students and Institutions Protecting Whiteness as Property: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Student Affairs Preparation

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*This study is based on interviews with White students graduating from a student affairs preparation program as well as a literature review of whiteness in education. Applying critical race theory, the author examined the ways that students and institutions protected whiteness. Institutions and those within them concerned with equity must have awareness of whiteness and rework curriculum, pedagogy, policies, and practices to fracture educational hegemony of whiteness.*

While the demographics of the United States are changing to include more racial diversity in higher education, scholars continue to report unwelcoming and hostile climates for racially minoritized persons<sup>1</sup> and groups on predominantly White campuses (Gildersleeve, Croom, &

1. Use of the word *minoritized* brings attention to the action imposed on people. This word acknowledges the processes that cannot be attributed to being a numerical minority alone. See Dei (1999), for example.

Vasquez, 2011; Harper & Quaye, 2009; Yosso, 2006). In light of this research, studies have examined how students learn about race and racism. Many of these studies have focused on undergraduates' experiences (Broido, 2000; Laird, 2005; Martin, 2010; Piland, Hess, & Piland, 2000) and at least one regarding master's students in K-12 teacher education programs in Canada (Tilley & Powick, 2007), but few have been focused on experiences of White graduate students in higher education programs in the United States (see for example Watt, 2007). Studies about White students indicated they resisted learning about racial power dynamics and offered defenses during the learning process (Goodman, 2001; Watt, 2007). These studies focused on the development of the students, not a critical examination of the educational context. Since multiple levels of racialization are operating simultaneously, none alone can explain social disparities in education (Phillips, 2011). Educators who want equity in the academy cannot ignore institutional history, policies, and practices that undergird contemporary issues in education (Law, Phillips, & Turney, 2004; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005).

The goal of this study was to examine the ways that White students enrolled in a student affairs master's program in a predominantly White institution engaged with race and racism and to locate their experiences within the context of the U.S. educational system. Students in predominantly White institutions are informed, directed, and supported by the institutions in which they are enrolled; unfortunately, these institutions have been cited as part of the problem of perpetuating oppression (Carr & Lund, 2007). While institutions make statements about their commitment to diversity and inclusion, teacher education programs ignore issues of race, power, and whiteness (Cross, 2005) and initiatives intended to create a more inclusive campus reinforce exclusion (Iverson, 2007). Although countering the individual level of oppression is important, fighting institutional oppression is also imperative (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Bishop, 2002; Kivel, 2002). Institutional and systemic oppression are often ignored in understandings of whiteness.

I offer the following description of whiteness for this study. Whiteness is not only associated with skin color but also describes *social processes* that are fluid and dynamic (Garner, 2007). When White people view only one level of whiteness, the individual level, they may feel powerless yet have greater relative power than racially minoritized people (Kivel, 2002). Referring to W.E.B. DuBois's statement about the problem of the color line, Brown et al. (2003) argued

today, many White Americans are concerned only with whether they are, individually, guilty of something called racism. . . . if Americans go no deeper than an inquiry into personal guilt, we will stumble backward into the twenty-first century, having come no closer to solving the problem of the color line. (p. 4)

In order to move beyond the individual level this study focused on not only the individual but also the institutional level by incorporating the educational context.

## A Conceptual Framework of Critical Race Theory

This study has been framed by critical race theory (CRT), which acknowledges the historical racial hierarchy where Whites have been positioned above People of Color as substantiated in the law (Tate, 1997). CRT has several tenets. First, race is socially constructed, indicating that race is not inherent within itself or a person, but the meaning of race is constructed in the social world (Collins, 2004; Young, 1990). Second, challenging ahistorical interpretations of events is central to CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). One example of ahistoricism is the argument that affirmative action unfairly advantages racially minoritized people, ignoring hundreds of years of privileging Whites in hiring (Katznelson, 2005). Third, CRT challenges values of objectivity and neutrality common in dominant discourse. People have disparate experiences related to their perceived racial group (Lynn & Parker, 2006).

In this study, a specific tenet of CRT, whiteness as property (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), was central to understanding how White students experienced race and racism in their student affairs preparation program. This tenet was used to identify how racism was not merely an ideology of prejudice and power but resulted in material discrepancies between White and racially minoritized people (Brown et al., 2003; Lipsitz, 1995). Some examples of whiteness as property in education may clarify this concept. DeCuir and Dixson (2004) described how whiteness as property resulted in African American students not being able to wear colorful clothing at graduation without violating school policies. Further, Patton, McEwen, Rendón, and Howard-Hamilton (2007) explained how student development theory has largely ignored the element of race in part because faculty “own” their courses and content.

Harris’s (1993) analysis of whiteness as property within U. S. laws described four rights of whiteness as property: (a) the right to disposition, (b) the right to use and enjoyment, (c) the right to status and property, and (d) the right to exclude. The *right to disposition* includes being able to pass along rights and privileges to heirs. The *right to use and enjoyment* holds White people can use their whiteness as they see fit with protection by the law. For example, I can use my whiteness to focus on my needs and perspectives, ignoring racially minoritized people’s needs and perspectives because I am not expected to know these. Like other types of property (e.g., house, land), whiteness is a valuable asset that Whites work to protect (Harris, 1993).

The third right protects the good reputation and elevated status of White people. Whites are assumed to be good intentioned (Harris, 1993). The courts have recognized that reputation and status as a White person are property of that person, and the law should protect them. In education, the majority of faculty and administrators are White, creating an understanding that being White has more status and power (Patton et al., 2007). The fourth right is the *right to exclude*, reflecting the law has been designed such that lawmakers (mostly White people) decide who is protected under the law (Harris, 1993). Examples of exclusion of racially

minoritized people in the law include laws allowing only White men access to certain G.I. Bill benefits (Katznelson, 2005) and immigration laws limiting citizenship opportunities by race and access to in-state tuition and financial aid (Haney López, 2006).

## Methods

This qualitative study was designed using constructionist and subjectivist epistemologies. As a constructionist I believe that meaning is not held in the object but that knowledge is created in the social world through social interaction; and as a subjectivist, I also believe that knowledge is dependent on the subject or the knower (Crotty, 1998). Following subjectivity, people in different standpoints have different understandings. I do not seek to provide one truth through this study, but I offer my interpretation as one possibility through a particular lens. Using the interpretive method, I focused on describing the participants' experiences and the meaning of them (Merriam, 2002). I approached this study from a critical perspective aiming to make a critique by illuminating power dynamics in a given context (Merriam, 2009). CRT is useful in this study for reframing the dominant discourse around learning in student affairs preparation with an alternate perspective informed by the educational context (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

## Data Collection

I used a single semistructured interview method (Mason, 2002). Eight people participated in interviews lasting between 30–50 minutes. During interviews, I asked students a number of questions and posed follow-up questions as needed. Following are examples of items posed to students: (a) describe your experiences with race and racism during your time in the student affairs preparation program, (b) describe classroom experiences when the topic of race and racism emerged, and (c) explain how race or racism impacted group projects and social interactions. Additionally, students described how they responded when topics of race and racism emerged in the classroom and how they perceived Students of Color to have responded during these experiences.

## Participants

The participants in this study graduated from a master's program in student affairs about a month prior to being interviewed. The program was located within a large public land-grant institution in the Midwestern United States comprised of 91% White students. In the cohort of graduating students 10 out of 31 students identified as Students of Color. Three out of five of the full-time faculty members teaching in the student affairs program identified as White, and two identified as People of Color.

Students in one graduating cohort received an email to participate in a study about White students' experiences with race and racism if they identified as White. Four men and four

women responded and were interviewed. Of these eight students, four self-disclosed during the interview one or more minoritized identities including having a learning or physical disability, being lesbian or gay, or being non-Christian. Most students described the schools they attended as predominantly White although one student described a racially and ethnically diverse education. In order to protect students' confidentiality, participants chose pseudonyms for use in this study. I do not associate social identities such as sexuality or disability with individual pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

### **Author Subjectivity**

Understanding how I come to this study is central to understanding my perspective and analysis because “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection” (Merriam, 2009, p. 15) in qualitative research. I come to this work as a White woman, privileged in most ways. In my whiteness, I have internalized dominance, which leads me to marginalize racially minoritized people. Some CRT scholars caution against Whites using CRT (Thompson, 2003; Bergerson, 2003) based on Whites' long history of appropriating knowledge and cultures for their benefit (Smith, 1999; Spring, 1997). Like Bergerson (2003), who supported Whites using CRT to bring attention to issues of race, I cautiously use CRT because I believe there is a need to call attention to whiteness and racism. I hope to use my experiences in whiteness to call for responsibility of all—but especially those in dominant groups (Dei, 2008)—to work for social justice.

### **Data Analysis**

First, structured coding of transcripts was performed relying on CRT concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Instantiations of several CRT concepts were identified. I found responses that could be interpreted as whiteness as property, saturated the transcripts of all participants, and made whiteness as property the primary focus for this study. Next, I created a data display to organize the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and documented the historical role of education in fostering each instantiation of whiteness as property. The connections between educational history and student participants' experiences are my interpretations through a CRT framework.

Once I identified findings, I gathered feedback from several peer debriefers to offer additional perspectives and challenge my interpretations. The peer debriefers, through their experiences as racial beings, served as another point with which to triangulate the data; none of the debriefers questioned the findings presented as being outside their experiences in student affairs, although they did challenge some of the ways that I had presented them. As a result of discussions with them I reconsidered and rewrote some explanations and conclusions. There were four peer debriefers who are all knowledgeable about the field of student affairs and CRT: a Black woman conducting research using CRT, a Chinese American woman, an Asian Indian/Desi American man, and a White man. I am truly grateful for my peers' support and contributions.

## Goodness

Trustworthiness or goodness is contingent on paradigmatic assumptions (Merriam, 1995). Patti Lather (1986) offered an alternative to traditional notions of trustworthiness originating in positivism. For this study, goodness should be measured by design adherence (Merriam, 1995), triangulation, and construct validity (Lather, 1986). Design adherence rests on the ability of the study to provide a critical race interpretation of experiences of White students and educational institutions (Merriam, 1995). Additionally, I leveraged students' perspectives, literature on educational processes of whiteness, and debriefers' experiences in order to serve as multiple data points or triangulation. Finally, I worked towards construct validity, a process of reflexivity, where I questioned how my a priori theory has been influenced by the data (Lather, 1986).

## Findings: Student Experiences

In this section, I share excerpts from interviews with White students about their experiences regarding race and racism. Students were asked about experiences that occurred while enrolled in their student affairs preparation program. Many of the experiences shared occurred during one course focused on social identity development, explicitly engaging issues related to race. Through the lens of CRT, three themes related to whiteness as property emerged from the interview data: (a) At Least I am Ready to Learn, (b) Let Me Contribute, and (c) Exclusion. After describing the students' experiences, I present a separate section drawing from the literature and locating students' experiences within the context of educational practices in the United States.

### At Least I am Ready to Learn

When asked to describe their experiences with race and racism, students talked about being ready and willing to learn about race and racism. Several indicated they had little previous experience with issues of race and racism and/or people racially different from them. Within the same interviews when students talked about being open, good intentioned, and ready to learn, they also expressed defensiveness and questioning of racially minoritized students who challenged the White students' experiences by offering theirs. For example, Tyler emphasized that his good intentions and being ready to learn were most important.

I'm trying to openly explore my White privilege. I'm saying things that are affecting people because I haven't figured it out yet, but I'm at least putting it out there. I'm saying these are the kinds of questions that I have.

During his interview, Tyler indicated that more than once his questions in class had evoked negative responses from peers, particularly racially minoritized students, some telling him he was being offensive. Applying the concept of whiteness as property, Tyler protected his White privilege by prioritizing his needs—learning—over his impact on others. Although he claimed

that he was ready to learn because he was participating in classroom discussion, he also used his White privilege to say whatever he wanted, even when it was hurtful to others.

Another student, Kristen, acknowledged that people were hurt in the classroom when race-related issues emerged. She said, "I don't think that people really know how to walk out of a class today and say 'ok, that was helping my learning and helping your learning, no big deal. We'll go have a beer today.'" Like Tyler, Kristen focused on her need for learning. She acknowledged the impact on others but minimized it by saying it was "no big deal." The tenor of her comment suggests she believed students should not be emotionally impacted by ignorant comments but go get a beer together.

In the interviews, students focused on their learning process and minimized the impact of learning on classmates, particularly racially minoritized students. Although students may not have asked for these privileges (Fine, Weis, Pruitt, & Burns, 2004; Helms, 1995), they have them and have learned to protect them. Whiteness as property, like a college education, has value associated with it. Consequently, owners of property work to protect it. In the next section, I discuss a pattern of behavior where White students also expected their right to contribute.

### **Let Me Contribute**

Participants described how the instructor and peers should let them contribute and validate their perspectives. Several participants expressed disappointment and even frustration that their experiences were not more centered in classroom discussions. The interview with Sally revealed her feeling undervalued in the classroom:

I had a couple experiences in working with youth. . . in Massachusetts which is really diverse. . . . I think at the beginning I was really excited to talk about [these experiences], and I was thinking I might have some things to contribute. . . . Then, . . . by the last semester, I felt very anxious every time the topics would come up because I knew how much tension was surrounding these issues and . . . I was just wondering who's gonna shoot that down and [say it's] offensive.

Sally explained how she had expected her experiences to be valued in the classroom. She focused on her feelings of disappointment and did not acknowledge the contributions of people who pointed out things that were offensive. Bryan also expected to contribute, "I felt that [my experiences] were somewhat devalued not only in my mind but in other people's mind." When these students' whiteness as property was threatened, they worked to protect it by asserting their right to be valued. From the dominant perspective, some may argue that Sally and Bryan should have the right to be valued in the classroom—every student should. Through a lens of CRT, another layer must be added for analysis. The additional layer in CRT is that of historical context (Haney López, 2006).

In this situation, the history that racially minoritized students are often marginalized in many classrooms matters when trying to understand how Sally and Bryan being centered in the classroom may be different from racially minoritized students being centered. Their experiences in the classroom as White people were likely different from most racially minoritized students' experiences who have been marginalized in many, if not most, of their classrooms throughout their schooling (see for example, Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Kuokkanen, 2007; Mayuzumi, Motobyashi, Nagayama, & Takeuchi, 2007). White students in this study referred to feelings of being silenced or devalued only in their one course related to social identity development. They did not report similar feelings about other courses. This finding suggests that White students expected to contribute and were frustrated when they perceived their contributions were not centered.

### **Exclusion**

All the participants spoke about a noticeable racial divide within their cohort, which consisted of one third racially minoritized students. Bryan said, "I feel like that people generally hung out with others in the cohort that looked more like them." Kristen gave the example that during social outings, "it was very much all the White students would go or all the Black students would go." Participants discussed segregation in where students sat in the classroom, groups chosen for assignments, and social activities. Only the participant who had grown up in a diverse neighborhood described maintaining close personal relationships with racially minoritized classmates. Whiteness as property is the right to choose with whom to associate even when it results in exclusion. Historically, White people as a group have excluded racially minoritized people (e.g., citizenship, housing through lending policies, redlining) (Katznelson, 2005; Lipsitz, 1995). Student affairs leaders should not be surprised then that students in this program experienced separation and exclusion along racial lines.

Sometimes racially minoritized students choose to sit together and work on projects together (Tatum, 2003). The historical context of racially minoritized people working together is different from Whites working together. When racially minoritized students are marginalized within the university, coming together in support of each other may be one of few spaces where they can feel supported and challenge the ubiquity of whiteness (Tatum, 2003). Whites, who have many spaces on campus to feel supported, could be protecting the right to exclude.

To summarize the findings in this study, students protected privileges awarded through whiteness. First of all, the students focused on their rights to learn while devaluing the impact it had on racially minoritized classmates. They also expected to be centered in the classroom. Finally, students protected their right to exclude by maintaining segregation in the classroom and social situations.

## Historical Roles of Educational Institutions

While the data collected through interviews for this study focused on students' experiences with race and racism, students have not learned behaviors of protecting their whiteness in a vacuum. They have learned within the context of the U.S. educational system, and this context is important to CRT analysis (Tate, 1997). As part of my data analysis and meaning-making process, I mapped the historical practices of education onto the experiences described by student participants. In this section, I present my analysis to describe the institution's role in shaping these experiences. This is important because student affairs leadership commonly ignore the institutional contributions to whiteness and inequity.

### Learning as Objective Process

One way that institutions support views held by individual White students is through positioning learning as an objective process (Wagner, 2005). Since educators often view learning as simply a cognitive process of taking in information—distanced from the sensing, emotional, and spiritual self (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010)—students are rarely asked within educational institutions to consider how the learning process may negatively impact the participants in the classroom and/or work against goals of equity and liberation (Ellsworth, 1989). When students are focused on learning content they are not necessarily attending to relationships with fellow students who have been impacted by what occurs in the classroom (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). By focusing on objective learning, educators often avoid addressing relationships and power dynamics in the classroom, which contribute to marginalization and exclusion.

### Content and Curriculum

The students' expectations to contribute and be centered in the classroom reflected how whiteness has been historically centered in educational institutions' content and curriculum (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Gillborn, 2005). Centering of whiteness has been instantiated in school texts privileging monocultural goals of White leaders who established the United States (Spring, 1997). Whiteness is evident in student affairs preparation when multiculturalism continues to be additive to conventional curriculum (Patton et al., 2007). These institutional processes show White students that they are centered. In addition to protecting whiteness through content and curriculum, institutions have a history of exclusion.

### Exclusion in Higher Education

Participants in this study have had their right to exclude demonstrated by the institution because exclusion is the status quo in higher education. Institutions of higher education have

a history of being *selective* (Shavit, Arum, Gamoran, & Menachem, 2007), which is a code word for *exclusive*. Exclusion is reflected in student body populations, lack of faculty diversity, and curriculum and program selection (Eckel & King, 2004). Graduate admission policies (Alon & Tienda, 2007), like using GRE scores as a primary admission criteria even though questions remain about race bias (Kaufman, 2010), are one method of exclusion. There are also less marked ways that exclusion occurs.

Exclusion occurs through faculty and students having lower expectations of racially minoritized students (Gildersleeve, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) traced the historical exclusion from legally segregated schools, to de facto segregation resulting from housing discrimination and economic disparities, and finally to low expectations of minoritized students. Also, racially minoritized people may feel out of place within student affairs programs through the discounting of their experiences (Osei-Kofi, Shahjahan, & Patton, 2010). Exclusion occurs through overtly racist interactions, but institutions also perpetuate it through allowing microaggressions, which are subtle, often nonverbal interactions that devalue people and have a significant cumulative effect after continual abuse (Solórzano, 1998). Comments that may seem innocuous like “Where are you from?,” “You are so articulate,” and “That person didn’t mean anything” all can be microaggressions (Cullen, 2008). Institutions that fail to require training of educators and students about whiteness and privilege perpetuate microaggressions and other behaviors that perpetuate exclusion. It is not only what individuals say but also the messages from institutions that impact the institutional context, as discussed in the next section.

### **Institutional Discourse on Diversity**

Institutions often reinforce whiteness as property in their discourse about inclusive learning environments. Iverson’s (2007) discourse analysis revealed that while institutions say that they want to be more inclusive, their approaches and discourse about racially minoritized students reflected views of them as outsiders and put little effort into real inclusion. The institutional discourse centering a desire for inclusivity parallels the participants’ mantra they were ready to learn. Both focus on the dominant group’s goodness and ignore the impact on racially minoritized persons. Milem et al. (2005) argued that institutions have much longer histories of exclusion than inclusion and these histories must be considered in institutional messages.

I included this section about institutions because an analysis of student interviews alone mistakenly places the responsibility for working towards equity solely on students. While White students do have responsibility to work towards equity, educators also have a responsibility for shaping institutional and program-level policies and practices.

## Implications and Recommendations

The findings led to several implications and recommendations for student affairs preparation policy and practice. One implication is to understand learning as a process wrought with practices of protecting whiteness. First, I describe implications and recommendations regarding learning. Students protected whiteness even while taking a course where they were asked to learn about White privilege. If faculty, staff, and students who often proclaim that inclusion is a priority want to change the classroom environment to be more inclusive, first, we must identify processes of whiteness and work actively to change them.

White students, staff, and faculty should (a) approach learning about race with an openness to others' experiences (Kivel, 2002), (b) approach learning about whiteness in particular as an ongoing journey that must be actively pursued beyond graduate school (Landreman, Edwards, Balón, & Anderson, 2008), and (c) place individual experiences within a historical, educational context of White supremacy (Lincoln, 1991; Osei-Kofi et al., 2010). White educators and students can examine whiteness by raising their awareness of power and privilege operating in the classroom by noting patterns of whose experiences are validated in the classroom and whose are challenged (Patton et al., 2007). Educators need to do this not only at the individual classroom level but also from the systemic and historical perspectives. When a White student uses the example of a biracial man talking more than others as evidence of equity, the White student should also place this individual experience within the context of the whole institution (e.g., Are biracial men on campus typically experiencing such privileges?) and society.

The classroom should also support racially minoritized people in deconstructing processes of whiteness and monitoring internalized oppression. Systems of dominance work to socialize both dominant and minoritized group members to reject marginalized ways of being (Freire, 2000). Internalized oppression can materialize within racially minoritized persons as judgments of oneself or others for not aligning with the status quo (Freire, 2000). Talking openly about the status quo, pressures to conform to standards, the risks involved in challenging the status quo from a subordinated position, and the value of solidarity can help students and instructors resist internalized oppression.

The exclusion described by students points to another implication for student affairs preparation learning environments. Studies suggest that relationships with diverse peers are correlated with positive attitudes and behaviors related to race and equity (Bowman, 2010; Laird, 2005). Efforts in the classroom should be focused in part on cultivating and deepening relationships across race. This may require changes in admissions policies to attract, recruit, and provide financial resources for a diverse student body; and it also may require more attention to community building and interpersonal interactions in the classroom.

As individuals pursue self-evaluation and build connections with others, they should also reconceptualize the learning process. For example, participants were most concerned with learning content, but the learning process has emotional and spiritual effects on students and faculty that must be addressed if equity and community are desired (Adams et al., 2007; Rendón, 2009; Shahjahan, 2010). Rendón (2009) offered *Sentipensante Pedagogy* as a way of learning. She advocates for a knowing where emotions, experiences, relationships, and contemplative practice nurture learning. Additionally, activists Preskill and Brookfield (2009) advocate for “learning as a way of leading” to be used “especially when the status quo demeans people or fails to give them opportunities to employ fully their experiences and talents” (p. 4). Their pedagogy suggests that individuals can challenge the status quo of inequity when they (a) are open with others; (b) share resources and knowledge; (c) acknowledge the talents of every person, especially the most marginalized; and (d) balance individual and group needs (Preskill & Brookfield, 2009). Calling upon different ways of being in the classroom has potential for changing the status quo of marginalization in the classroom (Osei-Kofi et al., 2010).

Student affairs professionals and faculty can ensure power and privilege are brought up in discussions about policy and practice. For example, leaders should examine who has access to application information, who has informal knowledge (e.g., who to talk with and where to find forms), and who is provided supports (e.g., validation, financial aid, mentoring) necessary to access and progress through student affairs programs. Addressing these questions of power and privilege requires investment of resources including time and money.

While individuals may not believe they harbor discriminatory attitudes towards racially minoritized people, the nature of institutionalized racialization is that policies and practices perpetuate inequities within institutions (Phillips, 2011). Educators should question the role of race in student affairs program admissions, definitions of professionalism expected of student affairs professionals, and normalized ways of interacting (Patton et al., 2007). Program leaders should consider the impacts on racially minoritized people who need to spend energy seeking connections and counterspaces to sustain themselves, strategize, and share resources (Patton et al., 2007; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Infusing issues of social justice throughout the curriculum is another strategy for challenging whiteness (Banks, 2004) meaning that courses on evaluation, administration, and the law all should address the issues instead of relying on a singular course. Unfortunately, faculty members, largely White (Christian, heterosexual) men, protect their right to design their courses according to their experiences, which may not be inclusive of experiences and epistemologies of racially minoritized students (Patton et al., 2007). For example, an instructor may have only had experiences with teaching the history of White people in higher education (likely since many of the texts are written from perspectives of White people) and may not do the research necessary to include the perspectives of higher education expressed by racially minoritized historians

and educators. Training for faculty, staff, and students on the importance of including multiple perspectives and valuing participation that is commonly marginalized must become a priority of student affairs preparation programs to support equitable curriculum development and student affairs practice. Excuses for neglecting this type of training for all faculty and staff reflect institutional racism. Training may include strategies for hiring racially minoritized faculty; addressing dominance and oppression in professional practice; and instituting accountability systems for working towards equity (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Additionally, student affairs preparation programs must conduct ongoing climate assessments and tie results into accountability systems in order to transform themselves (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

## Conclusion

By examining the educational context, the framework of CRT illuminated examples of how institutions have demonstrated whiteness as property. In order to work towards equity, individuals and institutions need to identify, mark, and discuss the significant impact of whiteness in the student affairs preparation programs, policies, and practices. Policies and practices need to be modified. This study adds three things to existing literature: (a) examples demonstrating whiteness as property in a contemporary student affairs preparation program, (b) ways to conceptualize how whiteness has been protected in education, and (c) examples of institutions demonstrating whiteness as property. Faculty and students in student affairs preparation programs must become aware of whiteness as property and work to interrupt its impact on the educational experience.

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