TEXAS EDUCATION REVIEW

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TEXAS EDUCATION REVIEW

FALL 2018 EDITORIAL BOARD

Welcome to Volume 7, Issue 1 (Fall 2018) of the *Texas Education Review* (*TxEd*).

This issue contains three manuscripts, including: a qualitative study of perceptions of sense of belonging among Latino male students enrolled at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Texas (Allen et al.); a teacher's reflection on both teacher recruitment and cultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences between teachers and students in bilingual classrooms in Texas (Batista-Morales); and, lastly, an examination of how Black girls are impacted by discriminatory policies and practices in a Texas school district (Caldera).

In addition to these pieces, we feature three critical forums curated by *TxEd* editorial board members. The first forum, edited by Dwuana Bradley, examines the effects of coercive isomorphism and state policy on Texas regional comprehensive universities. In the second critical forum, Chelseaia Charran presents pieces that examine education and employment of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. The last critical forum, edited by Rebecca Gavillet, details experiential learning in higher education, including relevant practices, frameworks, and program designs.

Conexiones: Latino Males' Sense of Belonging in Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Latino Males' Sense of Belonging in Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Men of color encounter a myriad of educational challenges as they traverse the K-16 educational pipeline (Lee & Ransom, 2011; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). Among Latino[1] males, postsecondary enrollment data demonstrates a critical achievement gap in college enrollment and degree attainment. For example, Latino males remain the least represented gender and racial group in postsecondary education, with only 29% of all 18- to 24-year olds enrolled in degree granting institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Further, once enrolled, research shows first-time, full-time Latino males earn fewer college degrees compared to their Latina counterparts, 49% and 57%, respectively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), which are institutions established prior to 1964 with the purpose of educating African Americans (US Department of Education, 2011), could be an ideal location for Latino male student success because of their historic mission and leadership in serving traditionally underserved student populations (Jewell, 2002). Research attributes positive student outcomes, including greater academic achievement, student engagement, and persistence for African American students enrolled in HBCUs (Bridges, Kinzie, Nelson Laird, & Kuh, 2008; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Fleming, 2001; Hirt, Amelink, McFeeters, & Strayhorn, 2008; Kim, 2002; Kim & Conrad, 2006). Furthermore, previous research demonstrates African American males, in particular, fare well at HBCUs because the entire university community, such as faculty, administrators, peers, and staff, serves as a conduit to social capital, which helps to facilitate their retention and persistence (Palmer & Gasman, 2008). Even when African American men are underprepared for college, HBCUs can act as a transformative space that promotes persistence and success (Palmer,

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[1]For this study, we use the term "Latino" when specifically focused on male students. We use the term "Latinx" as a gender neutral and more inclusive term referring to the Hispanic community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), Hispanics include "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race" (p. 2). We only use the word "Hispanic" when it is required by historical context, federal classification, or direct quotes.

Davis, Maramba, 2010). Yet, while few studies have examined the unique experiences of Latinx students attending HBCUs (i.e., Allen, 2016; Allen & Stone, 2016; Palmer, Maramba, Allen, & Goings, 205), research focusing specifically on the experiences of Latino male students at HBCUs is uncharted territory.

Additional research on Latino males at HBCUs is particularly critical since Latino males outnumber Latina female students in HBCUs (Turner, 2006). Thus, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore Latino male students' sense of belonging within two four-year Texas HBCUs. The following research questions guided this study: (1) How do Latino males describe their sense of belonging in HBCUs?; (2) what individuals, relationships, and experiences promote sense of belonging for Latino males enrolled in HBCUs?; and (3) what individuals, relationships, and experiences hinder sense of belonging for Latino males enrolled in HBCUs?

Literature Review

Sense of belonging is informed by psychological and sociological theories of literature and places emphasis on person-environment fit (Johnson et al., 2007). Strayhorn (2012) indicated that while sense of belonging is important to life, it is more important to college students given where they are in their personal development. Hurtado and Carter (1997) highlighted that "sense of belonging contains both cognitive and affective elements in that the individual's cognitive evaluation of his or her role in relation to the group results in affective response" (p. 328). Building on this work, Strayhorn (2012) argued that sense of belonging is particularly important for students who often feel at the margins of the institutions, such as racial and ethnic minorities, low-income, women, first-generation, and students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender.

Latinx Students' Sense of Belonging

Prior research has mostly focused on sense of belonging perceptions within the Latinx community at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). These studies found Latinx students' sense of belonging was influenced by the academic and social aspects of their collegiate experiences as well as their perceptions of campus climate. Research shows Latinx students benefit from student-faculty interactions, which can help facilitate sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Maestas, Vaquera, & Zehr, 2007; Nuñez, 2009). The amount of time spent studying and students' GPA also influenced the student's commitment to the institution (Strayhorn, 2008). Hurtado and Carter (1997) found that discussing course content with other students outside of class and tutoring other students also had a positive impact on students' sense of belonging. Finally, scholars Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005), found academic support programs and discussing course material with peers outside of class promote a strong sense of belonging. Taken together, these studies demonstrated that academic engagement was critical to Latinx students' sense of belonging.

Further, social engagement through campus participation in on- and off-campus activities, including student organizations and community service, has promoted a sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Nuñez, 2009). In their study at a Hispanic Serving Institution, Maestas, Vasquez, and Zehr (2007) found participating in co-curricular activities positively influenced Latinx students' sense of belonging. Nuñez (2009) reported Latinx students may develop a sense of belonging through their relationships with a smaller peer group within their institution yet may not be as involved in the larger campus community.

The institutional climate, which is "the historical, structural, perceptual, and behavioral dimensions of the college environment" (Hurtado, 1994, p. 22), is also critical in promoting or hinder-

ing a strong sense of belonging among Latinx students. Latinx students are more likely to persist when they perceive the institution to be focused on student concerns and needs (Hurtado, 1994). Hurtado and Carter (1997) reported negative effects of an unwelcoming campus racial climate on Latinx students' sense of belonging and recommended institutions work towards fully understanding and integrating these students into campus experiences. Latinx students' perceptions of the campus climate are primarily influenced by their collegiate experiences (i.e., positive interactions with diverse peers, living on- or off-campus, or enrolling in a diversity course) (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Maestas et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2008), which subsequently affect their adjustment and connection to the institution (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996). When Latinx students encounter a hostile campus environment, they successfully navigate the institution through community building (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009), identifying strategies for changing the campus (Hurtado, 1994), and building relationships with peers and mentors (Pérez & Taylor, 2016).

Sense of Belonging within HBCUs

Research has shown that minority students in general and African American students specifically attend HBCUs because they believe that they will experience a sense of belonging (Gasman, 2008; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). This sense of belonging manifests in African American students feeling connected to their roots and to the African American culture (Freeman, 1999). Previous research also highlights the nurturing relationships African American students develop with their faculty members (Allen, 1992; Berger & Milem, 2000; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002), which helps promote a caring, family-like environment. Moreover, a litany of research has shown that this sense of belonging for African American students at HBCUs helps to foster a supportive, affirming, and nurturing environment; all of which facilitates African American students' self-efficacy, racial pride, psychological wellness, academic development, and persistence (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Kim, & Conrad, 2006).

Despite this, a paucity of research indicates positive and negative perceptions of sense of belonging among non-African American students enrolled in HBCUs. In particular, in a recent study of 12 students—6 of whom were Asian American and 6 of whom were Latinx—participants reported experiencing various forms of racial microaggressions, or an unintentionally discriminatory or prejudicial act, that created an uncomfortable campus climate (Palmer & Maramba, 2015). However, another study revealed the positive interactions with family members and peers who attended HBCUs, who offered academic and interpersonal validation, which promoted Latinx students' connections to their institution (Allen, 2016). The present study addresses a critical gap in the literature regarding Latino males' sense of belonging in HBCUs.

Conceptual Framework

According to Strayhorn (2012), a sense of belonging is a basic human need that influences thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and it is often described as a sense of connectedness. Students who have a strong sense of belonging feel they matter, and their presence is valued. A strong sense of belonging improves student retention and supports degree completion because students feel cared about within their campus community (Strayhorn, 2012). Promoting a sense of belonging is especially critical for traditionally underrepresented college students, and, specifically focusing on Latino males, can shed light on how to best foster connections between students, faculty, staff, and the overall campus.

Sense of belonging is composed of seven core elements (Strayhorn, 2012). This definition maintains sense of belonging 1) is a basic human need, 2) is a fundamental motive that drives human

behavior, 3) takes on a heightened importance in certain contexts, 4) is related to mattering, 5) is affected by the intersection of social identities, 6) engenders additional positive outcomes, and 7) must be continually satisfied while changing as circumstances, conditions, and contexts change. In the context of college, "sense of belonging refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, respected, valued by, and important" (Strayhorn, 2012, p. 17) to the campus community, faculty, and/or peers. This definition is consistent with the ways in which other scholars have defined various tenets of sense of belonging and served as the framework for this study (Johnson et al., 2007; Nora, 2004).

Methods

This qualitative, phenomenological study explored the lived experiences and perceptions of sense of belonging among ten Latino male undergraduate students enrolled in two, four-year HBCUs in Texas. Through interviews with the participants, this study offers insights into the experiences, interactions, and individuals that influenced their sense of belonging at HBCUs. This study's epistemological approach was anchored in the constructivist tradition to construct knowledge, understanding, and meaning through human interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Site Selection

This study was part of a larger research project examining the first-year experiences and perceptions of sense of belonging among Latina/o college students enrolled in two Texas HBCUs, Smith University and Howell College (pseudonyms). We utilized purposeful sampling, which allowed us to intentionally select participants based on pre-selected criteria (Patton, 2002). The two institutional sites were selected because they sought to increase their enrollment of Latina/o students through recruitment efforts, scholarships, and community programs. As a result of these efforts, Latinx students represented 20% of the student body at Smith and 16% of the study body at Howell. Latino males represented between 40-70% of the entire Latinx community at these institutions, but the majority of Smith and Howell students identified as African American.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Students were eligible to participate in the broader study if they a) self-identified as Latinx and b) were currently enrolled as a sophomore, junior, or senior. With the help of on-campus administrators, we contacted eligible Latinx students via email. A total of 20 students responded and were eligible to participate in the study. For this study in particular, we selected only the male student transcripts (n=10) to explore their unique experiences and perceptions of sense of belonging. In the end, we had ten participants, which is line with prior phenomenological studies (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

All of the participants in this study identified as Mexican American males. Four participants were from Smith University and six students were from Howell College. Half (n=5) of the participants in this study were in their junior year of college, and the other students included sophomores (n=3) and seniors (n=2). Academic majors included fine arts, business, natural sciences, liberal arts, and education. Nine participants shared they were first-generation college students. Most participants (n=7) lived off-campus, and half (n=5) worked off-campus. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality.

Data Collection

Data were collected through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews (Maxwell, 2005) at the participants' respective campus. Prior to beginning the interview, we explained the purpose of the study and answered any questions. Participants then completed the informed consent document to begin the interviews. The interviews were scheduled at a time and place convenient for the participants.

We followed an abbreviated version of Seidman's (1998) three-step approach to interviewing. Although Seidman recommends a three-part interview, two interviews may be conducted to accommodate participants' schedules and time constraints. Therefore, each participant was interviewed twice, and each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes. The first interview focused on the students' life histories and social, cultural, and educational experiences leading up to their matriculation in an HBCU. For example, we asked participants the following questions: (1) *Tell me about your educational experiences in high school; (2) how did you first decide you were going to pursue a college degree?; (3) how did you learn about HBCUs?;* and *(4) who helped you apply for and enroll in this HBCU*?

The second interview asked participants to share their personal reflections on their academic and social experiences and perceptions of sense of belonging upon matriculation at their respective HBCU. Questions during this interview included: (1) *Tell me about your relationships with your faculty and peers*; (2) *what has helped you feel like you belong at this institution*?; and (3) *what experiences, if any, have made it difficult for you to feel connected to this institution*?

Data Analysis

The audio of each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. We then listened to the audio recordings to check the transcripts for accuracy. After confirming the accuracy of the transcripts, we began to review the transcripts, keeping in mind our research questions and Strayhorn's (2012) definition of sense of belonging. We first employed open coding by line-by-line analysis of each transcript to identify emerging themes and subthemes among the participants' responses (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We then used axial coding to independently and then collaboratively determine which codes could be grouped or combined together with related themes and subthemes. We discussed our findings until consensus was reached. Finally, we employed selective coding to develop the overarching themes and to create a detailed account of the participants' perceptions of sense of belonging in HBCUs.

Trustworthiness

We employed several strategies to promote the trustworthiness of our data. First, we sent the students their transcripts to review and edit. These member checks helped to ensure the participants' voices were accurately represented. We also debriefed with researchers (Creswell & Poth, 2017) who are experts on Latinx college students and HBCUs. These conversations provided us with the opportunity to discuss our data and preliminary findings.

Limitations

There are two primary limitations for this study. First, the number of participants and selected institutions sites could be perceived as a potential limitation. To address this limitation, we obtained rich, thick data to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the participants' lived experiences. Future research should expand upon this study to include additional research sites, both inside and

outside the state of Texas. Second, this study included participants who successfully persisted through their first year in college, and it does not offer insight into the experiences of Latino males who withdrew or transferred to another institution. Additional research should investigate the experiences of Latino males who depart from HBCUs to understand the obstacles to their sense of belonging and persistence.

Findings

Two themes emerged regarding what helped or hindered Latino males' sense of belonging in HBCUs. We describe the individuals, relationships, and experiences that shaped and informed their perceptions of mattering.

Forming Connections

The Latino males in this study identified two key influences in their connection to their HBCU. First, supportive relationships with faculty members helped them feel they mattered. In addition, an openness to diversity and a willingness to engage diverse peers created avenues to developing a sense of belonging.

Faculty. The majority of the participants in this study emphasized the integral role of faculty in promoting their sense of belonging. Students described their professors as relatable and personable. Peter, a junior majoring in education, shared that his faculty members "were friendly" and "by the end of the first week, they knew our names." To him, that was "pretty cool," and he liked "that people take the time to get to know who you are" at his HBCU. Levi, a sophomore student majoring in business, mentioned his professor's similar, friendly approach, in that it helped students feel like they mattered:

> As soon as I got there, everybody's friendly, you know, they introduced themselves. They told me like what department they worked for and if I ever needed something just go to them in case it was something related to their department.

Michael, a sophomore student who was married with two children, emphasized the assistance he received from HBCU faculty members. He recalled how his professors exceeded his expectations and were notably different from the professors with whom he previously interacted at the local community college:

> From my experience from (community college) and here I know that here the professors, they'll help you out. Like, if you don't understand something, they'll actually be, they'll step aside and try to help you out or they'll look for a time after class to help you and from my experience at (community college), I mean, it's like a big university. They just go in the class, talk, if you got it fine, if not, I mean, that's it. I mean, so if, if you need that little extra help this is the place for you.

To Michael, professors at the HBCU seemed to be passionate about students learning and understanding of course material. By comparing his experiences at the community college, Michael illustrated that professors at the HBCU were more concerned about and interested in students' academic well-being. Receptive faculty members helped Latino males feel they connected to the institution and fostered close personal relationships.

Overall, Latino males in this study positively responded to their professors' strategies for promoting success. As a result, they often visited their professors during office hours and met with them outside of class. Fernando, who majored in business, shared he connected with "the majority of all the teachers," and as a result, he felt he could "actually go to their office and talk to them."

Levi shared, "I could always go to their office hours, and they would like it." He explained these interactions facilitated his ability to get "pretty close to all of my professors." Mark, a junior student athlete, similarly explained he valued the "one-on-one's" with his professors. He felt "you can talk to your professors at any time" and "they'll talk to you, and they'll work with you," which he perceived to be a distinct quality of his university. This genuine interest and extra effort exhibited by HBCU professors helped Latino males feel like their institution was home away from home.

Openness to diversity. The students' connections with peers was shaped by their pre-college experiences with diverse communities. We found pre-college experiences with African Americans, in particular, shaped the students' personal perceptions of the institution's social context. For instance, Michael, Ernest (sophomore student who worked and lived off campus), Mark, and Abe (senior majoring in liberal arts) described extensive cross-racial interactions in their personal and academic life and how their personal experiences with African Americans in church, family life, or school provided a context for relating to their new campus culture. These experiences led the participants to view their new college environment as an opportunity to further learn from different cultures.

As an example, Mark entered the university with an openness towards interacting and developing relationships with their African American peers. Mark shared, "You know, we all have different backgrounds. We all come from different places, and that's what college is about, you know. Interacting with people from different cultures." According to Mark, it was expected that students enroll in college with the expectation to interact with individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, and traditions. Therefore, according to him, students should anticipate encountering different backgrounds and perspectives and develop an accepting and welcoming attitude toward their peers. An understanding of customs as well as familiarity with HBCUs allowed Latino males to connect with peers and fit in with the campus culture.

Obstacles to Belonging

Three key challenges to developing a sense of belonging emerged. First, students of Latinx Greek Letter Organizations shared their frustration in finding on campus representation in campus Greek councils. In addition, the lack of representation in institutional events or marketing created obstacles to belonging. Finally, off-campus work responsibilities led Latino males to question their connections to the institutions.

Finding a space. Latino males' involvement in student organizations highlighted their desire to create a cultural community within the HBCU but also created some challenges with intergroup relationships. Five of the participants actively engaged in on-campus activities through team sports and student organizations. On-campus organizations can create a space for students to find a sense of community and belonging. However, some participants in this current study shared an obstacle that emerged when they sought to establish a Latinx-based fraternity. Once chartered, the Latino fraternity was placed under the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), a council for historically African American Greek Letter Organizations. As a result, Fernando felt his fraternity was not valued: "[My] organization is, you know, we're in the NPHC, so technically we're like the, we're in the lowest, you know, the lowest of the stack, so…other, other organizations get that, priority first before we do."

Fernando felt his organization was "the lowest of the stack" because the organization was unable to vote or fully participate in business meetings. Further, Fernando recognized the organiza-

tion's operations were different from other NPHC organizations, and he believed the campus administrators did not acknowledge the distinguishing characteristics of a Latino fraternity. He shared,

> Like two years ago, that they were going to try to make a, [fraternal council] for Latinos. Uh, but I haven't heard anything from that. They were working on it, but how can they work on it, they don't really know how a Latino organization runs? Cause we're way different than they are. How can you, how can you have the person running the NPHC meeting try to figure out rules and regulations for the Latinos? You know, you can't, 'cause we don't work the same.

The Latino fraternity was included in NPHC meetings in hopes of fostering relationships and campus involvement. However, the national structure of NPHC omitted this group from fully contributing to meetings or programs. Without a vote or the ability to contribute to council business, the Latino male fraternal organization's voice was limited, which led Fernando to feel his group was not as important to the university.

Lack of cultural representation. Mark highlighted his frustration when he researched his HBCU and did not see Latinx students represented in campus publications or websites. He wanted his school to include more Latinx students in its print and online presence to recognize the diversity on campus. He stated,

> I'm not trying to change the school or nothing like that, you know, because I still want it to be an HBCU, you know, I'm really proud of that, that it's an HBCU, but, um, you know, just to put more familiar faces on there.

Mark asserted that he was "proud" to be attending a HBCU because of its dynamics. He felt comfortable with the way the school was organized in terms of its racial and cultural representations. However, his wish was that the school should make it more evident to its constituents and prospective students that this place was serving Latinx students as well.

Another participant, Greg, expressed his desire to see more representation of Latinx students in campus-wide events. For example, Greg suggested the HBCU host events to recognize Hispanic culture on-campus. He said,

> I know we have like a big emphasis like on Black History Month and MLK Day, obviously because we're a Black university…At the same time, I wouldn't mind seeing maybe a week dedicated to Hispanic Week or something like that.

Even though Greg recognized the importance of celebrating events honored by African American students because he was on an HBCU campus, he also realized that it was time the institution dedicated occasions to specifically celebrate Hispanic history and culture since this ethnic group gained significant representation on campus.

Finally, Abe wished to see Latinx students more integrated in the whole college culture. He recalled rarely seeing "anything, like, just for the Latinos." Abe recognized his institution did make attempts to incorporate Latinx students into the greater campus community; however, he was concerned Latinx students were not as prominent as African American students. Abe had prior experience with African American students, but he perceived cultural campus programming as an opportunity "that would actually help, you know, with the other (Latinx) students that are going to this school."

Work responsibilities. Five of the participants had off-campus employment, which limited their on-campus engagement and proved to be a key obstacle in fostering a sense of belonging. Instead of living on campus or participating in on-campus events, these Latino males commuted to campus to fulfill their academic responsibilities. For example, Peter shared he was offered the op-

portunity to live in an on-campus residence hall, but his work commitments prevented him from accepting the housing assignment. He explained,

> They gave me a dorm but, I don't know. It just, it's hard because I have two jobs and my, one of my jobs is in North (City) and the other one is in Downtown (City). It's really hard for me to be commuting every day, and it's going to cost me too much money.

In an effort to save money and time, Peter decided to live at home with his immediate family, which prevented him from living on-campus and becoming fully immersed in the campus culture and environment.

The students' work responsibilities directly affected their academic engagement. Fernando was "always working," which limited his ability to thoughtfully complete his coursework. He shared, "I don't really have the time to be studying so whatever's turned in, I gotta do like two hours before." Fernando explained his decision to maintain multiple positions in order to financially contribute to his family because his dad lost his job. He said, "At that point, I was like, I'm ready go to home and help my family. I didn't know how, but, you know, I had to find a way." Thus, his work requirements also limited his ability to fully engage his faculty members or coursework.

Confronted with the pressure to financially support or contribute to their family, Latino males in this study acquired one or more off-campus jobs. These positions paid more than on-campus employment, but they drew Latino males away from campus, thereby disrupting opportunities to connect with peers and professors, which could foster a sense of belonging.

Discussion

The findings of this study build on the limited knowledge that exists about the experiences of Latino males at HBCUs. More specifically, the findings address the particular academic, social, and financial aspects of developing a sense of belonging through the eyes of Latino males navigating the HBCU environment. By centering the perceptions of Latino males within this context, we are able to better understand their experiences and what they perceive could help or hinder their sense of belonging at HBCUs.

First, on an academic level, the participants expressed positive experiences with faculty. The dedication of their faculty enabled the participants to feel like they mattered to the institution and that their learning was a priority for faculty. This finding builds upon prior research highlighting the learning community offered by HBCUs (Allen, 1992; Allen, 2016; Berger & Milem, 2000; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010). While this study offered a qualitative perspective on Latino males' interactions with faculty members, future studies should quantitatively examine their insights for generalizable findings across HBCUS. The student-faculty interactions Latino males experienced at an HBCU campus created avenues for participants to initiate help-seeking behaviors. This finding distinguishes the experiences of Latino males at HBCUs from previous research that found Latino males' expressions of pride and fear prevented them from seeking academic support (Saenz, Bukoski, Lu, & Rodriguez, 2013). HBCU faculty and student affairs professions can make effort to educate Latinx students about academic-support services available on campus and encourage their utilization of the services upon their initial arrival. Future research can explore the help-seeking patterns of Latino males at other HBCUs to further understand their approach to coursework and relationships with faculty members. In addition, quantitative studies examining faculty-student interactions can offer generalizable strategies and approaches to engaging Latino male students at HBCUs.

Socially, the participants described mixed feelings about their interactions with African American peers, both individually and within group settings. On one hand, participants felt that the HBCU environment was friendly and welcoming. A few participants also shared that cross-racial

interactions were a welcomed opportunity since they anticipated college would create avenues for interacting with diverse peers. The HBCU environment, according to them, welcomed and valued diverse ethnic backgrounds and helped them to feel comfortable on campus. On the other hand, some participants felt that student organizations themselves sometimes encouraged segregation from their African American peers. This finding is compelling participants already felt a sense of belonging due to HBCU's friendly environment and being involved in co-curricular activities (e.g., Maestas, Vasquez, & Zehr, 2007), but they also wished that there could be increased interaction with their African American peers on campus. This relates back to the effect that social identities can have on sense of belonging, another core element presented by Strayhorn (2012). As a result, HBCU student affairs staff can consider organizing formal and informal events that celebrate racial and cultural diversity and promote inter-racial/cultural communications. Future research should examine cross-cultural interactions between African American and Latino male students, in particular, and the larger campus community, in general.

Finally, financial support also proved to be a challenge for Latino males in this study. Similar to prior research highlighting cultural norms and expectations of Latino males to work (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008), this study found a number of the participants were faced with the burden of needing to financially support or contribute to their family's expenses. These responsibilities were particularly challenging for those who also had to commute every day to campus, and they were further confounded when students had more than one job. Because of their limited time on campus, participants were negatively influenced. To help Latino males overcome this obstacle to sense of belonging, HBCUs can create and/or extend opportunities for on-campus employment and integrate into academic program such activities that connect Latino males to the institution while they are on campus for classes. Additional scholarly work should address the influence of financial aid, scholarships, grants, and work responsibilities on Latino male students and their perceptions of sense of belonging or persistence in college and also consider the institutional context (e.g., HBCU, PWI, or HSI).

Conclusion

Historically Black Colleges and Universities are in a unique position in history. Having educated African American students for over 100 years, they are on the cusp of change as a result of national demographic shifts. The emergence of more Latinx students presents opportunities for HBCUs to recruit diverse students, but these strategies will only prove successful if students persist towards their degree. Degree completion is particularly compelling for Latino males, as they remain among the most underrepresented student populations in higher education. This study offers insight into how Latino male students perceive their role on two HBCU campuses and offers potential strategies for HBCUs to help increase the sense of belonging felt by these men. Increasing the sense of belonging for Latino males on HBCU campuses should lead to a variety of positive outcomes for these students and reinforce a mutually beneficial relationship between these vital institutions of higher education and an emerging student population.

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The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Education Review
College of Education

When Caring Hurts:
"Foreign" Teachers in Texas Bilingual Classrooms

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"There are some things that are better left unspoken" (Carrillo, 2010, p. 74).

"¿Vamos a la carpeta maestra?" "Carpeta, carpeta." The teacher was puzzled, she wondered what her student meant. It had to be the three-ring binders they used to collect their best work; I mean that was the most feasible explanation. Instead, he approached the carpet with nothing but a 6-year-old's smile ready to conquer his first day of class. She could have kept quiet but instead decided to yell out "¡Oh, alfombra, sí, vamos a la alfombra!" That teacher was me. Skype had made it possible for a principal from a small East Austin elementary school to, inconspicuously, hire a Puerto Rican teacher who seemed had all the tools to conquer the Texan, bilingual classroom. After all, she spoke Spanish and was Latina. What else could a class of Mexican-American students need?

There are times when some teachers must bite their tongue. Times when they need to resist the temptation of correcting their students, even when it comes from the heart because you think *it is what's best for them*. Because we all know every loving teacher wants their students to go out into the world speaking "correctly." But, at what cost?

It wasn't until almost two years later when I was able to understand how wrong we both had been. It took a multitude of readings, lectures, and conversations in my doctoral program for me to realize my first-grade class had needed much more than a linguistic and – what seemed like – ethnic match. I finally understood how on that very first day of class I had invalidated my most brilliant student by correcting the only Spanish he knew, the one his mother and father had rightfully shared with him for his entire life, the one that echoed his home, complex socio-political past, and identity as a Mexican-American, simultaneous bilingual student.

This essay is about me, a former bilingual teacher, who like many was hired abroad, from Puerto Rico,[1] Spain and other Latin-American countries. However, if you are a teacher who speaks a different variety of their student's language, you will likely see yourself in my story. Maybe your students are like mine, Mexican-American and Central-American students whose daily linguistic interactions are sometimes puzzling and unfamiliar, or maybe your students speak Puerto Rican Spanglish up in New York; TexMex here in my new hometown, or African-American Vernacular English. Perhaps you see yourself in the principal that hired me or in the administrators that run the type of program that made it possible for me to come and teach in Central Texas. It is my hope this essay speaks to you as well.

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[1]Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth, I position Puerto Rican teachers as "culturally foreign" to the Mexican, Central American and Mexican-American cultures, histories, and experiences.

Setting the Stage

Bilingual Education

According to the most recent data made available by the Texas Education Agency (2018), Texas currently serves 18.8% of all English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States (U.S.). The same report positions Texas and Nevada competing for the second highest rates of participation in ELL programs in the nation. The majority of these students speak Spanish at home— 908,304 in pre-school to the twelfth grade to be exact.

The Bilingual Education Act (BEA; Title VII of The Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1968) set aside funding to support English Language Learners in U.S. schools for the first time ever. However, this funding was set aside for transitional bilingual programs where the end goal is to develop English as quickly as possible (Baker, 2011). Under the No Child Left Behind Act (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2001), the BEA was eliminated and replaced with the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act 7 (NCLB, 2001). As evidenced by its name, this act was completely focused on developing English proficiency. In the most recent federal government education act, the, Every Student Succeeds Act (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015), the focus continues to be on English language proficiency and there is no mention of bilingual education

At the state level here in Texas, bilingual education carries a long legacy. Beginning in the 1800's, communities engaged in early forms of bilingual education in Spanish, Czech, German and other languages (Blanton, 2004). English-only policies however have come and gone throughout the decades, yet entire generations have been deprived from their language and have experienced unequal facilities, segregation, and unfair grade placement (Powers, 2008). Throughout these English-only policies and ideologies, the Spanish speaking community has shown resistance (San Miguel & Valencia, 1998) and bilingual education continues to live on today. Although these federal and state mandates only require some form of support for English learners, Texas prides itself in being one of the few states that offers bilingual education in primary schools and in a handful of middle and high schools.

In Texas, bilingual education looks different across districts and grades, depending on the number of ELLs enrolled in the school and federal and state policies. At the high school level, the state requires English as a Second Language (ESL) support that can look like an ESL pullout or push in support with the goal of developing the English language. In the lower levels, bilingual education programs can range between similar ESL programs, to Transitional models focused on English development, to Dual Language models that aim to develop bilingualism and biliteracy by the fifth grade (Baker, 2011). These policies, along with the limited number of bilingual educators who graduate each year, create an unsustainable need for bilingual educators in the state and result in large, urban districts to search abroad for qualified bilingual educators.

The solution seems simple, either hire teachers from Spain or carry out wide teacher recruitment fairs in the Commonwealth (not a country, not a state) of Puerto Rico. To bring Spanish teachers, Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Ministry of Education of Spain for the Texas-Spain Visiting International Teacher Program (VIT program) hold a memorandum of understanding (Isett, 2016). This program helps Spanish teachers acquire a work visa and come to the United States in exchange for three years of service. Puerto Rican teachers, moreover, are born U.S. citizens and hold at least two of the requirements to enter Texan bilingual classrooms: (a) Permission to work legally in the U.S., and (b) ability to speak the target language of Spanish.

Complications. There are however unexamined complexities in this process. Not all varieties of Spanish are the same and more importantly, some hold more power than others. Simply speaking the target language, does not mean a cultural and linguistic match. Teachers hired from abroad step into bilingual classrooms with close to no knowledge on the Mexican or Mexican-American cultural practices, home values, and linguistic repertoires. I know because I was one of those teachers. I was once a Puerto Rican teacher for a group of Mexican American children. Clueless about their history, their different paths to citizenship, linguistic practices, and home values I often imposed my experience on them. Without these understandings, I often substituted their lexical repertoire with mine, *a proper type of Spanish*, invalidating their home language and identities. I am not the only one. A recent visit to a fifth-grade classroom revealed similar sentiments felt by one of my dear Puerto Rican friends; a deep lack of knowledge of her students' culture(s), issues of miscommunication, and assumptions and feelings of guilt permeated our conversation. Additionally, in the new Trump Era where our Mexican, Mexican-American students, Central-American, and other immigrant and minority students face new attacks and experience old fears, Mexican American students are entitled to teachers who have at the minimum some knowledge of their home life and past experiences. Yet, we are thrown into the classroom with no training on these issues. School districts continue think it is okay to fill in the gap with teachers who can connect so little with their students. Could professional development on culture, Mexican-American Spanish, history, policies, and immigration fill in some gaps and strengthen these teachers' practices in the classroom?

Theoretical Framework

"So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity-I am my language" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 81).

I approach this piece from a triad of theories: Anzaldúa's Borderland Theories, Bourdieu's concept of Social Capital and Freire's Critical Pedagogy. Together, they frame my understandings of the issues presented in this piece around language, power and the discovery of my oppressive role in the bilingual classroom.

No one captures the sentiment of linguistic resistance as well as Gloria Anzaldúa in her essay *How to Tame a Wild Tongue* (1987). "We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration" referring to their Chicano tongue, "an orphan tongue…a bastard language" (p. 80). Anzaldúa makes a case for the need for Chicanos near the border to create a new tongue; the need to give voice to their unique identities. She draws on her experiences as both a student and a Chicana to voice how she often felt censured by teachers who expected her to speak English only and by other Latinas whose Spanish they positioned as correct without thinking of the immense historical, social, and political differences. Anzaldúa invites me to reflect: How often did I make my students feel like they spoke "poor Spanish?", how often does a Chicana feel uncomfortable around me, a Puerto Rican Latina, "afraid of [my] censorship?" Anzaldúa pushes me to acknowledge my role as an oppressive, censoring entity in my student's lives and pushes me to do things differently.

To accomplish this, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1991) offers a lens through which to analyze teacher-student linguistic interactions. He poses that all linguistic exchanges function in a similar way as the economic system of the time in that they have acquisive value, or what he calls linguistic capital. He argues that linguistic exchanges function as economic exchanges and utterances are both "signs of wealth" and more importantly to my work "signs of authority intended to be believed and obeyed" (p. 504). In Bourdieu's logic, utterances have value dependent on the symbolic market or the value placed on it that is most favorable to the interlocutor with most power. That power is not limited to language itself, but to societal roles such as employer-employee, and in this teacher-student context. In this circumstance, the teacher's Spanish from Spain or from Puerto Rico

can be positioned as more valuable than the student's TexMex or local Spanish variation. I argue that although teachers sit on a higher plane, they can choose to place equal value on both linguistic interactions, theirs and their students, thus breaking down the market Bourdieu describes. If they fail to attempt this, students will internalize the language of power – not theirs – and might decide to use an alternate register in hopes to increase their linguistic capital. It is here where I found myself, imposing my own Spanish on my students and thus becoming a type of oppressor as articulated by Freire (1970).

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher, laid the foundation for the critical pedagogy we know today. In his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) he positioned education as a political act. Freire taught reading and writing to his adult students though their social realities in the *barrios*, using concepts close to their daily experiences as members of the lower working class. Through this work, he theorized an invaluable body of concepts such as humanization, problemposing education, dialogue, and praxis. Today, Freire helps me articulate my position as the oppressor in my previous linguistic interactions with my Mexican-American students. These concepts provide a lens through which to look back at my experiences and of those teachers like me described in the literature and recognize our faults. It provides a framework for the teachers in my position to realize that the liberation- linguistic in this case- of the oppressed must be created with them and not for them in a space that values all linguistic registers, those of the oppressor and the oppressed.

Review of the Literature

Several researchers have pointed out the issues of hiring Latin American and Spanish teachers to fill in vacancies in bilingual classrooms (Cervantes, in press; Smith, 2002; Valdes, 2002). Although these teachers speak Spanish, the target language, difference in class, culture, and migratory experiences should send, in the least, a cautionary message to school districts, overseas recruiters, and school administrators. Valdez (2002,) notes that "teachers from Spain knew little about poor children from Mexico and even less about the racial context of the United States" (p. 193) when describing the experience of one western United States school district trying to fill in the gap. Cervantes (in press) argued that teachers from Latin America and Spain belong to a different social class, are highly educated, and are not able to identify with their marginalized students, often devaluing their language practices, experiences, and identities. An excerpt from a study by Smith (2001) on studying the role of community resources of the minority language students and their role in the classroom drives the situation deeper by pointing at the less tangible issue of language discourse and ideologies:

> After an English-dominant Mexican American student answered,
> "Hoy fuimos ala marqueta" (sic), Sra. Galarraga, a native of Puerto Rico,
> supplied the word "colmado"[store] and wrote on the board the sentence,
> "Hoy fuimos al colmado La Calle. " As she wrote, students spelled each
> word aloud in Spanish. Despite substitution of the non-Spanish form
> "marqueta" there was no discussion of the Caribbean term "colmado" or
> comparison with local terms for "market," such as "tiendita" or "mercado."
> (p. 387)

Smith (2001) termed the word "marqueta" as "non-Spanish" in the excerpt above and focused on the fact that the teacher in his study did not stop to discuss the term "colmado" as the Caribbean term. For me, this classroom instance holds a different importance. This episode leads me to hypothesize that foreign teachers could in fact position their own Spanish variation as superior than that of minority Mexican-American or Central American students. Henderson (2015), in her extensive literature review on language ideologies, stated that "a language ideology could operate con-

sciously or unconsciously, and it could be used to silence, empower or oppress" (p. 26). Is it possible that teachers of these different backgrounds will position their variation of Spanish as superior? Ideologies matter to students. For example, Martínez (2013) found in his study of the use of Spanglish in a language arts classroom with sixth graders in Los Angeles that students internalized dominant language ideologies when they were asked about their linguistic practices as they described English as proper and expressed deficits views on their Spanglish. Deficit views can negatively impact students' self-esteem and create a disconnect from in-school learning and out-of-school knowledge impacting student's achievement in school. Palmer (2009) argued that the underachievement of bilingual students could be linked to inequities in Dual Language classrooms where English dominant students and unaware teachers create an imbalance of conversational power. The cited research helps us understand the possible ideological battles present in the context addressed in this piece.

How We Got Here

Language mixing practices and ideologies are a complex issue discussed by many experts in the bilingual education field (e.g., Baker, 2006; Garcia & Wei, 2014; Poplack, 1980; Valdez, 1981). What is clear is that Texan bilingual classrooms are a result of a complex history between the United States and Mexico that naturally reflects on our children's linguistic practices. Mexico was invaded in the 1500's by the Spanish Crown, thus resulting in their use of their Spanish today, along with more than 60 indigenous languages. In 1848, Mexico lost 40 percent of their territory to the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe de Hidalgo (Toro-Morn, 2009), or what some communities describe as *"I did not cross the border, the border crossed me."* This event led children of Mexican descent as well as to their newly arrived amigos y primos, to develop their own language with the passage of time, "a living language…one that is not incorrect, [a language that] sprang out of the Chicano's need to identify [themselves] as a distinct people," (p. 77) or Chicano Spanish as described by Anzaldúa (1987). This is what we are left with, the children born of a relationship between Conquista and appropriation being educated by strangers to their suffering, history and language.

Why It Matters

Latinx students who speak Spanish as their home language continue to grow across Texas and the United States (NCES, 2015). It is imperative teachers learn how to draw on these student's linguistic and cultural resources. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), made the case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in the success of African American and other historically marginalized students. In her article *But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* (1995), she exemplifies the work of teachers of African-American students who successfully incorporate their students' culture and language into their lessons. Her review of the literature in that same article revealed that student's whose home language is used in the classroom are more likely to be successful academically and that the students whose home culture is present in the classroom do better, the case of White, middle class students. However, simply hiring a teacher that is a linguistic match does not guarantee success. Much more has to be done in preparing teachers for the task of a culturally and linguistically humanizing teaching experience.

Concluding Thoughts

Recommendations

Hiring teachers from foreign contexts to teach in Texan bilingual classrooms is a more complex issue that we can begin to untangle through this piece. Although there is existent research in the dual language field looking at inequalities between the English and Spanish languages (Cervantes-Soon, in press; Martinez, 2013; Palmer, 2009; Valdez, 1997), I invite researchers in the field to take a closer look at the dynamics between two Spanish registers as discussed in this paper. In the meantime, there are actionable steps all stakeholders can begin to take in the process of addressing the intricacies of "foreign" teachers leading out bilingual classrooms.

School principals, recruiters, and other district personal need to be aware of these complexities when hiring qualified teachers for our bilingual classrooms and take a clear stance on what they value most; (a) home grown teachers with rich experiences as Mexican and Central Americans growing up in our communities or (b) the idea of bringing what some deem correct, academic Spanish (Flores & Rosa, 2015) into the classroom without giving it much thought. When there are not enough home-grown teachers available to fill the need for teachers, comprehensive professional development on: (a) Mexican-American/Central-American history, (b) politics, (c) documented and undocumented migration, (d) cultural differences and (e) language usage could have an impact on preparing teachers from foreign contexts to better address this specific context.

Lastly, bilingual teachers themselves must have a pivotal role. Teachers can take a more active role in learning about their student's history, culture and language. Homegrown educators from the local communities can become leaders in their campuses supporting other teachers and administrators not aware of these issues. These same teachers are the most apt to collaborate with researchers in the field to develop instructional practices that support these theories.

Reflections

This was hard for me. Changing my views on the Spanish register that should be used as the means of instruction in bilingual elementary classrooms was an arduous process of reflection and ideological shifts. It was hard to cope with the feeling of not teaching my students academic Spanish all the time. Was I and am I taking tools away from my students? Don't they need it to survive in the future, get into college, and be ready for jobs that required bilingualism? I do not propose we take from students of color the opportunity of mastering both registers, their own and the language of power. I am asking teachers and researchers for ongoing reflection, constant acknowledgement of their complex sociopolitical history, and a fierce appreciation for who they are, how they speak, and what they bring.

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Suspendable and Expendable, Kicking Out and Throwing Away Black Girls: An Analysis of a School District's Policies and Practices

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Suspendable and Expendable, Kicking Out and Throwing Away Black[1] Girls: An Analysis of a School District's Policies and Practices

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"School discipline has been used as an instrument for spirit-murdering Black girls, and it is the intentional death of the Black spirit that can result in a lifelong imprisonment of the mind and soul even when there are no visual bars present" (Hines & Wilmot, 2018, p. 63).

In *All the Women Are White, All the Men Are Black, But Some of Us Are Brave,* the book's editors and contributors made a bold, clear exclamation: Black women exist, Black women matter, Black women are brave (Hull, Bell Scott, & Smith, 1982). Their anthology responded to the need to make Black women visible as a distinct group not to be subsumed within the Black race or female gender. It was a response to a challenge identified by revolutionary scholar Anna Julia Cooper (1892) almost one hundred years prior: "She [the Black woman] is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both" (p. 134). The "woman question" and "race problem" are also reflected by Sojourner Truth in her legendary mid-19th century speech known as, "Ain't I a Woman?" as Truth challenged attendees at the Women's Rights Convention in 1848 to recognize Black womanhood as an experience unlike Black manhood and dissimilar to white womanhood (Biography, 2018). While Black men and White women were battling for the right to vote, Truth inquired about the rights of individuals who were both woman and Black. Since that time, scholars in a wide range of disciplines have found relevance in this question: *What about Black women*? I find a similar question particularly apropos to the field of education studies: *What about Black girls in schools?*

Research Purpose

In this paper, I follow in the line of Cooper's and Truth's work by insisting that educators acknowledge and address the distinct positionality of Black girls in their policies and practices. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate how Black girls in Fort Worth Independent School District of Fort Worth, Texas, are impacted by the District's recently adopted *Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy* and unjustly penalized by selected behavioral expectations in the *Student Code of Conduct* and by dress codes in the *Standards of Dress*, resulting in their disproportionate suspensions. The district defines *disproportionality* as "the over- or under-representation of a given population group, often defined by racial and ethnic backgrounds, but also defined by socioeconomic status, national origin, English proficiency, gender, and sexual orientation" (Breed, 2016). Additionally, I interrogate current district practices designed to mitigate the over-suspension of Black girls. Though Fort Worth Independent School District is the focus of this paper, the criminalization of Black girls is endemic to large districts in the state of Texas (Moran Jackson, Hatcher, & Jones, 2015) and throughout the South (Smith & Harper, 2015). Consequently, findings are relevant to districts across Texas and the Southern United States. Questions that guided my inquiry include the following:

1) How does the District's *Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy* impact Black girls?
2) In what ways might the District's *Student Code of Conduct* and *Standards of Dress* lead to disciplinary actions against Black girls?

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[1]Black and African American are used interchangeably to refer to individuals of African descent.

3) What District practices may be effective and/or ineffective in reducing the dispropor-
tionate suspension of African American girls?

Research Approach

To answer the first two questions, I selected several official Fort Worth ISD documents— a)
Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy, b) *Student Code of Conduct*, and c) *Standards of Dress*—for document anal-
ysis. Document analysis can be defined as "a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating doc-
uments" to interpret content and make meaning (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). In document analysis, re-
searchers draw upon multiple sources to identify convergence and corroboration in an effort to re-
duce potential bias (Brown, 20009). I used a line-by-line approach to find evidence of the following:

- targeted efforts to address the needs of Black girls;
- behavior expectations that may lead to biased interpretations; and
- dress codes that are subjective or culturally biased.

In answering the last question, I assessed the potential effectiveness of district practices based on
whether they are derived from District suspension data and are aligned with published scholarship
on best practices. A description of the theoretical framework that guided my data analysis and inter-
pretation follows.

Theoretical Framework

Black girls' existence in a society built on patriarchy and white supremacy makes it necessary
to intersect the fights for the rights of women and the rights of Black citizens. This intersection is
best evidenced by the ideological underpinnings of Black feminist thought (Hill Collins, 2000). Black
feminist thought can be defined as a sociopolitical stance and theoretical framework that insists up-
on addressing the needs of Black women/girls as distinct from White women/girls and from Black
men/boys (Hill Collins, 2000). Absent Black feminism, the multiple oppressions faced by Black
women and girls become embedded within feminism's struggle for freedom from sexist oppression
and Black people's struggle for liberation from anti-Black racism. It is pertinent that Black women's
and girls' challenges not be diluted by race *or* gender analysis and instead be considered holistically
through race *and* gender analysis. It is further necessary to recognize that Black women's/girls' mar-
ginalization stems from a matrix of domination, a system of interlocking oppressions based on race,
gender, and class (Hill Collins, 2000). Said differently, Black women's and girls' lived experiences are
profoundly shaped not only by racism and sexism but also by a complex intersection of these op-
pressive systems that uniquely marginalizes Black women and girls. For this reason, "we cannot
simply add up the types of oppression that a woman suffers one-by-one as independent factors but
must look at how they are interrelated" (Bunch, 1987, p. 337). For Black women and girls, these in-
terrelations, or intersections, result in a distinctive form of oppression, *racialized sexism*—sexism ex-
perienced because of one's race (Morris, 2016). As an example, racialized sexism leads to Black (and
Latina) girls being hypersexualized and objectified due to stereotypes that depict them as promiscu-
ous sexual objects (Morris, 2016). *Misogynoir*, a term introduced by Moya Bailey in 2010, describes a
form of misogyny uniquely experienced by Black women and girls as a result of racist, sexist tropes
(Bailey, 2013). In sum, Black girls do not experience *just* racism or *just* sexism; they experience mi-
sogynoir, violence that happens as a result of discrimination stemming from their intersectional
identities.

Crenshaw (1991), credited for coining the term "intersectionality," explained that intersectional analysis responds to the need to focus on the intersections of race and gender to account for multiple grounds of identity. Intersectional Black feminism emphasizes the importance of centering the lives of Black women/girls for examination. This centering is evident in the online social movement #SayHerName. #SayHerName, also originated by Crenshaw, was birthed as a result of the erasure of Black women in #BlackLivesMatter (Brown, Ray, Summers & Fraistat, 2017). Movements such as #SayHerName insist upon the recognition of intersectional identities such as race *and* gender instead of monolithic identities of race *or* gender (Brown et al., 2017). #SayHerName is a reminder that Black men and boys are not solely the causalities of police brutality and is an acknowledgement of the Black women and girls, too, who have been victims of state-sanctioned violence (Troutman & Jimenez, 2016). A derivative of #SayHerName that focuses exclusively on the experiences of Black girls is #BlackGirlsMatter (Troutman & Jimenez, 2016). This hashtag encapsulates a message that school districts in pursuit of equity must realize in both policies and practices: Black girls matter. As a reminder, "individuals do not separately experience gender and race; rather, they uniquely experience the social world as gendered racialized beings" (Monnat, 2010, p. 642). For this reason, it is pertinent that institutions resist what Cooper (2018, p. 77) calls "a race-only politic" in favor of an intersectional one. Intersectional analysis of gender and race simultaneously would result in important practical changes, for instance in the way the Texas Education Agency reports statewide district suspension data on its website. Presently, suspension data is reported only by race, resulting in a lack of easily accessible data on Black girls (Texas Education Agency, 2018a).

While this paper focuses on the intersection of race and gender, intersectionality is not limited by these factors alone. Further work, for example, might examine how the intersections of race, gender, and place (i.e., the U.S. South) impact discipline policies and practices that lead to the suspension of Black girls in this region.

Literature Review: Black Girls and School Suspensions

A decade of literature on the education of Black girls reveals what Kemp-Graham calls "a national crisis" (2017, p. 11) that "should cause public alarm" (Hines & Wilmot, 2018, p. 63). In essence, these studies reveal that Black girls experience disproportionate out-of-school suspension rates of varying degrees when compared to their representation in the school population (see Arango Ricks, 2014; Hines & Wilmot, 2018; Kemp-Graham, 2017; Koonce, 2012; Morris, 2016; Morris & Perry, 2017; Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Slate, Gray & Jones, 2016; Wallace, 2017; Williams, 2017). As an example, a White House report indicated a suspension rate for Black girls that is 12% higher than girls of any other race (The White House Council on Women and Girls, 2015). In their comprehensive report of suspensions of Black students in Southern states, Smith and Harper (2015) revealed that Black girls comprised 56% of suspended girls, the highest percentage of both sexes and all races and ethnicities. Similarly, in Texas public schools specifically, Slate, Gray, and Jones (2016) found higher percentages of out-of-school suspensions in all grades for Black girls than for White or Hispanic girls.

Extant scholarship suggest that school discipline policies have historically criminalized, policed, surveilled, neutralized, and held captive Black students in general and Black girls specifically (Wun, 2016a). While zero-tolerance policies—policies that demand immediate suspension for certain behaviors—were designed to curtail violence in schools, they are increasingly used to punish Black students for offenses like "talking back" and other forms of perceived disrespect (Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Wallace, 2017; Wun, 2016b). The referrals and disciplinary actions may be due in part to teachers' perceptions of Black girls. Francis (2011) found that teachers view Black girls

less favorably when it comes to disruptive behavior than girls from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Likewise, Morris found that discipline problems resulted from teachers' perceptions of Black girls as "challenging to authority, loud, and not ladylike" (Morris, 2007, p. 501). Perceptions of Black girls as adults, or the adultification of Black girls, is problematic as well. Adultification is defined as "the extent to which race and gender, taken together, influence our perception of Black girls as less innocent and more adult-like than their white peers" (Epstein, Blake, & Gonzalez, 2017, p. 2). When Black girls are seen as Black women, they are stripped of childhood innocence and freedoms (Morris, 2017).

Life outcomes for students who are suspended are troubling. In a recent study, Wolf and Kupchik (2017) found that exclusionary discipline results in negative long-term consequences. More specifically, their findings suggest "that students who are suspended in school by the time they are in grades 7–12 are at significantly greater risk of criminal victimization, criminal activity, and incarceration years later as adults" (Wolf & Kupchik, 2017, p. 423). Balfanz, byrnz, and Fox (2014) warned that out-of-school suspensions are a primary indicator of high school drop-out, leading suspended students to be excluded from post-secondary education and from realizing career opportunities (Balfanz et al., 2014). Additional research is needed to shed light on outcomes specifically for Black girls who experience school suspensions.

Limited scholarship exists focusing specifically on the effects of school policies and practices on Black girls (Hines & Wilmot, 2018; Ispa-Landa, 2017; Kemp-Graham, 2017; Wun, 2016a; Wun, 2016b). My work broadens this literature by focusing on how Fort Worth Independent School District's educational policies and practices impact Black girls. This project is distinctive in its use of document analysis as a qualitative inquiry methodology used to analyze district policies.

Fort Worth Independent School District

With an enrollment of 87,233 students, Fort Worth Independent School District (hereafter Fort Worth ISD) is the second largest school district in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area and the sixth largest school district in Texas (Niche, 2018). It is classified by the Texas Education Agency as one of eleven "Major Urban" school districts (Texas Education Agency, 2018). A majority-minority district, almost 89% of students are students of color with Hispanics being the majority at 62.5% and Blacks representing the second highest percentage at 22.9% (Fort Worth ISD, 2018a). As is consistent with national trends, teacher demographics in Fort Worth ISD reflect quite the contrary—Black (10.2%), Hispanic (26.6%), and White (59.8%) (Fort Worth ISD, 2018a). Seventy-four percent of teachers are female and 26% are male (Fort Worth ISD, 2018a). More than three-fourths of students in Fort Worth ISD are economically disadvantaged and a third are English Language Learners (Fort Worth ISD, 2018a). The District's four-year graduation rate is 85%, but disaggregated data show a four-year graduation rate of only 84% for African Americans, compared to 89% for White students (Texas Academic Performance Report, 2018b). Data throughout this report show similar gaps in outcomes between African American and Hispanic students and their White peers (Texas Academic Performance Report, 2018b). Although data contained in this report, as in TEA discipline reports, is disaggregated by several subgroups, data is not disaggregated by gender or by gender and race. This recognition is important because the absence of disaggregated race and gender data has led to the assumption that all girls are doing well in school (Smith-Evans, George, Goss Graves, Kaufmann, & Frohlich, 2014). To fully understand the experiences and outcomes for African American girls, data must be reported by race and gender, together, instead of separately by race or by gender (Thomas & Jackson, 2007). It is only through a more nuanced analysis, an intersectional analysis, that the actual state of Black girls can be revealed.

Equity Efforts in Fort Worth ISD

Fort Worth ISD appointed a new superintendent in October, 2015. Reflecting his commitment to racial equity, within a few months of his appointment, Superintendent Kent P. Scribner created a Division of Equity and Excellence in February 2016 (Breed & Moore, 2016). At the same time, the school board approved a Racial Equity Committee comprised of board members, district employees, students, and community members (Breed & Moore, 2016). One of their first tasks was the formation of a Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy (Breed & Moore, 2016). In February, 2017, the Fort Worth ISD school board voted unanimously to accept a newly conceived, groundbreaking Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy, in addition to the District's existing nondiscrimination policy (Breed & Moore, 2016).

Although the District's focus on racial equity became more intentional in 2016 under its new leader, previous racial equity work had included the Equity for Student Success Initiative, which focused on the success of African American boys (Breed & Moore, 2016). In 2015, the board had approved the Pledge by America's Great City Schools to better serve males of color in the District. The emphasis of the District is made clear by the use of "Males of Color" in the pledge more than a dozen times. Additionally, the District hosted a *My Brother's Keeper* (*MBK*) summit and established *MBK* chapters in high schools in the District in 2015 (Breed & Moore, 2016). Introduced by President Barack Obama, *My Brother's Keeper* is a 2014 White House initiative that seeks to address the opportunity gaps faced exclusively by boys of color (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2014). As a result of the overt omission of Black girls and other girls of color in MBK, over 1,600 scholars, activists, politicians, and concerned citizens penned an open letter to President Obama indicating that they were deeply bothered by the exclusion of women and girls of color from this important initiative (African American Policy Forum, 2014). Mainly as an outcome of this letter and the #WhyWeCantWait campaign (African American Policy Forum, n.d.) petitioning for the inclusion of girls of color, the White House Council on Women and Girls launched *Achieving Equity,* an effort to ensure that federal policies and programs consider the distinct needs and wellbeing of women and girls of color (The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2016). Yet, there is no evidence available that Fort Worth ISD took any action at this time in response to this national focus. In this case, as in others, policymakers addressed racial discrimination but prioritized only the experiences of Black boys (Williams, 2017). Racial justice initiatives that focus solely on Black boys result in Black girls' experiences being undervalued and their voices absent from efforts to find solutions (Williams, 2017). This is not to say, however, that Black boys do not deserve attention, too. Black boys are the largest subpopulation to experience exclusionary discipline. Still, the increasing suspension of Black girls warranted examination then and warrants it now (Ispa-Landa, 2017; Morris, 2012; Williams, 2017;).

At the same time that the District was exerting efforts to improve outcomes for Black boys, at least four national reports[2] shedding light on educational outcomes for Black girls had been released. Each report revealed an urgent need for strategic work, namely policy and programmatic interventions, to address the discipline disparities of Black girls. Yet, it was not until January 2018 that Fort Worth ISD revealed plans to focus on Black girls in a programmatic way (Steinert, 2018). Their new focus on Black girls may have been prompted by two *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* articles entitled "Sixty-two percent of girls suspended in FWISD are Black, here's the plan to fix that" and "Cultural stereotypes play a role in Black girls being suspended," published on December 29, 2017 and January 3, 2018, respectively. An additional story highlighting the challenges faced by the District, "In Texas, Black girls are almost seven times as like to be suspended from school as White girls," was

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[2]A list of these reports is found in the Appendix.

featured on the radio program the *Texas Standard* on January 11, 2018. All three stories had a common theme: the disproportionate suspensions of African American girls in Fort Worth ISD (Brisbin, 2018; The Editorial Board, 2018; Smith, 2017). Subsequently, during the District's January 23, 2018, board meeting, Michael Steinert, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services, led a presentation on "Student Suspensions," with a particular focus on African American girls. Mr. Steinert shared the following data from 2016-2017:

- Fort Worth ISD ranks second in the state for suspensions among other major urban districts.
- African American students comprise 55% of all suspended students although they make-up only 23% of the student population.
- African American girls comprise 62% of all female suspensions, while African American boys comprise 52% of all male suspensions (Steinert, 2018).

Data absent from the presentation but obtained through a data request submitted to the District sheds more light on this topic. During 2017-2018,

- African American girls comprised approximately 12% of the student enrollment.
- African American girls consisted of 24% of the female enrollment.
- African American girls made up 18% of out-of-school suspensions in 2017-2018. (FWISD Support, personal communication, July 11, 2018)

These data revealed the severity of the disproportionality of suspensions of African American girls in Fort Worth ISD. Perhaps most alarming is that African American girls comprised 62% of female suspensions though they accounted for only 12% of the female student population. Fort Worth ISD's suspension rates for Black girls are consistent with state and national data (Arango Ricks, 2014; Hines & Wilmot, 2018; Kemp-Graham, 2017; Koonce, 2012; Morris, 2016; Morris & Perry, 2017; Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013; Slate, Gray & Jones, 2016; Wallace, 2017; Williams, 2017).

Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy: An Incomplete Imperative

As is reflected in its title, the *Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy*, adopted in February 2017, focuses exclusively on the District's commitment to racial and ethnic equity. The superintendent's decision to make racial equity a priority in a district plagued by racial inequity since its inception (see Cannon, 2009) is bold and forward-thinking. The work of the Racial Equity Committee and the Division of Equity and Excellence is aimed at one goal—eliminating the achievement gaps that occur as a result of opportunity gaps between students of color and White students (Breed & Moore, 2016). While Black girls are included in "students of color," the racial and ethnic equity policy has a clear and explicit focus on race, not gender, and certainly not gender and race, as evidenced by the following focus statement:

> The District shall focus on improving its practices in order to ensure equity in education. Any achievement gap between white students and students of color (historically defined as black or African Americans, Africans, American Indians or Alaska natives, Asians, Latinos, native Hawaiian, or Pacific islanders) is unacceptable. (Fort Worth ISD, 2018b, p. 1)

Reflecting this focus, the District's mission statement changed from "Preparing students for success in college, career, and community leadership" to "Preparing *all* students for success in college, ca-

reer, and community leadership" (Breed & Moore, 2016). It is significant to note that the District does not have a policy on gender equity though gender is listed as a protected class in its non-discrimination policy.[3] More importantly, there is no policy in place that protects students who sit at the intersection of race and gender, namely Black girls and other girls of color. By focusing solely on race (or solely on gender), educational policies ignore Black girls' unique positionality (Arango-Ricks, 2014). As a result, Black girls fall through the cracks theoretically and pragmatically (Arango-Ricks, 2014). Fort Worth ISD and other Texas districts who prioritize equity and justice for all students must address the complex intersections of race and gender oppression in their policies. Otherwise, Black girls are rendered invisible.

Fort Worth ISD Policies

In this section, I examine how rules related to students "talking back" and being disrespect-ful lead to discipline bias. According to the *Fort Worth ISD Student Code of Conduct*, students are ex-pected to "show respect for others and their property" and to "express opinions and ideas in a re-spectful and courteous manner," among other things (Fort Worth ISD, 2018c, p. 9). They are pro-hibited from "being disrespectful to adults and/or other students" (Fort Worth ISD, 2018c, p. 12). An "unprovoked display of disrespect toward school personnel" can be considered insubordination (Fort Worth ISD, 2018c, p. 41). Both disrespect and insubordination can lead to harsh punishments, like suspension (Fort Worth ISD, 2018c).

Black girls are often perceived by teachers as being loud and attitudinal, making them prone to disciplinary actions (Morris, 2007; Morris, 2016; Wun, 2016b) and to less attention and respect from teachers (Hines & Wilmot, 2018). In some cases, being loud is a way that Black girls make sure that they are visible (Arango-Ricks, 2014), while other Black girls see being heard as vulnerability to discrimination (Ayres & Leaper, 2012). In her research with African American girls, Koonce (2012) found that loudness is equated with being attitudinal, or "Talking With an Attitude" (TWA). How-ever, actions interpreted as disrespect may simply be pushing back or questioning (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015). This pushing back was described by a teacher, a study participant, who recognized that Black girls are "more likely to get a little in your face than a girl who's white might" (Lei, 2003, p. 165). Teachers, particularly authoritative ones, interpret "active resistance" as disrespect, and Black girls' leadership traits are instead labeled as questioning authority, or in disciplinary terms, de-fiance (Lei, 2003). As is the case with Fort Worth ISD disciplinary policies, making "smart com-ments" is viewed as a disciplinary problem that warrants suspension (Wun, 2016b).

There are several problems with having "respect" as an expectation. First, respect is a gen-dered value that is directly linked to notions of femininity (Slate, Gray & Jones, 2016). Slate, Gray, and Jones (2017) summarized the gendered racism that many Black girls face: "School discipline practices and policies can work aggressively against the efforts of many Black girls who try to recon-cile the complexities of being Black and female while navigating a school system in Texas that pro-motes Westernized standards of femininity" (p. 257). Implicitly, African American girls are encour-aged to adopt what Williams (2017, p. 78) called "traditional femininity," suggesting to them that they need to "recede into the background." "Ladylike" girls are supposed to show respect by being seen not heard and obedient, not recalcitrant. These socially constructed values are rooted in patriar-

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[3]The Fort Worth Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, gender identity and expression, military/veteran status, in its programs and activi-ties (Fort Worth ISD, 2018a).

chal notions of womanhood that are designed to control women's and girls' actions and to convey where their social "place" is. This is particularly true for Black women who have been historically silenced and forced into obedience. In challenging gender norms, a Black girl who was accused of being "loud and unladylike" expressed confusion about her behavior: "So I don't know how they want me to act . . . I don't understand" (Murphy, Acosta & Kennedy-Lewis, 2013, p. 601). This student's words show her confusion and frustration with behaviors that educators consider to be appropriate for girls.

Second, having "respect" as an expectation penalizes African American girls whose home culture, including communication codes, often conflict with school culture and communication codes. For example, speaking at voice levels and in manners that are the norm at home may not be acceptable in academic settings. In order to conform to school expectations, Black girls are forced to code switch (Lei, 2003) or create "a new self" (Williams, 2017, p. 78). Possessing the ability to be bicultural leads to academic excellence (Evans-Winters, 2014) while Black girls who fully embrace their home culture at school, whether out of an inability or refusal to code switch, are penalized.

Third, respect as a behavioral expectation is highly subjective. School districts need to articulate clear and concrete actions that constitute unacceptable behavior. Clough (2015) found that students are willing to follow rules if they are consistent and not open to interpretation. Last, simply forcing students out of school with suspensions for being disrespectful allows educators to disregard the reasons behind the disrespect. Cooper contended that "sometimes Americans don't recognize that sass is simply a more palatable form of rage" (2018, p. 1). Instead of suspending Black girls for expressing their rage, educators should try to help rage-filled girls resolve the issues behind their anger. This examination of the *Student Code of Conduct* pinpoints a specific area that has proven to be problematic for African American girls and indicates where critical interrogation is needed in order to identify and eliminate biased policies.

Next, Black girls are cited more frequently than their peers for dress code violations, which results in more disciplinary referrals (Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2012). The Fort Worth ISD *Standards of Dress* prohibits students from wearing clothing that is "too revealing" and from wearing "head gear such as hats, scarves, bandanas, do-rags, and shower caps" (Fort Worth ISD, 2018d, para 4). As with rules regarding respect, describing clothing as "too revealing" is highly subjective, and prohibiting scarves infringes on the cultural expressions of African American girls. In Kemp-Graham's (2017) case study, Black girls were penalized for wearing tight pants and wearing cultural attire (a gele) and hairstyles (dreadlocks). These dress code violations can lead to Black girls becoming insubordinate and defiant, exacerbating their infractions (Kemp-Graham, 2017). Although the District's dress code is specific in its description of shorts, skorts, and skirts (must be no shorter than three inches above the knee), African American girls believe that they are frequently penalized for wearing clothes that are too short because of their body types (National Women's Law Center, 2018). The way these students dress "is not inherently bad or criminal but is rendered such by these rules" (Wun, 2016a, p. 182). Evidence of the racialized and gendered aspect of dress is found in an educator's description of a Black girl's clothes as a "hoochie mama skirt" (Morris, 2007, p. 507). This comment reflects the way Black girls are hypersexualized and the way their bodies are scrutinized by adults.

Morris (2007) found that Black girls disagreed with or simply ignored the dress code and stated that having to wear a uniform is like being in prison. In this way, Black girls who refused to adhere to dress codes may be simply trying to feel less institutionalized and controlled and should be offered flexibility in dress. In *Dress Coded: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools,* findings upheld that Black girls are penalized by racially and sexually discriminatory dress codes (National Women's Law Center, 2018). The authors of this report recommend that to avoid unjustly punishing Black

girls, districts that decide to enforce a dress code should begin their dress code with an equity statement, such as the one quoted here:

> Evanston Township High School's student dress code supports equitable educational access and is written in a manner that does not reinforce stereotypes and that does not increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, house income or body type/size. (National Women's Law Center, 2018, p. 31)

Both of these subjective criminalized behaviors—being sassy, outspoken, and loud and dressing provocatively—are rooted in longstanding stereotypes of Black women that are also imposed upon Black girls. Stereotypes about women are mediated by race and class, as seen in stereotypes about Black women and girls. Black women and girls are judged according to the "angry Black woman" and hypersexual "Jezebel" stereotypes (Harris-Perry, 2011; Hill Collins, 2000). Undoubtedly, these stereotypes influence how educators interpret the actions of Black girls, leading to discipline referrals for violating unjust discipline policies and dress codes.

Practices Designed to Reduce Suspensions of Black Girls

In a January 23, 2018, board meeting, Fort Worth ISD district officials mentioned a need to implement "specific additional supports" for African American girls (Steinert, 2018) and listed strategies that the District intended to use or were currently using to address the disproportionate suspension of Black girls. Interestingly, though, these supports appear to have been determined without data regarding the nature of the infractions. Because infraction data was not included in the presentation to the board of trustees and have not been shared publicly by other means, I made an open records request for the following data:

> 1) What infractions led to student suspensions for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 for all suspended students?
> 2) What infractions led to student suspensions for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 for suspended African American girls?

This data request led to a critical discovery. The vast majority of infractions for the general student population (95%) and for African American girls (93%) that led to suspensions are designated as "Code 21 Student Code of Conduct" (FWISD Support, personal communication, July, 11, 2018). After several requests for clarification about this code, I was eventually told by Mr. Steinert that "Code 21 Student Code of Student" is a broad category of infractions and there are not specific PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System) codes that break down the detail of each infraction (Steinert, personal communication, July 16, 2018). Consequently, it is impossible to pinpoint the infractions that lead to suspension (Steinert, personal communication, July 16, 2018). Without this crucial data, any efforts to address the disproportionate suspension of African American girls is insufficient and unfocused. To the contrary, knowing why African American female students are suspended would allow for targeted, culturally sensitive interventions and equitable solutions. It is imperative that Fort Worth ISD and other Texas districts create and implement systems that make it easier to identify the nature of suspendable offenses. Even without this important data, however, several of the District's strategies are commendable and research-based:

- The Division of Equity and Excellence held and plans to continue to hold focus groups with Black girls to gather data about their educational experiences. This practice makes space for the voices of African American girls and makes them active contributors in solution-finding. Centering marginalized voices is a signature principle of Black feminist thought (Hill Collins,

2000). I recommend that researchers situate data collected from Black girls within a historical context to reveal longstanding oppression of Black women and girls (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015).

- The District plans to expand its use of restorative justice (also known as restorative discipline) practices. Restorative justice, an approach to discipline that focuses on repairing harm, building relationships, and encouraging accountability, has been shown to decrease disciplinary referrals and suspensions of students of color (Ispa-Landa, 2017).

- Providing training in culturally relevant instruction is also a district priority. Culturally relevant (or culturally responsive) teaching is teaching that draws on students' cultural backgrounds and knowledge as assets in learning (Gay, 2002). Culturally relevant teachers build on the knowledge and experiences students bring to the classroom. To be culturally relevant, "teachers first must develop their own cultural competence by understanding their students' communities and home lives" (Byrd, 2016, p. 1). A form of culturally relevant pedagogy designed specifically with African American girls in mind is Hip-hop feminist pedagogy (Brown, 2009). Hip-Hop feminist pedagogy centers the experiences of Black girls, focuses on establishing relationships with Black girls, and respects the contexts and communities of Black girls (Brown, 2009).

- Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) is an alternative to punitive discipline that focuses on teaching students appropriate behavior, rewarding positive behavior, and providing the support that students need to behave properly (Flannery, Fenning, Kato & McIntosh, 2014).

- The First Five strategy, included in the District plan, emphasizes connection before instruction. Teachers spend the first 5 minutes of each class building relationships with students. Relationship-building is central to restorative discipline practices.

These practices are important in addressing the disproportionate suspension of Black girls and should be implemented with Black girls at the forefront of planning. For these practices to be effective, educators must focus specifically on building relationships with Black girls, centering the experiences of Black girls, building on the cultural background of Black girls, and supporting Black girls in their efforts to meet District expectations.

Two practices, however, cause concern. First, the District proposed the formation of S.O.A.R. (Students Organized Against Racism) groups on campus as a remedy to the problem of over-suspensions of Black girls. Based on research and best practices in the field, singular attempts to address the needs of Black girls are ineffective. Because Black girls experience racism in ways that are different from racism experienced by Black boys, I propose a group designed to counter the gendered racism experienced by Black girls.

Next, the District highlighted the work of a high school club for African American girls, Sophisticated Ladies, as an exemplar in reducing the disciplinary referrals of African American girls. While it is prudent to address the behavior of African American girls, one must use caution in doing so. A tagline of the club is "Keeping it cute and classy." Organizations such as Sophisticated Ladies that set behavior and dress standards for Black girlhood run the risk of enforcing respectability politics. Respectability politics is defined by Cooper (2018) as "the belief that Black people can overcome many of the everyday, acute impacts of racism by dressing properly and having education and social comportment" (p. 173). Said differently, it is the belief that individuals who are members of marginalized groups should behave, speak, and/or dress in ways that meet societal expectations in order to be successful. Nyachae (2016, p. 798) found notions of respectability in her analysis of the *Sisters of Promise* (SOP), a program she and colleagues developed for marginalized Black girls in

grades 5-8. She concluded that having "womanly character" as a value forced girls to conform to perceptions of virtuousness and moral correctness and thereby contradicted Black feminist pedagogy's value for freedom of expression. While learning proper decorum is a necessary reality for Black girls, it is erroneous to believe that learning to be more "ladylike" will resolve the District's issues surrounding discipline. Morris (2016) shed light on this subject:

> Our work on behalf of Black girls cannot be about respectability politics. Etiquette lessons can be a part of social practices and agendas, but if our anti-criminalization efforts are to have teeth, schools must look far beyond whether our girls are wearing tight pants, crop tops, or pink extensions in their braids. The crisis of criminalization in schools is an opportunity to focus on the policies, systems, and institutions—in other words, the structures— that place women and girls at risk of exploitation in private and public spheres. (p. 181)

Supporting African American girls in meeting unbiased behavior expectations is certainly important but does not address the longstanding systemic issues that criminalize Black girls.

Recommendations

Based on this examination, I offer seven recommendations to school districts:

1) Districts should strive to eliminate the unique form of racism—gendered racism— experienced by Black girls.
2) Because rules about respect and dress are often discretionary and enforced based on educator bias, districts should revise their code of conduct and dress codes to make expectations clear, specific, and bias-free.
3) District and state policies and practices that render disrespect and dress code violations worthy of exclusionary discipline practices should be removed.
4) Programmatic support for Black girls should not be steeped in respectability politics, as these supports do not eliminate the institutional barriers Black girls face.
5) Districts need data-collection systems that allow them to identify the infractions that lead to suspensions.
6) Black girls need in-school support to address their psychological and emotional needs that are often a result of "unresolved trauma" (Kemp-Graham, 2017; Williams, 2017, p. 79).
7) Districts should draw upon published reports from scholars whose work centers Black girls to drive their policies and practices.[4]

Conclusion

Data regarding life outcomes for students who are suspended should be alarming to Fort Worth ISD (see Balfanz, byrnz, & Fox, 2014; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017). When Black girls are suspended, districts are excluding them from opportunities for academic and career success. Although the District is now making strides to address the over-suspension of African American girls, their apparent silence for several crucial years is inexcusable. In order to redress the injustices faced by African American girls, Fort Worth ISD and other Texas school districts must eliminate "spirit-murdering" policies (Hines & Wilmot, 2018) in favor of discipline policies and practices that nurture the bodies, minds, and spirits of African American girls. Texas educators who espouse equity as a

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[4]A list of relevant reports is found in the Appendix.

value must demonstrate a commitment to end the gendered racism in discipline policies and practices that result in Black girls being suspended disproportionately.

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Appendix

Reports on the Over-Suspension of Black Girls in the United States

- 2012-*Race, Gender, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Expanding Our Discussion to Include Black Girls* by Morris
- 2014-*Unlocking Opportunities for African American Girls: A Call to Action for Educational Equity* by Smith-Evans, George, Goss Graves, Kaufmann, and Frohlich
- 2014-*Women and Girls of Color: Addressing Challenges and Expanding Opportunities-November* by The White House Council on Girls and Women
- 2015-*Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected* by Crenshaw, Ocen, and Nanda
- 2015-*Disproportionate Impact of School Suspension and Expulsion on Black Students in Southern States* by Smith and Harper
- 2017-*Let Her Learn: Stopping School Pushout for Girls of Color* by Onyeka-Crawford, Patrick, and Chaudhry
- 2017-*Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood* by Epstein, Blake, and Gonzalez
- 2018-*Dress Coded: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools* by National Women's Law Center

Texas House Bill 51: A Coercive Isomorphic Force on Texas's Regional Comprehensive Universities, a Matter of Access and Equity

DWUANA BRADLEY
The University of Texas at Austin

Texas House Bill 51: A Coercive Isomorphic Force on Texas's Regional Comprehensive Universities, a Matter of Access and Equity

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The University of Texas at Austin

The state of Texas has a highly autonomous system of public higher education. It is one with a diverse degree of institutional types across the four-year and two-year sectors. Each sector, and institution have highly nuanced organizational structures and missions and serve a diverse state population with various cultural, financial, educational backgrounds, and needs (De Los Santos, 1997; Perna & Finney, 2014; THECB, 2017). The state of Texas has 80 public two-year institutions and 39 four-year institutions (THECB, 2017). This includes six university systems, 50 community college districts, several technical colleges, and multiple independent public colleges and universities across the pipeline (Perna & Finney, 2014). Most of the four-year university systems are comprised of independently accredited and independently governed college campuses. Several of the community colleges have multiple campuses, each accredited as independent institutions, while others are accredited as a single district. Together, these approximate 119 colleges and universities form the public higher education pipeline—loosely overseen by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) (Perna & Finney, 2014).

Though the THECB has limited authority to penalize or hold institutions accountable, it has significant power in shaping the educational agenda for the state and coordinating efforts towards student access and success based on extensive institutional data. Historically, these plans have been broadly used to ensure equal opportunity and meet labor demands for the Texas economy. Based on projections for workforce demands, the THECB set its most recent state goal to credential 60 percent of Texans between the ages of 25-34 by 2030 (THECB, 2017). This state goal, articulated in the current strategic plan and entitled *60x30,* came on the heels of the previous 15 year-long strategic plan, which allowed the coordinating board to set a statewide educational agenda focused on improving equity and access in higher education.

In a clear articulation of their vision for equity, THECB titled the previous longstanding plan, *Closing the Gaps*, when the board developed the plan in 2000 (THECB, 2000). *Closing the Gaps* was developed with this particular nomenclature and was rooted in a clear focus on equity because, despite diversity of institutional type, which theoretically should have expanded the opportunities for access and student success for students from various backgrounds, students in Texas from Black, Latin*x,* and/or poor financial backgrounds were least likely to enroll or graduate from any of Texas's public higher education institution at that time (THECB, 2000). Under *Closing the Gaps*, the THECB prioritized initiatives and encouraged institutional efforts that aimed to increase educational equity between the state's most educationally deprived groups (racially and financially marginalized students) and those who were benefiting the most from the current educational system (White affluent students) (THECB, 2000).

Another less prominent but important priority of the *Closing the Gaps* era was increasing institutional prestige and educational excellence (THECB, 2000). At the onset of this strategic plan, the state of Texas had two public flagship institutions (The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University), in addition to one leading private research institution (Rice University). However, in comparison to some of the state's national counterparts (e.g., California and New York, both of which enjoy exceptional levels of reputation based on their systems of higher education serving large and diverse citizen populations), Texas seemed to demonstrate room for improvement (Daniel, 2008). To make these improvements, thought leaders from multiple arenas (including the two public flagship institutions, the oil and gas industry, and those from the tech industry) identified a need to

increase the number of nationally recognized flagship institutions for two primary reasons: (1) improving academic excellence and (2) improving economic vitality (THECB, 2000). The way the state went about realizing this vision, to improve institutional prestige and stabilize the economy, was by adopting Texas House Bill 51 (TX HB 51) (THECB, 2009).

The Development of TX HB 51

TX HB 51 was developed in 2008 and enacted in 2009 as state legislation. The policy was widely supported and sought to improve academic excellence among the state's existing public institutions of higher education, as opposed to creating a new system or adding an additional research or flagship university to the current landscape (TEC 62.145; THECB, 2009). Though the landscape of Texas higher education was determined to be robust enough in size, thought leaders at the THECB (in conjunction with education policy makers on both sides of the aisle) connected improving the national prestige of the state's public universities with improving the local and state economy (TEC 62.145, THECB, 2017). Introducing TX HB 51 put forth a performance-based funding model that identified eight of the state's most promising comprehensive regional universities[1] as emerging tier-one universities and incentivized those eight institutions to demonstrate academic excellence by requiring each to increase activity in four out of six of the following performance areas, four of which are concerned with research:
    1. institutional research productivity;
    2. institutional research expenditures;
    3. number of graduate programs offered;
    4. number of conferred doctoral degrees;
        5. number of nationally and globally recognized research driven faculty hires; and
        6. the academic profile of the incoming freshmen cohort (TEC 62.145, THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017)

Concerns for Equity

The sixth benchmark—to improve the academic profile of the incoming freshmen cohorts at these institutions by increasing the average accepted ACT and SAT scores and increasing the number of students within the top 25% of their graduating high school class (THECB, 2009)—is unrelated to research endeavors. This benchmark requires that comprehensive research universities striving for tier-one recognition do so by complying with a policy that rewards them for committing to narrowing student enrollment through the use of traditional indicators of academic prowess (such as the ACT and SAT, which have been demonstrated to have differential predictive ability of college performance along the lines of racial and socioeconomic status according to decades of research) (Aguinis, Culpepper, & Pierce, 2016). This particular benchmark is the clearest indicator that TX HB 51 has had the capacity to contribute to the erosion of diversity and inclusion efforts in the enrollment process of comprehensive regional universities (Altbach & Hazelkorn, 2017).

Moreover, despite the development of TX HB 51 under the THECB's *Closing the Gaps* agenda, the only benchmark related to equity is an optional benchmark, which incentivizes institutions to preserve student success programs, such as the McNair Scholars program, a program centered on student success for racially minoritized and financially underprivileged undergraduates interested in

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[1]The eight comprehensive regional universities include: Texas State University, Texas Tech University, University of Houston, University of Texas at Arlington, University of Texas at Dallas, University of Texas at El Paso, University of Texas at San Antonio, and University of North Texas—Denton.

careers in research (THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017). However, unrelated to access at the undergraduate level and articulated as an optional performance priority, the success benchmark is limited in its ability to promote the level of educational opportunity that the *Closing the Gaps* or *60x30* strategic plans posited as necessary to ensure the economic vitality of the state of Texas or to ensure economic access for historically marginalized students. This particular aspect of TX HB 51 makes it a policy that runs counter to the vision of equity articulated under *Closing the Gaps* and limits its capacity to aid the state in meeting the credentialing goals that the THECB set forth in the latest strategic plan, *60x30*. Despite these concerns, the eight universities identified as emerging research universities by TX HB 51 (once known for having broad access policies and more diverse student bodies than the more selective research powerhouses in the state) have now competed for state funding based on their ability to meet these accountability metrics for the past decade as they race to be named as Texas' next flagship institution (THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017; TEC 62.145 (c)).

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this backgrounder is to provide a theoretical framework to understand how each contributor within this critical forum adds to the narrative addressing the development, implementation, and impact of TX HB 51 as a performance-based funding model that has potentially challenged the capacity of the state to provide equitable educational opportunities to all students. Each author included in this journal issue offers a different theoretical lens as they examine the phenomenon of third party state-level governmental influence on public higher education, which I identify as coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This critical forum is not intended to offer a theoretical analysis of isomorphism itself. However, understanding coercive isomorphism as a phenomenon in the field of education is instrumental in understanding the broad implications of TX HB 51.

Coercive Isomorphism

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) defined three types of isomorphism: memetic, normative, and coercive. Broadly, the concept purports that organizations of all types, in any given field, will morph into homogenous entities as the leaders of those organizations attempt to embody the most legitimized practices and norms within their professional domain (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Practices and norms that thought-leaders, field professionals, and the general public consistently tout as most value in a particular field can be defined as legitimized and are highly likely to be mimicked or positioned as priorities as institutions undergo isomorphic transformation.

Of the three forms of isomorphism described by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), this critical forum is most concerned with coercive isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism occurs when stakeholding agents exert influence over organizational leaders to transform the mission, norms, and priorities of their organization in pursuit of external legitimization, which ultimately leads to a homogenized field of institutions. Put plainly, and set squarely in the context of higher education, the theory is about stakeholders who have direct and/or indirect authority over colleges and universities through political and/or fiscal influence, and the power they have to influence organizational change that might lead an institution to match or surpass the level of prestige enjoyed by similar colleges or universities. Examples of such stakeholders might include a governor, a state educational coordinating board or other agencies concerned with education, large corporations with considerable legislative influence, alumni donors, and, especially, state policy makers. Through political and/or fiscal persuasion, influential stakeholders are able to encourage institutional growth that prioritizes the ideals that benefit themselves and/or others.

Review of the Literature

Few scholars have explicitly identified coercive isomorphism (the homogenizing influence of external university stakeholders) as a negative influence on educational equity and access. Scholars such as Cassim (2005) and Ramirez and Tiplic (2014) have studied this particular aspect of isomorphism in countries outside the United States. However, only a small number of scholars have addressed institutional isomorphism as it occurs among regional comprehensive universities in Texas specifically (e.g., Altbach & Hazelkorn, 2017; Crisp, Horn, Dizinno, & Barlow, 2013; Crisp, Horn, Dizzino, & Wang, 2010; Doran, 2015). Few of them identify isomorphism as the phenomenon under investigation, and none of them explicitly refer to the phenomenon as coercive isomorphism.

Troubled Notions of Excellence Propagated by TX HB 51

Concepts concerning academic excellence heavily undergird the legitimated performance benchmarks outlined in TX HB 51. Though the thought leaders of the state responsible for developing the policy accepted those notions of excellence, some scholars have called those priorities into question. Altbach and Hazelkorn (2017) offered a conceptual analysis that explained why most colleges and universities undergoing institutional transformation towards research one status and national prestige based on national ranking systems will never meet these expectations of academic excellence. They concluded that institutions would trade aspects of their organizational culture critical for student development and access in the process of attempting to reach impossible productivity measures that do not necessarily benefit students. Therefore, Altbach and Hazelkorn (2017) recommended that these institutions collectively reject and resist the standards of academic excellence as they are conceptualized in TX HB 51. Similarly, Gonzales, Núñez, and Clemson (2014) conducted a qualitative study and found that chasing the external validation of ranking regimes was associated with the adoption of values that promote "individualism, standardization, commodification, and homogenization" (p. 13). They, too, recommended a resistence of these norms based on concern for the integrity of knowledge production in the academy (Gonzales et al., 2014).

Emerging Research Universities & Underpriviliged Student Populations

Due to structured stratification in the U.S. higher education pipeline and historical *de jure* and *de facto* acts of educational exclusion, students of color and those from low income backgrounds have historically relied on comprehensive regional institutions as access points to attain a four-year degree (Harcleroad & Ostar 1987; Henderson, 2007; Orphan, 2015; Pizarro Milian, 2016). The emerging research universities of Texas come from this particular institutional sector and in doing so may be emerging from the grasps of these student populations, as well. Crisp, Horn, Dizzino, and Wang (2010) found that two of the identified emerging research universities—the University of Houston and the University of Texas at San Antonio—consistently attracted students of color under the Top 10%[2] plan up until 2008. Their study called for more research on the enrollment management outcomes at these institutions following the enactment of TX HB 51 due to the policy's per-

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[2]Texas Top 10% plan is a statewide policy that guarantees automatic admission to any Texas public university for high school graduates ranked in the top 10 percent of their senior class. Like TX HB 51, the Top 10 percent mandate was developed and passed under the *Closing the Gaps* strategic agenda as an effort to increase equity in access for students from poor urban and rural school districts in Texas. However, today Top 10 percent no longer applies to the state's highest ranking universities. For example, the flagship institution, The University of Texas at Austin, adheres to a more exclusionary Top 7 percent plan.

formance benchmarks related to selectivity in the admissions process. Crisp, Horn, Dizzino, and Barlow (2013) found differential graduation outcomes at these same institutions along the lines of race and gender, prior to TX HB 51. However, the authors noted that the study was limited in its methodology due to the timing of the study. Conducted in 2013, insufficient time had passed between the study and the enactment of the policy to allow for the interrogation of the impact of TX HB 51 without using statistical analysis that relied on inferential modeling to predict data that had not yet been captured, therefore the authors acknowledged the need for more research on the effects of TX HB 51 in years following their study (Crisp et al., 2013).

Considerations of Institutional Mission

Three of the emerging research universities impacted by TX HB 51 are Hispanic Serving Institutions and two of the institutions are located in cities with the state's highest concentrations of Black and Latin*x* citizens (Social Explorer, 2017). Doran (2015) offered a historical analysis of the changes brought to University of Texas at San Antonio by TX HB 51, paying particular attention to the institutional mission of the university as a federally identified Hispanic Serving Institution. Since 2010, Leslie Gonzales has explored the experiences of faculty members in the changing organizational cultures of emerging tier-one universities under the influence of TX HB 51 (e.g., Gonzales, 2013, 2015; Gonzales & Pacheco, 2012; Gonzales & Rincones, 2011).

Together, these scholars have all laid the foundation of support for the implications of TX HB 51; however, scholarship is still needed to asses the actual impact of TX HB 51 on the enrollment patterns of students at emerging research universities across the state. This deficit of scholarly exploration into the phenomenon of coercive isomorphism on enrollment management practices at regional state universities leaves a gap in the literature, particularly as it pertains to understanding its impact on the educational opportunities available to low-income and racially marginalized students.

Implications of Isomorphism in the Lone Star State

In 2009, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) designated eight public institutions across the state of Texas as emerging research institutions following the enactment of TX HB 51. As is explained by the theory of coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), this bill has the potential to fiscally incentivize those designated universities towards significant organizational change. Proponents of TX HB 51 believe these changes have the potential to advance knowledge production and the reputation of the state (as it relates to academic excellence) on a national scale (TEC 62.145; THECB, 2017). However, the people of Texas (students and their families, specifically) and policy analyst should be critically concerned as they monitor the impact of TX HB 51 on comprehensive regional institutions, after taking into consideration the theory of coercive isomorphism.

The theory of coercive isomorphism explains that the missions of these designated institutions—once concerned with access, equity, and student-centered teaching—might shift away from these priorities as the state's comprehensive research universities morph into research-oriented organizations, which do not prioritize these same values (Crisp et al., 2010; Doran, 2015). Moreover, monetary resources that might have once been designated through state appropriations or allocated by university leadership towards functions that support equity and access have the potential to be reallocated in the wake of such legislation (Crisp et al. 2010; Doran, 2015). In this particular context, coercive isomorphism has considerable implications for low-income and underrepresented students of color as it pertains to their ability to attain upward economic and social mobility via higher educa-

tion (Altbach & Hazelkorn, 2017; Crisp, Horn, Dizzino, & Barlow, 2013; Crisp, Horn, Dizzino, & Wang, 2010; Doran, 2015). I address this concern in greater detail in a separate piece, which has been included in this critical forum. In the following section, I provide a brief overview of the critical forum, which I curated to better understanding the nuances in the development, implementation, and potential consequences of TX HB 51.

Issue Overview

As of January 2019, it will have been a complete decade since the enactment of TX HB 51. By 2016, five of the designated emerging research universities had already risen to the Carnegie classification of tier-one "highest research activity" status. However, the state of Texas has yet to name any one of them as an official flagship institution. Those five institutions included Texas Tech University, The University of Texas at Arlington, The University of Texas at Dallas, University of Houston, and University of North Texas (THECB, 2017; THECB, 2018; Watkins, 2016). Each of the contributing authors to this critical forum offer insight into why the state of Texas was motivated to generate more flagship institutions, what that competition has looked like over the last decade, and what the implications of TX HB 51 are for vulnerable student populations within the context of the state's strategic plan for higher education.

The first article in this issue, "Attack and Parry: An Examination of Gubernatorial Rhetoric and Agenda Setting for Higher Education in Texas, 2000-2015," offered the readers a rigorous and empirical analysis into how the political agenda of former Texas governor, Rick Perry, as an indirect university influencer led an educational accountability campaign that created fertile ground for the enactment and implementation of TX HB 51. Using Stata—a quantitative analytic software—to conduct a discourse analysis on 28 of the governors' addresses Rick Perry made from 2000 to 2015, authors Drake and Marsicano found that governor Perry, acting as a political entrepreneur, primed constituents and framed his educational political agenda around the ideals of accountability, efficiency, and competitiveness during the years that Texas House Bill 51 (TX HB 51) was adopted and enacted by the Texas Legislature. In their piece, the authors made direct connections between Perry's vision for micro and macro-economic growth through improved access to higher education and increased accountability measures across the P-20 pipeline.

The second article, "Theoretical Starting Points: The Field of Emerging Research Universities," considered the phenomenon of emerging tier-one research institutions through the conceptual framework of strategic action fields. Offering a conceptual foundation, Ryan's piece demonstrates the way Texas's regional institutions were incentivized by the state to compete for resources in order to improve not only the reputations of the institutions but the overall reputation of Texas as it sought to compete with the state of California.

The third article, "Texas House Bill 51: An Incognito Higher Education Performance Funding Policy," outlines the implications of the performance metrics mentioned in this backgrounder in greater detail with the purpose of explicating the unintended consequences of performance-based funding models that ignore predictable consequences to vulnerable student populations. Authors Bradley and Doran offered a critical policy analysis that identified TX HB 51 as a performance-based funding model and considered the varied power dynamics between policy influencing stakeholders and those with little to no influence. Through their analysis, Bradley and Doran drew parallels between the documented unintended consequences of national performance-based funding models and the predicted unintended consequences of TX HB 51, specifically considering the effects of TX HB 51 on racially marginalized and financially vulnerable student populations.

Conclusion

  This backgrounder detailed the scope of the critical forum that follows concerning Texas House Bill 51 (TX HB 51) of the 81st Legislature, also referred to as the emerging research university policy. Here, I have offered a bit of background on the policy concerning the aims of TX HB 51 and why the policy was developed. However, and perhaps more importantly, I have offered a framework for considering TX HB 51 as a performance-based funding model that promotes coercive isomorphic change to the foundational mission of comprehensive regional universities.

  In this work, and through the articles curated for the forum that follows, I have hoped to make clear that the implications of a performance-based funding policy, such as TX HB 51, may pose a threat to equity and access in higher education for vulnerable student populations due to its level of influence. Any external force to a college or university that incites this level of organizational change should be critically analyzed and empirically investigated to ensure that access and equity for students, particularly those from historically marginalized or financially disenfranchised populations, is not lost in the pursuit of evolution. This issue seeks to synthesize and expand the current narrative surrounding the impact of TX HB 51, by providing a forum to interrogate the development, implementation, and impact of the legislation on these students as they seek better life opportunities through higher education in Texas.

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Attack and Parry: An Examination of Gubernatorial Rhetoric and Agenda Setting for Higher Education in Texas, 2000-2015

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Texas higher education saw significant growth and change from 2000 to 2015. Driven by the strategic goals of the state's *Closing the Gaps* higher education plan, the state saw significant increases in higher education enrollment and outcomes. Postsecondary enrollment increased by 589,741 students. Institutions conferred 9,612 more STEM degrees in 2015 than in 2000, and nearly every public four-year institution saw a dramatic increase in the number of annual bachelor's degrees awarded (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2015). Incentivized by initiatives such as the Texas Research Incentive Program, eight public four-year doctoral institutions earned classification as Emerging Research Universities. The state's two public flagships, The University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin) and Texas A&M University, increased their research expenditures and national rankings (Hamilton, 2012).

At the same time, public higher education in Texas experienced profound criticism from conservative interest groups, political donors, and political appointees. In 2003, Governor Perry approved the Legislature's decision to deregulate tuition rates; this policy shift ushered in a new era of heightened concern over increasing tuition and decreasing affordability (Hamilton, 2011a). The right-wing Texas Public Policy Foundation released two reports: *Seven Breakthrough Solutions to Reform Higher Education*, followed by a *Red and Black Report* compiled from public data on Texas A&M faculty members' return on investment for the university (Burka 2012; Hamilton 2011b). At UT-Austin, tension between President Bill Powers and Governor Perry's appointees to the UT Board of Regents escalated to produce Powers' resignation in 2015 (Taliaferro, 2014).

Texas exemplifies the ideological debate over higher education as a public good, the value of research, and the role of the state in governing public universities. Combined with the aforementioned political forces at play during this time, the state's size and scope make Texas an ideal case study for higher education politics and policy. Indeed, ranking second of all U.S. states in population and higher education enrollment (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), Texas is significant both to the national political context and to U.S. postsecondary education.

The purpose of this study was to examine the gubernatorial rhetoric and agenda setting for higher education in Texas during this controversial period of growth and change. To do so, we looked to public speeches by Governor Rick Perry, a strong advocate for conservative higher education reforms and the most public face of the Texas higher education debate (Hamilton, 2014). We addressed two research questions: 1) How does Governor Perry *frame* the political agenda around higher education in Texas from 2000-2015? and 2) How does Governor Perry *prime* Texans to support his higher education reform agenda?

Literature Review

Agenda setting, first identified by journalist Walter Lippman in 1922, originally referred to the media's ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda (McCombs, 2002). The concept has been broadly applied to actors outside the media and within political science and refers

to the actions of political elites to make certain issues salient during a given political debate. *Framing* – the way in which political elites speak about a given issue, and *priming* – readying voters and other constituents to thematically connect political concepts, are natural extensions of agenda setting (Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw, 1998). In short, political elites set the agenda of policy issues they want to address, frame those policy issues in a way that is favorable to their preferred positions, and prime constituents to receive that information.

One of the dominant theories of policy formation applied by researchers today is Kingdon's (1995) multiple streams model. Kingdon argued that three distinct streams coincide to create conditions ripe for policy change. In the problem stream, public and political elite attention turns to a specific policy problem. The policy stream contains the potential political solutions to given policy problems. Finally, in the politics stream, political elites are motivated to turn political solutions into policy. When the three streams coincide, a policy window opens through which political entrepreneurs can make policy. Kingdon posited that policy entrepreneurs with political capital, skill, and expertise could deftly manipulate the three streams and leverage policy windows in order to move their own agendas to fruition.

Governors are important policy entrepreneurs and can impact each of these streams through the various roles they play (Christakis, 2009; Mintrom, 1997). They serve as the chief executive for their states and appoint executive branch officials who will create policy solutions. They lobby legislators for their preferred policy prescriptions, impacting the politics stream. Perhaps their most important role, however, is that of agenda setter, drawing attention to issues within the problem stream. Governors set out a vision for their states and try to persuade legislators to follow that vision.

Governors also belong to a particular group of policy entrepreneurs: those seeking election and re-election. The classical view of elected officials suggests these policy entrepreneurs advocate for policy that helps them achieve at least one of three major goals – enacting effective public policy, earning re-election, or gaining political power (Fenno, 2003). Fenno (1977) applied these goals to federal representatives' communication behavior with four major constituencies. These constituencies and goals, however, also apply to all political figures, especially to those at the state level. The first constituency is geographic and refers to those people who live in their area of representation (Fenno, 1977). In the case of Governor Perry, the entirety of the state of Texas serves as his geographic constituency. The second constituency is their re-election constituency, or the group of people who are likely to support a candidate for re-election. The third is the primary constituency, meaning those who would likely vote for a candidate in the primary process. Fourth, the personal constituency refers to those who know the political figure personally (Fenno, 1977). Political candidates therefore, develop different speaking and communication styles for interacting with each constituency. Fenno called this phenomenon the politicians' home styles, describing the ways they discuss policy with constituents in order to achieve goals of policy, power, and re-election (Fenno, 1977).

Scholars have also examined the gubernatorial role in higher education. Notably, McLendon (2003) found that governors were key agenda setters in state higher education decentralization efforts in Arkansas, Hawaii, and Illinois. Christakis (2009) argued that governors are dominant stakeholders in higher education; his study of gubernatorial influence classified Texas as an entrepreneurial governor state, with strong budget authority but informal rather than statutory influence over the agenda.

Conceptual Framework

In addition to literature on agenda setting and political priming and framing discussed above (e.g., Lippman, 1922; Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw 1998), we applied discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001) to this research because of our interest in examining discourse as social phenomena. Discourse theory posits that meaning is dynamic and reality is unknowable; discourse requires analysis and interpretation. Guided by discourse theory, our interest is in "exploring patterns in and across the statements and identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations of reality" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 22). Discourse theory treats text itself as a research subject, examining relationships among its expressions and articulations and seeking to identify the discourses, values, and symbols the text draws from or perpetuates (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Our conceptual framework was also informed by literature on the influence of governors in state agenda setting, particularly higher education. Governors are the most visible political figure in their states, and gubernatorial influence has arguably increased across the U.S. since the 1960s (Dilger, 1989; Lane & Adler, 1988; Weerts, 2002). According to Lane and Adler (1988), the governor is the most important state policymaker for both public and higher education because of his or her three major roles as chief state executive, chief state budget officer, and chief opinion leader (p. 2). Governors also exert influence through appointments to state higher education offices, commissions, and boards of regents. According to Christakis (2009), "The lack of attention to gubernatorial power over public higher education presents a striking void in the examination of a central figure in a state's relationship with its public university system" (p. 98). We focused here on the role of the governor as a policy entrepreneur with the influence and authority to shape the state's higher education agenda (Kingdon, 1995; Mintrom, 1997).

Methods

We examined gubernatorial agenda setting around higher education policy in Texas, focusing on the ways in which Governor Perry framed his higher education agenda and primed constituents to receive his message. Because agenda setting requires a public audience, we used Perry's most high-profile public speeches as the basis for our dataset. We chose not to include stump speeches from Perry's unsuccessful 2012 and 2016 presidential campaigns. Perry's target audiences during those campaigns were not the same as those he addresses as Governor; in short, his four constituencies for those campaigns were dramatically different, as he had to communicate to a geographic constituency of the United States presidential electorate rather than that of Texas. We also included speeches given specifically on subjects related to higher education. In total, our dataset included six State of the State addresses, three inaugural addresses, 18 education addresses, and one outgoing address for a total of 28 speeches over a period spanning 2001 to 2015. Speeches in our dataset are listed in Appendix A.

We employed a twofold approach to the analysis of Rick Perry's speeches as Governor of Texas during this time. First, we assumed that major speeches from the Governor represented the Governor's aspirations and goals for the state at a given time period. In doing so, we expected he was attempting to communicate with geographic, re-election, primary and personal constituencies while also serving as policy entrepreneur. Therefore, multiple mentions of a policy issue or specific frame in Perry's speeches as Governor would suggest an attempt to pull multiple streams together to impact policymaking. To assess the extent to which Governor Perry focused on specific policy issues, we used a manifest-coding scheme. We created a counting program in STATA that searched

for key words and phrases within Perry's speeches.[1] The program then created indicator variables for the presence of words that dealt with higher education policy. Our approach is consistent with a widely used form of content analysis of qualitative data (Krippendorff, 2004; Merriam, 2009). Summary statistics and keywords are included in Appendix B.

Second, informed by political discourse analysis theory and methods (Dijk 1997; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), we conducted qualitative analysis to identify themes, patterns, and recurrent rhetoric appearing within and across the text of these speeches. Each speech was coded in Atlas.ti based first on deductive codes informed by the conceptual framework and literature review then through a second round of inductive coding for emergent patterns and concepts. We used pattern matching (Yin, 2014) and constant comparison (Merriam, 2009) techniques to identify themes across the data.

Findings

In response to our first research question, we found two themes in Governor Perry's framing of the Texas higher education agenda from 2000-2015: (1) emphasis on reforms to increase accountability, efficiency, and affordability, and (2) communicating both priorities and specific strategies to the Legislature.

Regarding our second research question, we found Perry primed voters to receive and value his message by (1) emphasizing higher education's contributions to economic and workforce development, and (2) invoking Texas's tradition of competitiveness and leadership.

Framing the Higher Education Agenda

Across the 28 speeches in our sample, Governor Perry mentioned the words "education" and "higher education" 93% and 53% of the time, respectively. He used the phrase "higher education" an average of 2 times per speech, with a maximum of 10 mentions in both of his speeches specifically addressing higher education reform. Perry's priorities included increased postsecondary accountability, efficiency, and affordability. Our data show the Governor worked not only as an agenda setter, but also as a policy entrepreneur – articulating not only priorities, but specific strategies for the Legislature to pursue.

Reforming for accountability, efficiency, and affordability. Perry's agenda for education opposed complacency and challenged the status quo. In both public schools and higher education, Governor Perry's reforms promoted three overarching values: efficiency, accountability, and affordability. Perry mentioned issues related to tuition in 32% of his speeches, and student debt in almost a fifth of the speeches in the sample. While he talked about affordability in only seven percent of the speeches, he used the word "access" in an impressive 60% of his speeches. Perry mentioned access issues an average of 1.5 times per speech. Mentions of financial aid and tuition occur in 39% and 32% of his speeches, respectively. Perry mentioned financial aid an average of .85 times per speech. Considering the bulk of the speeches included in the sample did not directly focus on issues of high-

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[1]The counting program requires researchers to divide each speech into lines of 80 or fewer characters. Once the lines are created, it searches for keywords as determined by the researcher, deletes those words from the lines, and counts the number of deleted characters from the line. It then divides the number of deleted characters by the number of characters in the keyword and saves that quotient, before re-inserting the keyword in the line. The quotient effectively serves as a total number of times the keyword appeared in a line. The program then adds the quotients to gain a total number of instances of a keyword within the entirety of a speech. We also transform the total count into an indicator variable for the purposes of this paper.

er education, this mean suggested a qualitatively significant amount of policy focus on issues of financial aid.

Perry often presented the ideals of efficiency, accountability, and affordability as interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Governor Perry emphasized the way in which these values strengthened transparency and taxpayers' understanding of the return on investment of state funds. In 2002, Perry emphasized the connection between accountability and excellence, stating:

> A strong system of accountability brings out the greater potential of our children and our schools. As long as I am governor, the state of Texas will not stand for mushy curriculum, weaker standards, or a system of toothless accountability.

This assertion demonstrates the extent to which Perry believed high outcomes required high expectations and oversight. As governor, he presented higher education as a tool for fueling the state's workforce and competitiveness through postsecondary accountability, efficiency, and affordability. Without such an approach, postsecondary education would neglect to serve the state as a driver of economic productivity.

Accountability. Perry sought major reforms to public education finance, accountability, and teacher incentives; as his tenure progressed, he increasingly applied these priorities to higher education. In his 2007 State of the State address, Perry called on the Legislature to improve budget transparency in higher education to improve taxpayer awareness of how state funds were used. In remarks on higher education reform the same year, Governor Perry reiterated:

> With greater clarity in budgeting, taxpayers will be able to ensure that their money is being put to good use, yielding a return higher than ever before. If lawmakers adopt this plan, the ultimate result will be a higher education system that is more affordable, more accountable and more focused on meeting the needs of tomorrow's global marketplace.

Perry's emphasis on accountability included advocating for outcomes-based funding for universities, a priority he emphasized for years but was not realized by the Legislature during his time in office. Governor Perry emphasized this funding model in his 2011 and 2012 State of the State addresses. In 2011, he explained how a 2009 review of cost efficiencies he commissioned supported the idea of funding based on performance:

> One idea that emerged from that process is called "outcomes-based" funding in which a significant percent of undergraduate funding would be based on the number of degrees awarded. Texans deserve college graduation for their hard-earned tax dollars, not just college enrollment.

Funding based on outcomes aligned with Perry's interest in efficiency and incentivizing shorter time to degree would also mean greater affordability for students and families. Perry again emphasized outcomes-based funding in his 2012 State of the State address:

> Under my plan, $300 million in new funding is tied to schools meeting performance targets. Funding would increase for degrees awarded in critical fields, graduation rates, and success with at-risk students. One of the fundamental changes envisioned by this plan is ensuring more funding follows the students. Ultimately, higher education is not about the buildings we fund but the lives we improve.

Here, Perry invoked the previously discussed tactic of priming Texans to support his education reform efforts by framing education in terms of increasing opportunity and quality of life. To facilitate education's effectiveness to these ends, he argued that the state must incentivize institutions to increase productivity and graduate more students.

Efficiency. Governor Perry's emphasis on graduation outcomes also furthered his interest in improving efficiency for students, institutions, and the state. This phenomenon was underscored

by his mention of business-related practices in higher education in 67% of his speeches and issues of innovation in higher education in 11% of his speeches. In fact, only in Perry's education addresses did he use the words "business" or "innovation," with three mentions of business-related practices in higher education in his May 2010 speech on investment in education. In his 2011 State of the State address, Governor Perry called for reforms to increase educational productivity and value:

> Our public institutions had 200,000 more students enrolled in 2010 than they did in 2008, so let's be sure those students and their families are getting the best value for their time and money. Change does not come easily or naturally to these big institutions, but it is critical to educational effectiveness and efficiency.

In this statement and others, Perry's repeated use of terms such as "efficiency," "effectiveness," "reform," "change," and "progress" underscores his business-oriented approach to higher education. In two 2012 speeches addressing education issues, Perry called for specific policy changes in the form of transparency from institutions about cost and time to degree. He asserted:

> We're also going to make sure students have a clear picture of how much is at stake when it comes to graduating on time, by requiring universities to inform students how much they'll spend on their degree if they graduate in four years, and how much more it'll cost if it takes five or six. Implementing these measures will meet the growing demand for higher education...in a way that provides encouragement for students to complete their degree in a timely fashion and with financial certainty.

As with greater budget transparency, Perry advocated for open communication from institutions about how student enrollment decisions would affect their educational expenditures. His interest in accountability and efficiency emphasized return on investment of stakeholder resources and better outcomes for the economy if students could graduate and get to work more quickly.

Affordability. In order to serve as a vehicle for opportunity and workforce development, Perry advocated consistently for lowering costs to students and increasing financial aid.
In his 2007 State of the State address, Perry called for new financial aid resources to support Texas students and power the economy into the future:

> Today knowledge is more valuable than raw labor, and those nations that prosper by pushing the envelope of innovation are those that invest in vibrant colleges and universities. That's why I have proposed expanding financial aid by $360 million so Texas can compete in a global economy.

To reach his goal of increasing college affordability, Perry stressed the importance of initiatives such as TEXAS Grants, the state's need-based aid program, and B-On-Time Loan program, which offered zero-interest loans forgiven if students graduated in four years with a B average. In his 2011 State of the State address, Perry famously called for the development of bachelor's degrees costing students $10,000 or less. He stated:

> Today, I'm challenging our institutions of higher education to develop bachelor's degrees that cost no more than $10,000, including textbooks. Let's leverage web-based instruction, innovative teaching techniques, and aggressive efficiency measures to reach that goal. Imagine the potential impact on affordability and graduation rates, and the number of skilled workers it would send into our economy.

Institutions did indeed respond to this call and incorporated competency-based education into affordable new four-year degrees. By 2013, Perry observed that 13 institutions offered such programs (Hamilton & Gibbs, 2013). In his 2013 State of the State address, Perry praised this progress and added a call to freeze tuition rates for incoming freshmen so costs would not change if they graduated in four years. He explained:

> We must do everything we can to continue making higher education an achievable dream for

all Texans. To that end, I've called for a four-year tuition freeze for incoming freshmen…This will provide students and families cost certainty, as their tuition will be locked in at the rate they pay their first semester for the next four years. This will also encourage them to graduate on time, which is a problem we simply can't ignore anymore.

Perry primed voters to support his agenda by emphasizing higher education as a way to pursue individual aspirations. Perry's proposal of a four-year tuition freeze promoted his interest in affordability for students, as well as efficiency and accountability for students, institutions, and the state.

Perry as agenda setter and policy entrepreneur. Governor Perry identified a set of core foci related to higher education and called on the Legislature to pursue those goals. He articulated higher education as a key priority of his governorship, beginning with 2001 remarks in a speech on higher education reform: "There is no more important effort related to our future as a state than that of improving higher education." Subsequently, in 2003, Perry included education among the top priorities outlined in his State of the State address:

We must begin by setting clear and limited priorities. And I will begin by stating my top three priorities for all of you: The education of our children, the security of all Texans, and the fiscal responsibility of our government. Education, because it represents the greatest investment we can make in a future of prosperity. Security, because the economic security of citizens, and the safety of citizens are the core responsibilities of any government. And fiscal responsibility, because neither of these priorities can be met unless our spending is disciplined.

Perry called three special legislative sessions in 2005 and 2006 to address education reform issues (Martins, 2013), and he clearly outlined the objectives he sought for the legislative activity that would occur during that time. In 2005 remarks to the Texas Association of School Administrators and Texas Association of School Boards, Perry prioritized education issues and called for improvements to educational excellence:

For months I have discussed four principles I would like to see achieved…The first, and most important goal, is to improve public education by rewarding educational excellence…We must decide on the final destination first, and then plot the course. Educational excellence is the destination I am seeking and it is where we must focus the most attention as a state. So let me be clear: if we have a special session this year, the subject will not be school finance, it will be educational excellence.

Similarly, in 2006, Perry shared with the Texas Business and Education Coalition: "Let there be no doubt that education reform will be central to the debate of the next 15 months." The Governor's consistent messaging about these priorities solidified his agenda of prioritizing and reforming education, both in public schools and higher education.

Yet Perry's agenda setting extended beyond communicating broad goals and calling on the Legislature to identify policy solutions. Governor Perry set state priorities then outlined specific strategies for the Legislature to adopt in achieving them. A 2007 speech on higher education reform demonstrates his combination of overarching goals and legislative strategies:

Without reform, the global marketplace will continue to march forward, and in a few short years, Texas workers, and the entire Texas economy, will be left behind. That is why today I am proposing major reforms to higher education that will reward colleges and universities for every student that earns a degree, lead to more degrees awarded in critical fields like computer science and nursing, and open new doors of opportunity for thousands of young Texans with an increase of $360 million in financial aid. There are two cornerstones to this proposal: financial aid and performance-based funding.

In this and subsequent speeches, Governor Perry outlined proposals for outcomes-based funding for universities, four-year tuition freeze for students upon entering college, and expansion of finan-

cial aid funding. He called for the development of STEM academies to strengthen Texas's high-tech workforce, low-cost degree options, and tax credits for employers whose workers earned GEDs. Perry communicated high-level goals as well as specific strategies and tactics, engaging in both agenda setting and policy entrepreneurship as the Governor of Texas.

Priming Texans to Support Postsecondary Reform

Governor Perry's remarks often primed voters to view higher education as a life changing opportunity and important investment for the state. For example, in 2002 remarks on higher education reform, Perry emphasized educational opportunity and aspirations:

> We must take greater measures to ensure a college education is the opportunity of all, and not just the dream of some. More young Texans must be trained for the opportunities of tomorrow. That means we must make every effort to attract first generation students to our colleges and universities, while continuing to take innovative steps to ensure our students are ready for college, and able to afford college. A higher education is critical to achieving higher aspirations. We must empower more young Texans to live their dreams.

With remarks like these, Perry primed legislators and voters to hear and support his specific policy proposals to achieve these goals. An excerpt from his 2007 inaugural address shows similar political priming tactics:

> Over the last 30 years, because of the grace of God, I have learned my purpose. It is not to build a majority political party, nor to hold power for the sake of holding power, it is to build a Texas of limitless possibility. And it starts with our children. Imagine the possibilities in a Texas where every child is educated, every graduate has access to
> a good job, every life deemed precious.

Perry established the underlying value of education to Texans before outlining specific strategies to further educational achievement. By priming voters about the importance of education, he could prepare them to understand and appreciate his ideas for reforming schools and universities. Here, we discuss two subthemes related to Perry's priming tactics: connecting higher education to economic and workforce development and invoking Texans' pride in their state's leadership and competitiveness.

Economic and workforce development. Governor Perry used political framing to position higher education as a critical tool for workforce and economic development. In 2005 remarks to school administrators, Perry stated: "Education is the foundation for a future of unlimited opportunity and prosperity. Educated Texans are empowered Texans, empowered to pursue the jobs they desire, and the quality of life of their choosing." Education meant not just following dreams but achieving greater financial security for both the state and its private citizens. Again, in his 2011 inaugural address, Perry called on Texas to "continue investing in our people, developing young minds, grooming and attracting the best and brightest in the fields of science and medicine, giving individuals the tools and the freedom to prosper." Governor Perry primed voters to value higher education as a life changing opportunity then framed educational attainment as essential for a strong economy and comfortable quality of life for all Texans. This approach would resonate with both the basic hopes and dreams of everyday Texans, as well as the economic interests and values of policymakers focused on growing the state's productivity, workforce, and tax base.

Governor Perry prioritized the economy throughout his tenure in office. In his 2015 outgoing address, Perry stated: "As Governor, I have made economic growth my signature initiative." Accordingly, Perry consistently tied the need for accountability, efficiency, and affordability reforms to the state's economic interest. Recall, for example, that when calling for the development of

$10,000 bachelor's degrees in 2011, Perry referenced "the potential impact on affordability and graduation rates, and the number of skilled workers it would send into our economy." College graduates would fuel the state's workforce. At an earlier statewide education summit in 2006, Perry credited educational progress with improving the Texas economy:

> One way to judge whether schools are succeeding is to look at the job climate, because one of the top factors employers consider in choosing where to expand is the presence of an educated workforce. To me, the fact that so many businesses are expanding in Texas is a ringing endorsement of the progress we are making in education.

Indeed, when referring to higher education policy issues, Perry's speeches included an average of 5.2 references to workforce development, with the highest number of references, 22, coming in his 2011 State of the State speech. His references to higher education were often closely followed by economic references. In his 2007 Inaugural address, for example, noted the need "to commit to excellence in higher education as it prepares the workforce of the future." His messaging repeatedly positioned higher education as an economic rather than intellectual engine and a producer of workers more than graduates.

Perry saw the economy and technological innovation as driving the need to reform education. His comments on higher education and the economy often referenced the need to promote STEM training and careers that would prepare workers for new jobs in emerging fields. Perry encouraged investment in related programs as a way to advance the state's workforce. His policies increased state funding for STEM Academies and high school robotics, math, science, and technology programs. Governor Perry also advocated for the UTeach program, which prepared teachers for math and science classrooms. In 2009, he stated: "By emphasizing these core subjects, we can accelerate the pace of our high-tech education, expand opportunity for the young people of our state, and strengthen our state's workforce of the future." The same year, Perry also asserted that "the most important job attractor is a well-educated workforce that is equipped to meet the demands of a high-tech economy." Again in 2012, Perry continued to stress the importance of adapting higher education to meet the needs of a rapidly changing workforce:

> It's a vital conversation to have, because higher education in Texas remains in flux, and we're definitely at a crossroads. There are some who want to make sure things stay the same. To an extent, I can understand the emotions behind that, since the Texas system is among the best in the world. But today's highly competitive, ever-evolving economy is demanding a workforce that's more extensively educated, and better prepared for the high-tech jobs of the present and future.

These comments reveal the economic impetus behind Perry's higher education reforms, as well as the tension between the status quo and his vision for the future of higher education in Texas. Perry viewed higher education as outdated in relation to emerging technology and the global economy. This sense of misalignment between academe and the 21st century workforce contributed to his reform agenda, which sought to ensure colleges and universities prepared graduates to help Texas compete and lead in the national and global economy.

Leadership and competitiveness. Perry's speeches revealed strong pride in Texas as a state, an economy, and a system of higher education. In fact, Perry used frames related to Texan exceptionalism 99 times over 28 speeches, for a mean of 3.5 phrases related to Texas pride per speech. The Governor's public statements during this time demonstrated the state's commitment to national leadership and prominence. Perry viewed higher education reforms as a critical strategy to advance Texas's influence and competitiveness; he stated in 2001: "There is no more important effort related to our future as a state than that of improving higher education." In 2009, he urged policymakers to ensure Texas remained a leader in education and economic productivity: "Let's…continue improv-

ing higher education in Texas as we work to achieve and maintain a competitive edge in the global marketplace well into the future." Public and higher education reforms would enable the Texas economy to excel in the 21ˢᵗ century.

Amidst calls for increased productivity, transparency, and lower costs, Perry also acknowledged the state's progress and praised Texas as a pioneer in higher education reform. In his 2011 Inaugural address, Governor Perry stated:

> The people running some other states are actually pretty smart, and they see what we've been doing. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, you all should be flattered. In Florida, Governor Rick Scott has enacted very similar policies and is promoting many of the higher education reforms that are yielding promising results here.

In this and other statements, Perry consistently emphasized that other states recognized and envied Texas's success in education reform and economic growth. In 2002, he noted: "Education leaders around the country refer to our progress as the Texas Miracle." In two 2006 speeches, Perry praised policymakers and education leaders for their success strengthening public schools; at a statewide education summit, he described Texas as outperforming other states:

> Our record in improving education tells a remarkable story that no other state in America can match. Scores on national assessments have gone up in every age group, ethnicity and subject area, and the achievement gap has steadily gone down. We are the first state in America to make a college prep curriculum the standard coursework in high school, the first to provide individualized study guides for struggling students, and the first to tailor individualized graduation plans for students at risk of dropping out. We lead the nation in the number of students taking advanced math courses, and total enrollment in pre-K.

Again that year, Perry announced to the Texas Business and Education Coalition: "The facts show that no other state in America can measure up to the progress Texas has made in improving education…what we have accomplished…has been nothing short of revolutionary." These comments reveal the extent to which Perry saw Texas, and himself, as a national leader in higher education reforms to increase efficiency and outcomes.

Perry stressed high expectations but assured Texans that their state was always the envy of others. His messaging balanced calls for reform with affirmation of progress, and he conveyed perennial pride in Texas as a state and Texans as a people. For Perry, Texas was a leader and a trailblazer in higher education and other areas; yet, the governor posits the state should not rest on its laurels and should always do better in order to stay ahead. Even as the state improved on metrics of achievement and national benchmarks, Perry continued to call for greater strides forward and ongoing leadership; in 15 years, his work was never done. Through this emphasis on leadership and competitiveness and in the three preceding themes of agenda setting, reform priorities, and workforce development, Perry positioned himself as an education reformer committed to promoting economic growth for Texas. He appealed directly to his constituents' pride in Texas as a national leader, positioning the need for more accountable, efficient, and affordable higher education as pivotal to the state's ongoing leadership and competitiveness.

Discussion

This study reinforces work by Lane and Adler (1988), McLendon (2003), and Christakis (2009) on the critical role of governors as policy entrepreneurs and agenda setters in higher education. The findings discussed above present Perry as a governor who engaged in both the broad work of agenda setting and the narrower, more focused work of a policy entrepreneur. Governor Perry approached higher education with an overarching agenda that he communicated regularly and consistently; his statements about the value of higher education and the importance of ongoing reforms

elevated higher education as a key priority during his tenure. But, rather than delegate that priority to the Legislature to consider and develop, Perry took an active role in crafting and facilitating the progress of policies that aligned with his higher education agenda. His role in relation to higher education combined agenda setting with policy entrepreneurship: he charted a course for the state, then engaged directly with legislators throughout the policymaking process to garner support, build coalitions, and ensure the outcomes he desired.

This view of Perry as highly engaged in higher education policy supports his reputation as a higher education reformer who tangled with university affairs through his regental appointments, interference with university leadership, alliance with the conservative Texas Public Policy Foundation, and support for implementing the Foundation's productivity reforms, such as the Seven Breakthrough Solutions (Burka, 2012; Hamilton, 2011b). In 2009 during the 81st Legislature, Perry signed House Bill 51 (HB 51) and established the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP), an effort to increase the number and capacity of Tier 1 research universities in the state. HB 51 provided matching funds to double the impact of private investments in Texas's emerging research institutions. Establishing the TRIP – which remains, over 10 years later – underscores Perry's commitment to higher education as a vehicle for economic productivity, competitiveness, and Texan leadership. TRIP funds have resourced efforts such as the Texas Biomedical Device Center at UT Dallas and the Laser Capture Microdissection System for High Impact Life Science Research at UT El Paso (University of Texas System, 2015). Research in these areas paves the way for high-paying, high-skill jobs that will advance the Texas economy.

Perry's articulation of higher education as a priority for Texas also illustrates the concepts of political framing and priming (Weaver, McCombs, & Shaw 1998). Governor Perry primed constituents to receive and support his higher education policy ideas by presenting college as a transformational opportunity and a vehicle for economic prosperity and success; few would oppose such widely shared values, making them effective in raising support for his cause. Primed to view higher education as an opportunity for individual and state economic mobility, constituents were more likely to accept his policy ideas for improving higher education's efficiency, accountability, and affordability – ideas such as $10,000 bachelor's degree programs, or HB 51's resourcing for emerging research universities. Perry also approached higher education in ways that aligned strategically with traditional Texan values and ideals: workforce emphasis, economic development, and competitiveness and leadership. These themes in Perry's higher education agenda served not only to present his own values, they also reflected values his Texas constituents would appreciate and understand. Governor Perry made higher education a key priority by tying the issue to values and ideals that would resonate with Texans of all backgrounds. Texas was great and its people had great potential – but higher education had to improve in order to provide the opportunities and economic growth they deserved.

Lastly, Perry communicated through his own home style to at least three of his four constituency groups. By nature of communicating to the people of Texas, Perry addresses his geographic constituency. His focus on Texan exceptionalism relies on some level of geographic connection within the state. Furthermore, Perry's emphasis on accountability and treating higher education institutions as businesses clearly relates to both his primary and re-election constituency. Conservative Republican voters, a vital electoral group both for re-election and earning the party nomination, by and large support business and free enterprise (Francia et al., 2005). Such voters also support a greater efficiency in government. Perry speaks to this "small government is the best government" faction throughout his speeches, especially when talking about increased efficiency and $10,000 degrees. Ironically, Perry's demands for greater accountability, transparency, and efficiency likely have the opposite effect for institutions – these demands translate to "big government" for universities. Incentivizing research activity might also be seen as adapting the missions and priorities of teaching-focused institutions in the name of economic productivity. By relaying his goal of making higher ed-

ucation more efficient and economically relevant, Perry advocates for his preferred policy position while speaking to his conservative and business-minded political base. These examples suggest a cultivated home style by which Perry speaks directly to his constituents.

Significance and Implications

Governor Perry's political discourse reflects many of the conservative higher education reform efforts at play across the country (Kelly, 2014; Olson, 2015). As the voices of policymakers and the media can too easily dominate these reform conversations, it is critical that higher education scholars identify and analyze this discourse in order to participate in shaping the future of our colleges and universities. It is particularly important to note that themes emerging from analysis of Perry's speeches from 2000-2015 continue to arise in today's higher education landscape, where performance funding exists in nearly two-thirds of U.S. states (National Conference on State Legislatures, 2018) and the U.S. Secretary of Education advocates openly for privatization and alternatives to public education (Strauss, 2018). College and university stakeholders – from students and families to faculty, administrators, and boards – must question the overarching narrative surrounding higher education and consider the political agendas of those in power. This study contributes to the limited literature on governors' higher education agendas (Christakis, 2009) and reinforces the need for further examination of their role as agenda setters and policy entrepreneurs – particularly at this time of endangered public support and rising political siege against the value of higher education.

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Appendix A

The Education Speeches of Rick Perry

Speech Date	Speech Occasion	Legislative Session
1/15/15	Outgoing address	84
1/29/13	State of the State	83
10/4/12	Competency Based Learning & Technology	82
10/1/12	Meeting Growing Demand in Higher Education	82
2/8/11	State of the State	82
1/18/11	Inaugural address	82
5/19/10	Investment in Education as Key to Competitiveness	81
11/16/09	Investment in Education Robotics Programs	81
10/15/09	Plan to Expand High Tech Education	81
5/7/09	Celebrating Progress in Higher Education	81
1/27/09	State of the State	81
2/6/07	State of the State	80
2/1/07	Higher Education Reform	80
1/16/07	Inaugural address	80
3/23/06	Statewide Education Summit	79
2/21/06	Texas Business and Education Coalition	79
5/13/05	Texas Public Education Foundation	79
1/26/05	State of the State	79
1/27/04	TASA and TASB Regarding Education Reform	78
4/14/04	Educational Excellence and Property Tax Relief	78
4/3/04	The Education Plan	78
3/9/04	Education Availability	78
1/26/04	Educational Excellence Initiatives	78
1/12/04	Announcement of Texas Education Commissioner	78

Appendix B

Summary Statistics of Keywords in 28 Speeches Given by Governor Perry

Keyword	Mean Number of Mentions	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Agenda Setting				
Education	11.60714	7.866192	0	30
Higher Education	1.892857	2.910254	0	10
Accountability				
Tuition	0.5357143	0.9222413	0	3
Efficiency				
Deregulation	0.0357143	0.1889822	0	1
Affordability				
Affordability	0.0714286	0.2622653	0	1
Financial Aid	0.8571429	1.532712	0	6
Debt	0.2142857	0.4986755	0	2
Financial Need	0.1071429	0.4162697	0	2
Merit	0.0357143	0.1889822	0	1
Economic and Workforce Development				
Workforce/Jobs/Employment	5.214286	6.172563	0	22

Business/Economy	4.25	4.933821	0	18
Innovation/10K Degree/CBE	0.1428571	0.4483951	0	2
Leadership and Competitiveness				
Freedom and Opportunity	3.535714	2.987407	0	10
Middle-Class	0.1071429	0.3149704	0	1
Access/Access Institutions	1.535714	2.081348	0	8

Theoretical Starting Points: The Field of Emerging Research Universities

SEAN A. RYAN
University of North Texas

Theoretical Starting Points:
The Field of Emerging Research Universities

SEAN A. RYAN
University of North Texas

In 1960, recognizing the lack of preparedness on the part of public higher education to deal with the drastically increasing population, California enacted legislation that included universal access to community colleges, increased support for state college polytechnic programs, and continued emphasis on the university research mission. The California Master Plan for Higher Education, formally implemented through the Donahoe Higher Education Act (1960), was developed by leaders from various fields, including public and private higher education, business, and government. Clark Kerr (2001), then President of the University of California (UC) and a key person in the development of the plan, remarked that more than anything, it was "a desperate measure to prepare for a tidal wave of students, to escape state legislative domination, (and) to contain escalating warfare among its separate segments" (p. 172). Yet the plan, and more importantly the vision it put forth, developed the largest number of high-level research campuses in the U.S. while ensuring the educational demands of an advancing technocratic society would be fulfilled.

The California Master Plan created a coordinated field of higher education in which the various institutional sub-fields understood their particular missions and could plan accordingly. A primary concern of the planners was the desire for state colleges to be recognized as research universities and share in the federal research and development money such status brings. At the time, California had 15 percent of the country's research universities, but comprised less that 10 percent of the nation's population (Kerr, 2001). Understanding the need for polytechnic education the state colleges provided, as well as the increased operational costs that research status brings, the responsibility for academic research remained within the UC system. It was understood by most policy makers and higher education leaders that California did not need any more research universities at that time (Kerr, 2001).

The State of Texas

The state of Texas at the turn of the new millennium, was in a much different predicament with regards to public research universities. There were only two Texas public universities that would be considered tier one, the popular and informal designation referencing institutions that produce the highest levels of academic research as defined by the Carnegie Foundation Classifications (n.d.). Here, I refer to these institutions as Research Universities One (R1). California, a state often used for comparison with Texas due to its relative population size and gross domestic product output, had eight public institutions that were R1 in 2003. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) recognized that federal research support was the primary contributor to such activity, and recommended an increase in the proportion of such funding, setting various benchmarks pertaining to science and engineering obligations to Texas universities. In an effort to increase the state university proportion of federal research dollars, THECB provided formal recommendation to the Texas Legislature with *Closing the Gaps by 2015,* establishing benchmarks that called for an increase from 5.5 percent of federal research obligations in 2000 to 6.2 percent by 2015, amounting to more than doubling total research expenditures during that time period (THECB, 2000).

In 2009, the Texas legislature created the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP), providing matching funds to private gifts for a newly established institutional grouping known as Emerging

Research Universities (ERU). Later that year, the National Research University Fund (NRUF, 2009) was established, creating a dedicated and independent fund to assist ERUs in achieving national prominence with regards to research status. Then Governor Rick Perry believed the NRUF would serve as a "clear road map to help emerging research institutions reach the next level" (UH, 2009). Benchmarks for the NRUF included restricted research expenditures of at least $45 million, commitment to high quality graduate education, and awarding of at least 200 Ph.Ds annually (NRUF, 2009).

Academic Drift

California state colleges and ERUs in Texas demonstrate the various ways that states approach the dilemma of academic drift (Kerr, 2001). Public institutions straying from their traditional roles in search of prestige can underserve the demands of students while bringing about higher education systems that are more expensive (Morphew, 2009). California recognized the need for affordable polytechnic education, and a coordinated system ensured that access to a quality higher education be available to all state residents. Texas encouraged state universities to strive for status associated with academic research by rewarding such behavior with the lure of additional funding. Comparing the ideologies that drive policies in both Texas and California demonstrates the differences between equity-driven policy versus policy driven by privatization and competition. These states' policies emphasize the influence that ideology has on how organizations react to state policy and organizational legitimacy. The desire for status is apparent in both situations, though in the context of Texas, ERUs have begun taking on attributes and characteristics of organizations that are more expensive to operate and maintain, a problem for institutions that have historically served as access points for bachelor's degrees. The increased emphasis on research productivity at state institutions occurs within the same policy environment that demands these institutions are more efficient and affordable. How can these seemingly competing priorities coexist?

Strategic Action Fields

Efforts to prevent or persuade increased emphasis on academic research at state colleges and regional universities demonstrate how emerging fields of higher education can be influenced through various policies and incentives. Utilizing the concept of strategic action fields (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012) this paper explains changes in organizations by providing insight into how state policy influences constructed, meso-level social orders. Expanding on Pierre Bourdieu's (1996) concept of fields, defined as the structured arena where practice occurs, strategic action fields extend the analysis to that of groups of actors competing for advantage and resources to increase their capabilities and reputations.

Strategic action fields are socially constructed in that they are based on subjective standings. They have boundaries that shift based on varying situations and promote a set of shared understandings amongst their members that are fabricated over time. Membership within a specific field is limited to "those groups who *routinely* take each other into account in their actions" (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012, p. 168), thus within this analysis, only universities and colleges who strive for R1 status are included. Removing all other actors from the field analysis brings attention to the relationships between groups who compete for position within the particular field, exposing precisely what is of value in these relations. In the case of state colleges in 1960s California and ERUs in present day Texas, external research funding is a coveted resource, but it is only a means to achieving prestige associated with tier one status.

Membership and Field Dynamics

It is understood that all fields emerge and change over time. Moreover, fields are made up of incumbent groups—those who possess disproportionate advantages against groups of challengers who wield fewer resources and influence over field dynamics. The aim of incumbent groups is to solidify their advantage within the field, while the role of challengers is to take advantage of opportunities that increase their influence amongst the status hierarchy. These moments of contention can be caused by various exogenous shocks or even instability within corresponding fields that send ripples through the greater field environment (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012).

These constructed social orders are meso-level in nature in that they are made up of fields and sub-fields that are hierarchically structured based on a perceived social status. The relative position between and within various groups determines an institution's legitimacy (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). All fields are embedded within a complex web of other fields, each possessing varying levels of potential and influence over their own affairs and the functioning of others. The state can be seen as a set of strategic action fields that have tremendous influence over shaping the practice and stability in almost every non-state field (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012). The set of shared understandings that govern individual fields are defined by the state and serve the interests of incumbent members by reproducing field conditions that will continue to be self-serving in determining the standards of prestige. Fields are often managed by various Internal Governance Units (IGU), non-state actors who assist in the reproduction of field conditions (Fligstein & McAdam, 2012).

Fields of American Research Universities

The field of American research universities can best be understood as a general field, made up of four-year universities that conduct academic research and educate doctoral students. Within this field, there are various subfields determined by a particular institution's ability to conduct research. The boundaries of these sub-fields vary but are generally determined by one's designation by the Carnegie Classifications (2018). It is important to note that these classifications should not be thought of as rankings but are intended to provide a framework of comparable institutions for educational and research purposes. These classifications take into account various metrics related to research, and are generally most competitive and status worthy within the sub-field distinction of R1. Within this subfield of research universities, status hierarchy is most sensitive at the top, as competition for resources is fierce between those institutions with the strongest abilities. Those universities located towards the bottom pay close attention to their actions and those of peer institutions most similar to their capabilities. Worse than not reaching R1 status is emerging into this sub-field and then falling out five years later. The Carnegie Foundation, unintentionally of course, functions as an IGU, as its classifications serve as a symbolic system that legitimates the hierarchical arrangements of the field. The rules and standards of the field ultimately benefit those with the most advantages, further solidifying their presence within the social order's hierarchy.

Establishing Incumbents

Inspired by the German universities of the 19th and early 20th centuries, early American research universities increasingly became concerned with graduate education and the advancement of knowledge. At the beginning of the 20th century, the presidents of the 14 leading research institutions convened the Association of American Universities (AAU), an organization dedicated to the standardization of Ph.D. requirements in an effort to gain recognition of American doctoral pro-

grams. These AAU institutions can be viewed as the incumbent members of the newly formed field of American research universities.

Reliance on external sources of funding was a common theme amongst early research universities. As the procurement of the social resources needed for academic research became an increasing concern, revenue from undergraduate tuition continued as a primary source of funding. Prior to World War I, the 14 member institutions of the AAU enrolled 10 percent of American college students, an enrollment needed to supplement the cost of recruiting faculty, educating graduate students, and building physical space for experiments to take place. These federal initiatives continued on a massive scale through World War II and during the Cold War grants from the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and, eventually, the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Health served as major sources of research funding (Geiger, 1989). As the federal government established policy regarding federal research and development, incumbent institutions within the field were involved in shaping the shared understandings that define the field rules.

Neoliberal Policy Environment of Texas

Neoliberalism's influence on the political culture of Texas over the past two decades has shifted popular opinion regarding the purpose of higher education from being a public to a private good (Harvey, 2007). Through an agenda centered on less government and stricter adherence to free-market principles of privatization, deregulation, and competition, it is believed that policy that reflects the neoliberal ethic will result in improved efficiency, quality, and affordability within the public sector (Harvey, 2007). Privatization of public higher education occurs through shifting the responsibility of obtaining a college degree to the individual. One of the primary purposes of higher education is to promote social mobility among members of society, as it provides individual students with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete for employment in the marketplace (Labaree, 2005). It is believed that because the individual is benefiting from obtaining a college degree, higher education is a private good, thus the responsibility rests upon the student.

This ideological shift has also had financial repercussions for public institutions through the reduction of state appropriations and the deregulation of tuition setting authority, shifting a larger share of the financial burden to students. Since 2003, tuition setting authority in Texas has been vested with public higher education systems or institutions, allowing universities the ability to raise their price without any oversight by the state.

Unlike many public services, higher education is capable of generating a large portion of its operating budget through tuition and fees. Because of this feature, public higher education is often targeted for larger budget cuts during troubled economic times. Being disproportionately affected by economic cycles, public universities are becoming more reliant on sources other of revenue to maintain operating budgets and provide stability (Doyle & Delaney, 2009). Unfortunately in Texas, as in the nation, these shortfalls in public support are supplemented by increases in tuition and fees.

Isomorphism and Academic Drift

Within an established field, institutional efforts employed to deal with uncertainty often lead to decisions and policies that make organizations more similar in structure. Facing similar environments, organizational tendencies to resemble one another is understood as isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This process can result from pressure being exerted by formal and informal stakeholders or through institutional responses to uncertainty, which leads to imitation. Universities, in an effort to seem more legitimate, often mimic other organizations that are perceived to be successful. This competition for status encourages homogenization within a field, as prestige and resources are

rewarded for efforts to appear more legitimate to peers and innovative to stakeholders (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Faced with an environment in which external funding became synonymous with increasing prestige and legitimacy, a growing administrative bureaucracy shifted resources in directions believed to ensure a stable flow of research revenue (Morphew, & Baker, 2001). The generation of revenue through faculty practices has always been a fundamental component of American higher education, as the teaching and academic research that make up the bulk of their time can contribute large sums to university operating budgets. The difference between the universities of today and those of the later 20th century, lie in the "breadth and depth" of such market-based behaviors (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

NRUF Benchmarks and "Competitive" Markets

Public policies that create competitive funding for resources reward institutions not for efficiency and innovation but for meeting policy objectives that have little to do with free-market principles or the benefit of public higher education. The belief that competition will make universities more efficient with public money, while also making them more accountable to so-called consumers, ignores the difficulty of productivity growth within complex personal services, such as higher education (Giroux, 2010). Redirecting resources towards research requires efforts to control costs, possibly leading to diminished quality, such as increasing class sizes or raising the number of courses a faculty member teaches each year. These efforts would generate more semester credit hours per year for the faculty members and departments, but bigger classes and more students will most likely not lead to better education (Archibald & Feldman, 2010).

The quasi-markets in which ERUs compete lack components essential to free economic markets, such as the free flow of producers, open competition for resources, regulation determined by price-based exchange between buyer and seller, and the production of goods which are rivalrous and/or excludable. Institutions are rewarded not for economic efficiency but for meeting policy objectives that have little to do with the principles of laissez-faire exchange, allowing particular institutions, which are well situated within the field, disproportional access to these awards (Taylor, Cantwell, & Slaughter, 2013). Competitive funding policies do not address the issues of public policy environments, as free-market solutions misunderstand the unique nature of public goods.

Carnegie Classifications as a Symbolic System

Financial resources are not the only capital being coveted by universities looking to expand their research abilities within the field of ERUs. Status and prestige provide these institutions with perceived legitimacy, and the importance of enrollment growth leads university administrators to pursue various rankings or statuses in order to attract students. Research has become emphasized by state policy makers as an opportunity to raise revenue and prestige for universities becoming less reliant on state appropriations. As institutions dealt with financial uncertainty, decision making tended to take the form of mimicking the characteristics and attributes of organizations that are understood to be successful. This organizational behavior was fueled by a rankings regime (Gonzales & Nunez, 2014) that promoted increased institutionalization by formalizing standard perceptions of excellence within the field, leading institutions to drift from their historic missions and purpose as regional public universities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This academic drift has drastic implications on the institutional diversity of Texas public higher education, as many regional universities began pursuing research status (THECB, 2000).

In search of legitimacy, ERUs continue to become more institutionalized through the various ranking systems and the influence these organizations have on external resources. This influence is more likely to impact decision making at institutions that are vulnerable to status hierarchy created by the ranking regime (Bastedo & Bowman, 2009). Increasing revenue through faculty activities such as research, promotes external revenues while also increasing the prestige of the institution. Faculty work is turned into a commodity with exchange value, continuing neoliberalism's privatization of public higher education (Gonzales & Nunez, 2014, p. 13).

Attempts to increase a university's reputation, as a research intensive institution, requires increasing the amount of federal funding the institution receives for research, an incredibly expensive and challenging undertaking. In order to be competitive for federal research funds, universities must invest in infrastructure and specialized faculty who will conduct such investigations. As the role of faculty is shifted towards specialized areas of research, the administrative bureaucracy continues to grow as a result of movement away from teaching and shared governance (Morphew & Baker, 2004, p. 369).

More than anything, competition for stagnant resources has led to an increasing proportion of the cost of research activities to be picked up by the institution itself. The outdated funding system for research funding does not work well for a community that has grown by a factor of 12 over the past 50 years. Institutional expectations for research generation have expanded, while funds for research have remained flat. Even in the present reality in which universities face increased competition for external resources, while funding an increasing share of research operating costs, institutions continue to stay the course out of fear of being left behind (Stephan, 2012, p. 149).

Implications for State Higher Education

The search of prestige is believed to underserve the demands of students while bringing about higher education systems that are less affordable (Morphew, 2009). The tendency for institutions to become more similar is problematic for American higher education systems. Additionally, as universities that historically served as access points for public education begin taking on the characteristics and attributes of more costly institutional types, those most in need of the social mobility that higher education can provide are the most likely to be priced out of the market (Archibald & Feldman, 2009). Many different types of colleges and universities allows for greater learning options for students while also providing systems that can adapt and change to specific public needs. Institutions have grown less diverse in past years, even when there has been vast change in almost every other facet of higher education (Morphew, 2009). California understood this in 1960, and though it seemed as if Clark Kerr and other Master Plan designers were playing favorites when they denied California state colleges from establishing research university status, they knew the field conditions only benefited incumbent members. To be fair, Texas only had three research universities in 2000, while California had eight in 1960. Additional R1 universities were needed in Texas, but competitive and market-based policies created priority contradictions for institutions asked to chase prestige while also being fiscally accountable to the public. When it was realized additional research universities were needed in California, new UC campuses were built rather than allow state colleges to emerge. The mission of the polytechnic campuses was too important to the social mobility and efficiency of state educational efforts. It was also a way of discouraging any additional colleges that wished to emerge within the sub-field of R1.

Reflecting back on the Master Plan more than 40 years later, Kerr summarized the coordinated efforts of California as simply a "triumph of collective good judgment" (Kerr, 2001). As state legislatures determine how to accomplish specific goals related to the development of human capital and the financing of public higher education, it is important to understand that organizations re-

spond to incentives and pressures from a range of stakeholders that exist within multiple fields. Uncoordinated competitive policies aimed at increasing the number of R1 universities rewards prestige and status, which undermine access to educational opportunities, particularly for those most at risk of being excluded.

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Texas House Bill 51—An Incognito Performance-based Funding Policy: Implications for Access and Equity in Texas

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Texas House Bill 51—An Incognito Performance-based Funding Policy: Implications for Access and Equity in Texas

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Higher education policy discussions are largely shaped by competing viewpoints regarding who benefits from higher education—society or the individual (Bowen et al., 1997). This tension around who higher education most benefits informs decision-making for policy makers who might ultimately decide who should pay for higher education—the individual or state and federal governments (Labaree, 1997). Most importantly, the aforementioned premise undergirds policy makers' perceptions of higher education as a justifiable public investment, which shapes their beliefs regarding their role in determining the function of public universities as state institutions (Labaree, 2013).

There is little consensus considering the function of higher education (Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008). Many stakeholders hold firm fundamental beliefs that higher education functions solely as a benefit to individuals who can afford the luxury of such pursuits (Labaree, 2013). Others stakeholders hold firm beliefs that higher education is of most benefit as a function of the state's political, social, and economic development, and thus a viable public investment and of special interest to state legislators (Labaree, 1997). However, most stakeholders miss the interrelated nature of each argument, which ultimately justifies higher education as a public good with some private benefits, worthy of investment (ideologically and fiscally) by both the state and the individual student. No different than any public policy issue, as discussed by Stone, (2002), the contemporary function of higher education must be understood not in terms of contradiction but in terms of its dual nature. To assess the true value of education and determine its most appropriate function across the P-20 pipeline, one must understand the purpose of education as a purpose rife with duality (related to its public and private functions). This duality reflects the perspectives of a diverse group of stakeholders across various public domains, including students and their families, governmental agents, and private industry. Through their imposed values and influences, each of these stakeholders play key roles in (re)shaping and (de)legitimizing every fundamental aspect of higher education, not excluding macro matters surrounding institutional mission and funding.

Yet, policy makers with significant influence often fail to consider the interest of disenfranchised stakeholders. This happens when policymakers prioritize the policy interests of some stakeholders at the expense of others. Thus, the outcome leads to policy blind spots at the policy development and policy implementation stages of the process, which ultimately leads to inequity. This policy outcome comes at the risk of alienating or disenfranchising one or more groups considered as primary stakeholders in the field—students and their families, governmental agents, and/or private industry. Unchecked asymmetric power relationships between policy stakeholders constrains the ability of policy makers to historicize and situate the disparate outcomes of a policy within a contemporary racialized context (Jones et al., 2017). This then limits their ability to acknowledge the endemic, systemic racism and elitism prevalent in the societal context in which these policies exist, even when these ends are the aim of the policy (Gillborn, 2005).

Specific to the issue of performance-based funding models in higher education, administrators and thought leaders of higher education have been woefully limited in their ability to develop policy solutions with the potential to eradicate (rather than mitigate) concerns of racial and class in-

equity (Fairclough, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). These limitations exist due to insufficient attention to the needs and experiences of low-income and racially marginalized student stakeholders at the policy development and implementation phases (Gillborn, 2005; Umbricht et al., 2017). Nearly 10 years ago, following the enactment of Texas House Bill 51 (TX HB 51) of the 81st legislature, the Texas Legislature initiated a state appropriations policy that offers an example of the policy politics and policy inequity previously mentioned.

In 2009, the THECB designated eight of its most accessible and reasonably priced public universities as emerging research universities (THECB, 2017). These institutions are now referred to as emerging tier-one or emerging research universities across Texas and the policy has since taken on a similar nomenclature as the tier-one university bill or the emerging research university bill. Since the enactment of the policy, which can be thought of as an opt-in performance-based funding model, the designated universities have been fiscally incentivized to join a state-sponsored race that is predicated on institutional transformation, which has been predefined by accountability metrics outlined by the THECB. Winning this race means that administrators of the university will have succeeded, not only, in advancing its prestige on a national level but also in securing substantial amounts of state appropriations and positioning the university to be recognized as Texas' third public flagship university. By 2016, five of those universities rose to the Carnegie classification of Tier One "highest research activity" status, but none have been recognized as a Texas flagship institution. Those five universities include Texas Tech University, University of Houston, University of North Texas-Denton, University of Texas at Arlington, and University of Texas at Dallas (THECB, 2017).

The Purpose

To understand the impact of Texas House Bill 51 (TX HB 51), which has gone largely unidentified as a performance-based funding policy governing four-year institutions in Texas, we analyzed TX HB 51 as a performance-based funding model at the state level with an understanding that higher education is a public good with some private benefits. With that understanding we work from an underlying assumption that state universities ought to work for the benefit of both the good of the polis as well as the private good of those who make up the polis—the polis in this case being the state of Texas. Therefore, we emphasized not only the microeconomic gains or losses resultant from performance-based funding but also (and primarily) the social repercussions related to such policy decisions at the macro level.

Because TX HB 51 is not a statewide mandate that universally affects all public Texas universities, it cannot be stated without qualifiers that Texas has a higher education performance-based funding model. However, this policy uses state appropriations, beyond the state's base funding formula, to incentivize its regional comprehensive institutions towards high research activity in pursuit of academic excellence and nationally recognized prestige (Crisp, Horn, Dizinno, & Wang, 2010). Because of the unique role regional comprehensive institutions have historically played in meeting the needs of low-income and racially marginalized students (stakeholders with considerably less political influence than those who developed the policy), we use a critical policy analysis to consider at what costs these priorities have been pursued and at whose expense. By employing this lens, we offer critical interrogation of the potentially negative economic and social impacts of this funding mechanism, while considering historical and persistent racial inequity and power differentials across dominant and non-dominant groups within U.S. society.

In the sections that follow, we first synthesize the impact of long standing performance-based funding models outside the state of Texas. We then discuss similar trends related to TX HB 51 that might warrant further exploration as it relates to the specific needs of various stakeholders

and policy goals within the state of Texas. Finally, based on our analysis, we encourage the reframing of TX HB 51 in ways that better align with Texas' equity focused vision for higher education, as espoused in its statewide strategic plan at the macro level and sustainable policy recommendations to eliminate (un)intended impacts to marginalized student populations at the micro level.

Literature Review

To trouble the dominant discourse surrounding the influence of TX HB 51 on the organizational mission and enrollment management practices concerning low income and racially marginalized student populations, we first liken TX HB 51 to performance-based funding policies, a category of policies demonstrably proven to change the organizational inputs and outputs of higher education institutions (Dougherty, Natow, Bork, Jones, & Vega, 2013). Performance-based funding models in higher education are not new funding mechanisms, nor are they unique to the state of Texas (Dougherty et al., 2013). There are a variety of performance-based funding models. Some models incorporate performance metrics into the base formula that determines an institution's expected state appropriation within a given fiscal year. Other models offer an added bonus to the base appropriation.

Performance-based funding models originated as early as 1979 in Tennessee and continued to develop throughout the following decades across the nation, serving primarily as accountability policies in the higher education policy arena (Dougherty, Jones, Kahr, Pheatt, & Reddy, 2014; Massy et al., 2013). These policies have been historically more punitive than incentivizing, primarily because most performance-based funding models do not allocate new funds as an incentive. To the contrary, the incentive is typically a reallocation of funds that institutions would have otherwise received as a portions of their base funding if the performance metric had never been introduced (Petrick, 2012). In addition, institutions most often only receive funds on the basis that they follow an unfunded, unmanned state mandate (Dougherty et al., 2014), which is to say that they are meeting performance metrics or reporting data in accordance with a non-optional state law. This is in line with simple compliance, rather than a reaction to a worthy incentive, as the idea of performance-based policy implies. But above all, institutions are commonly compelled by law to produce additional labor in order to record and report the degree to which they offer more of the same services (Petrick, 2012). Taking all of these points into consideration, the mechanisms of the earliest and longest standing performance-based funding, budgeting, and reporting models are threats of penalization for failure to improve, rather than incentives to improve.

The National Context: Performance-Based Funding Models

The makeup of state legislative bodies, higher education governance structures, as well as the inter- and intra-state economic and political climate in which institutions are situated largely determine if a state will adopt a performance-based funding model (McLendon, Hearn, Deaton, 2006). Dougherty et al. (2014) qualitatively studied the uptake and implementation of performance-based funding models across multiple states. Like McLendon et al. (2006), Dougherty et al. (2014) found that Republican domination of state legislative bodies and governors with Republican party affiliations increased likelihood of adoption of performance-based funding models. In addition to the partisan distribution of the legislative body or the party affiliation of state governors, government (de)centralization and the level of authority held by the governor were also found to have significant influence on the development of performance-based policies (Dougherty et al., 2014). Specifically,

states with centralized higher education governance (such as a state coordinating board) were more likely to adopt performance-based reporting models (McLendon et al., 2006).

Typically-Cited (Un)intended Consequences

We use a critical policy analysis to move beyond the typical preoccupation with "governance, elite leaders, and field dynamics" (Bastedo, 2012, p. 5). Instead we consider the implications of organizational changes and the effects researchers have shown these changes to have on educational outcomes in multiple state contexts, which further perpetuate educational inequities. Across the nation, several consistently or potentially negative repercussions of performance-based funding models have emerged (Dougherty et al., 2014; Lahr et al., 2014). The issues of most concern in the literature among scholars and policymakers are three fold: the cost of compliance, weakening academic excellence, and diminished faculty voice in academic governance (Dougherty et al., 2014; Massy et al., 2013; McLendon et al., 2006; Petrick, 2012). These issues relate to dominant, White normative conceptualizations of institutional legitimacy, accountability, and efficiency. As a result of the attention these effects receive in the literature, most policy makers easily accept them as critical priorities, and they take precedent at the policy agenda setting and implementation stage. Moreover, they are more likely to undergird the decision-making processes surrounding what priorities are measured and rewarded in performance-based funding models (Massy et al., 2013), which ultimately guides the priorities of colleges and universities under the mandate of the policies.

Other documented repercussions of performance-based funding models include the narrowing of institutional mission and restriction of student access to higher education through enrollment management decisions that affect equity in the admissions process, financial aid awards, and institutional resources for student development (Dougherty & Reddy, 2013; Dougherty et al., 2014; Petrick, 2012; Umbricht et al., 2017). These consequences disproportionately impact low-income and racially marginalized students. Yet, policy makers and those who implement policies pay considerably more attention to preventing and mitigating the consequences mentioned in the previous section (cost of compliance, weakening academic excellence, and diminished faculty voice in academic governance) at each stage of the policy making process than they do the unintended consequences related to access and equity (Umbricht et al., 2017).

With the exception of Tennessee and Ohio, little has been done to reconfigure performance-based funding models to deal with these aftershocks. Instead, it is commonly suggested that the diminished equity can be made up for by the community college sector, which will presumably absorb students who might be shut out of the four-year sector due to performance-based funding mechanisms that incentivize more exclusionary enrollment management practices (Dougherty & Reddy, 2013; Dougherty et al., 2014; McLendon et al, 2006). Such conclusions support the reliance on community colleges to resolve the residual issues of equity and access within the four-year sector and support the status quo of inequity pervasive across the P-20 pipeline (Pizarro Millian, 2016). As open-access institutions, community colleges are intended to be accessible to all people, while four-year institutions are not held to the same standards of equity (Dougherty, 1988; Labaree, 2016), despite the impact on students' private lives or implications for society more broadly. However, these repercussions do not appear to rise to the level of concern that would suggest to policy makers that the formula itself, undergirding the performance-based funding model, might have a fatal flaw and should therefore be reconfigured based on more equitable assumptions.

The inequitable consequences of performance-based funding mechanisms are consistently discussed in the literature as unfortunate, residual, after-effects—the metaphorical bride price—for a more efficient and legitimized system of higher education (Dougherty & Reddy, 2013; Dougherty et

al., 2014; McLendon et al, 2006). Only recently have scholars taken up the task of empirically demonstrating the deleterious impact of such policies with the sole intention of highlighting the level of impact on access for racially marginalized and low-income students pursuing higher education in a performance-based funding state context (Jones et al., 2017; Umbricht et al., 2017). Jones et al. (2017) offered an alternative model to performance-based funding that centralizes and prioritizes equity in higher education. Their model includes five key components: (1) Mandatory Equity Metrics, (2) Equity Metrics Inclusive of Race, (3) Additional Weights for Low-income & Racially Marginalized Students, (4) Dis-incentives for Creaming at the Expense of Low-income and Racially Marginalized Students, and (5) Investment in Low-resourced Institutions (Jones et al., 2017).

Together, the findings of our literature review have implications related to the values most often reflected in the metrics of performance-based funding models (Massy et al., 2013). Policy makers, analysts, researchers, and other powerful constituents, who determine which functions of higher education are worth measuring, ultimately have the privilege of legitimizing new priorities and delegitimizing other priorities. This means they have substantial power to systematically change the most fundamental functions of a given college or university. As Jones et al., (2017) pointed out, legislators' resistance to incorporate standards of equity into funding models and scholars' reluctance to critically interrogate the repercussions of said models only perpetuate the systemic racism and economic oppression endemic within and beyond the academy writ large (Apple, 1993). Whether intentional or not, the repercussions of these stakeholders' actions have real consequences for the students and other stakeholders immediately affected by their decisions.

Research Questions

In the following sections, we employ a form of critical policy analysis identified by Gale (2010) and Sheurich (1994) as policy archeology. Though Sheurich (1994) discussed this method of analysis comprehensively and from within a U.S. policy context, in this study we are concerned specifically with the type of policy archeology that Gale (2010) described from an Australian policy context. Gale (2010) posited that policy archeology is a specific variety of critical policy analysis, derived from policy sociology, which asks a variety of questions, such as:

(1) Why are some items on the policy agenda (and not others)?; (2) Why are some policy actors involved in the production of policy (and not others)? and (3) What are the conditions that regulate the patterns of interaction of those involved? (p. 387-388)

In this study we specifically ask two questions in line with this inquiry:

(1) What were the institutional priorities of Texas House Bill 51?

(2) What does documented discourse reveal regarding the intended and unintended influences of those priorities on regional, comprehensive four-year institutions as it relates to the educational opportunities of low-income and racially marginalized student populations?

Analytical Theoretical Framework

The methodological underpinnings of this work are be firmly rooted in the fertile (evolving) soil of critical policy analysis (CPA). According to Diem, Young, Welton, Mansfield, and Lee (2014), CPA is often concerned with: 1. "the policy, its roots, and its development," 2. "the space between policy development and implementation," 3. "the policy tools and processes that facilitated policy institutionalization and/or internalization," and 4. "the distribution of power, resources, and knowledge…[with special attention to] the creation of winners and losers" (p. 1072). In line with CPA methodology (Diem et al., 2014), we situate TX HB 51 within the context of the most recent

and current higher education agenda put forward by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)—Closing the Gaps and 60x30TX Plan, respectively. In doing so, we begin our analysis by speaking to the origins, funding mechanisms, and reporting metrics gleaned directly from a document analysis of TX HB 51, state coordinating board documents, and news articles that cover the development of TX HB 51. We briefly contextualize TX HB 51 within the historical context of comprehensive regional institutions in an effort to illuminate the unseen social effects of the policy. We finally analyze the development of TX HB 51 (explicitly conceptualized here as a performance-based funding model) in ways that challenge unquestioned notions of academic excellence, prestige, and acceptable residual outcomes. Ultimately, in the following sections, we present our archeological findings to our research questions that consider the function of Texas' regional comprehensive institutions, the institutional priorities of TX HB 51, and the influence of those priorities on regional, comprehensive four-year institutions as the findings pertain to low-income and racially marginalized student populations.

Texas HB 51: Origins, Funding Mechanisms, & Reporting Metrics

In 2000, nine years prior to TX HB 51, the state of Texas explicitly identified symptoms of what Ladson-Billings (2006) refers to as "the educational debt," which continues to go unpaid to students from racial groups who have been historically excluded from educational opportunities—those symptoms being academic achievement gaps between racially minoritized students and their White counterparts across the pipeline. The THECB introduced a new strategic plan for higher education entitled Closing the Gaps, which might be usefully interpreted as a step towards repayment of that debt. TX HB 51 was originally developed under this strategic plan, and reflects two of its primary priorities for the state, but at varying degrees. Early on in its plan, Closing the Gaps pointed out, "At present, a large gap exists among racial/ethnic groups in both enrollment and graduation from the state's colleges and universities. Groups with the lowest enrollment and graduation rates will constitute a larger proportion of the Texas population" (THECB, 2000, p. 4). The need to effectively close the gaps between white students and students of color, particularly African-American and Latinx students, was named as vital to the future economic viability of the state. In its 15 years as the state strategic plan, gains were made in minoritized student enrollment and graduation; for example, Black students actually exceeded target enrollments by approximately 45,000 students in 2015 (THECB, 2016).

Along with access, Closing the Gaps did in fact discuss institutional prestige. With the hope of increasing the prestige of programs and missions at Texas institutions, the plan put forth the point, "Most universities should not strive to be research institutions, but rather focus on strengthening their own unique missions" (THECB, 2000, p. 14). Interestingly, the plan directly addressed a specific excellence goal regarding public institutions; in order to do that, the state would: increase the number of research institutions ranked in the top 10 among all research institutions from zero to one, and two additional research universities ranked in the top 30 by 2010; increase the number of public research universities ranked in the top 10 among all public research universities from zero to two, and four ranked among the top 30 by 2015. (THECB, 2000, p. 14)

Notably, the state's public flagship institutions, The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University, contributed to developing this goal. Further, Closing the Gaps described plans to help Texas colleges and universities grow in quality according to their institutional type (THECB, 2000).

While the addition of a small number of public institutions was needed to help the state meet its benchmarks for excellence, a statewide and systematic program for incentivizing multiple

institutions across the state was not obvious when Closing the Gaps was introduced in 2000. It was not until 2008 when TX HB 51 was adopted by the Texas Legislature to fulfill this latter vision of the Closing the Gaps strategic plan. However, the former goal, articulated in the name of the strategic plan, to improve equity between racial groups, was incorporated in TX HB 51 to a much lesser extent, indicating that equity might have been lost in its implementation.

TX HB 51: Origins

In 2009, TX HB 51 mandated that THECB designate seven regional, public, comprehensive, four-year institutions across the state as emerging tier-one research institutions (THECB, 2009). Those institutions then became eligible to compete for access to millions of dollars in state appropriations from several newly developed (not newly generated) pots of money following the 81st Legislature. Two of those pots are referred to as the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) and the Research University Development Fund (RUDF). The final pot, which will be given the most attention for the scope of this work, was deemed the National Research University Fund (NRUF) (Legislative Budget Board, 2009; TEC 62.145; THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017; THECB, 2018).

When early competition revealed winners and losers for TRIP funds, especially given that alumni and fundraisers could generate matching funds for the universities, legislators' priorities for national competition and economic improvement were evident (Hamilton, 2010). One of the leading advocates for higher education in the Texas Legislature, Senator Judith Zaffirini, scolded University of Houston officials who fell short in fundraising: "All of the hometowns of these [emerging] universities should want a national research university, not for the status but because of the economic multiplier" (Hamilton, 2010, para. 13). In testimony to the Texas Legislature, Daniel (2008) argued that it was no coincidence that research universities were clustered around important innovation centers like Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, and Boston. It was argued that more research universities would add to Texas's economic competition against other states. Hamilton (2010) called Texas's three research universities "a source of some embarrassment and a drag on economic development," (para. 4) considering that California had nine top-tier research universities and New York had seven (Daniel, 2008). This discourse surrounding progress towards tier-one research status further fueled the desire for institutions to maintain endurance in the race to high research activity.

TX HB 51: Funding Mechanisms

In total, TX HB 51 was projected to cost the state of Texas close to three million dollars ($298,965,652) through the initial biennium following its enactment (Legislative Budget Board, 2009). Annually, that was reported to be an approximate $147,500,000 each fiscal year from 2010 until 2014 (Legislative Budget Board, 2009). When TX HB 51 was enacted, Texas legislature abolished the prior Texas Higher Education Fund (HEF) and reallocated the $256,000,000 balance to fund the NRUF (THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017; TEC 62.145). To qualify for NRUF benefits, each eligible institution is required to meet qualifying benchmarks in practice, collect institutional data, and submit data reports to the THECB demonstrating their commitment to increased research activity across legislated categories outlined in sections (d)(1)(c) (iii-vi) of TX HB 51.

TX HB 51: Reporting Metrics

In addition to making THECB responsible for designating the first emerging research institutions, TX HB 51 mandated that the Board also delineate the eligibility criterion qualifying institu-

tions for performance-based appropriations distributed from the NRUF (TEC 62.145; THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017; THECB, 2018). THECB came up with eight criteria to reflect state priorities around excellence and prestige.

Mandatory Criteria	Four out of Six Additional Criteria
1. Emerging Tier-One Designation by THECB	1. Endowment Funds $\geq$ $400 Million
2. Two Consecutive Years of Research Expenditures $\geq$ $45 million	2. Doctoral Degrees $\geq$ 200
	3. Increases in Freshman Academic Profile
	4. Increases in Faculty Profile
	5. National Recognition by Professional Associations
	6. High-quality Graduation Rates

Figure 1. THECB NRUF eligibility criterion.

First, institutions must be designated by the Coordinating Board as an emerging research institution and have spent a base of $45,000,000 dollars in research expenditures in the last two years prior to applying to receive NRUF appropriations (TEC 62.145 (C); THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017; THECB, 2018). In addition to meeting two mandatory criteria, institutions must also meet four out of six optional criteria in the two years prior to applying. Institutions can (1) demonstrate endowment funds in excess of $400,000,000; (2) award more than 200 doctoral degrees; (3) achieve membership in one of three nationally recognized research associations; (4) recruit high-quality faculty—determined by the number of Nobel peace winners, tenure-track or tenured faculty, and the professional association to which they belong; (5) enroll a high-achieving freshman class—determined by whether the institution enrolls a freshman class comprised of 50 percent or more students from the top 25 percent of their high school class, or whether the institution enrolls a freshman class whose 75th percentile reflects standardized test scores at or above 1210 on the SAT or 26 on the ACT, or whether they demonstrate commitment to closing the gaps between underrepresented first time in college (FTIC) students by offering federal support programs such as TRIO or McNair Scholars; or (6) demonstrate high-quality graduate education by having 50 or more graduate level programs, or having at least a 56 percent master's graduation rate or at least a 58 percent doctoral graduation rate (THECB, 2009; THECB, 2017).

The Targets of TX HB 51: Comprehensive Research Universities

In order to understand the potential impact of TX HB 51 to equity in higher education, it is critical that we briefly explain the historical context of the institutions it affects—comprehensive research universities. To do that effectively, we must consider these institutions through the framework put forth at the beginning of this analysis, which recognizes the dual function of higher education as a public good with some private benefit.

The eight institutions designated as emerging tier-one campuses by TX HB 51 were Texas State University, Texas Tech University, University of Houston, University of North Texas-Denton, University of Texas at Arlington, University of Texas at Dallas, University of Texas at El Paso, and University of Texas at San Antonio (Hamilton, 2010). These universities, as regional, comprehen-

sive state universities, emerged from historical roots that tie them to a category of institutions that the state and federal government fiscally and ideologically invested in out of interest in the success of the surrounding regional economy and the localized needs of citizens who wanted access to advanced learning through post-secondary education opportunities (Harcleroad & Ostar, 1987; Henderson, 2007; Orphan, 2015; Pizzarro Millian, 2016). As a result of their inclusive nature for academically underserved populations (e.g., low-income, racially minoritized, and historically female student bodies geared towards applied professions), they are also part of a category of institutions with far reaching roots in the race for status, prestige, and state resources (Harcleroad & Ostar, 1987; Henderson, 2007). Nonetheless, they have been identified as crucial institutions for providing access and developmental opportunities for growth for students who might never be able to access selective or highly selective institutions based on admissions practices foundationally rooted in exclusion (Carnegie Foundation, 2014; Crisp, 2016; Kirst, Stevens, & Proctor, 2010).

According to Harcleroad & Ostar (1987) comprehensive regional institutions have been at the mercy of governing bodies and accreditation agencies since their inception. This history positioned the institutions as universities with malleable priorities over the course of several decades as they sought legitimation and public prestige (Harcleroad & Ostar, 1987). Their ability to secure such status, (largely determined by their ability to emulate research universities) has always affected their ability to garner fiscal support from private investors (students) and public investors (state governments) alike (Harcleroad & Ostar, 1987; Crisp, Doran, & Reyes, 2018). Crisp et al., (2018) acknowledge that the accountability measures currently applied to these institutions are of particular concern in a fiscal culture where policy makers are increasingly tying funding for higher education to high-stakes, performance-based funding models. Because these policies are devoid of knowledge about what actually makes these institutions democratizing spaces of higher learning, the policies leave the missions of the institution vulnerable to distortion.

TX HB 51: Unintended Consequences

The THECB benchmarks, which qualify these institutions for as much as $35,000,000 (as in the case of University of Houston), have little to do with direct impact on students' academic/social development or equitable educational opportunities for access (Legislative Budget Board, 2009). Instead, the major priorities of the policy incentivized growth in the areas of research efforts, research expenditures, faculty research productivity, and badges of prestige, which often reflect hegemonic White normative values of knowledge production, which delegitimize the scholarship and stifle the professional advancement of faculty of color (Baez, 1998; Fenelon, 2003; Frazier, 2011; Gonzales, Murakami, & Núñez, 2013; Gonzales, Núñez, Clemson, 2014; Gonzales & Rincones, 2012; Griffin, 2013; Lee & Leonard, 2001).

Because TX HB 51 requires universities to strive for benchmarks that ask them to reach beyond their current missions in pursuit of not only prestige but also state funding, several scholars have called into question whether these identified emerging research universities will be able to maintain their commitment to access (e.g., Crisp, Horn, Dizinno, & Wang, 2010; Doran, 2015). Critics of the policy raise these concerns because comprehensive regional universities have long served the societal function of supporting the educational needs of racially marginalized, low-income, and otherwise non-traditional students (Crisp et al., 2010; Doran, 2015; Lipson, 2011). In addition, these institutions are required to bet on themselves as they strive to meet the benchmarks of TX HB 51, meaning institutions are not provided start-up funds to meet the research goals for NRUF eligibility (THECB, 2018). Instead, they must raise the money or shift it from other priorities. This could mean institutions have to reallocate monies that may have once funded equity-focused initiatives or

that the institutions are passing the expenses on to students through increases in tuition (Doran, 2015). Furthermore, it implies that institutions might be likely to respond to TX HB 51 by reallocating funds or refocusing development efforts to increase research expenditures and their ability to recruit top faculty members committed to research activity, as opposed to student development and/or teaching (Milem, Berger, Dey, 2000; Neave, 1979; Riesman, 1958).

Beyond the potential shift in mission described above, one of the greatest shifts in priorities among some of these institutions could be their commitment to serving community college transfer students. Because of this reality, TX HB 51 has the potential to have significant negative impacts on racially marginalized students who primarily use community colleges as their starting point for accessing reasonably-priced, broad-access, regional, four-year universities (Dougherty & Kienzl, 2006; McLendon, Hearn, Hammond, 2013). For example, University of Houston, University of Texas at El Paso, University of Texas at San Antonio, and University of North Texas-Denton each have strong reputations for serving community college transfer students (Crisp, Horn, Dizzino, & Wang, 2010), but now the universities find themselves monetarily incentivized to shift their focus or have a more intense focus on FTIC students as a result of the eligibility benchmarks of TX HB 51 (Crisp, Horn, Dizzino, & Wang, 2010).

Discussion and Implications for the State of Texas

Monetary incentives, such as TX HB 51, operate to increase the performance of some functions and therefore, by definition, decrease the function of others (Lahr et al., 2014). Sometimes these effects disparately impact the most vulnerable and marginalized stakeholders, including low-income and racially minoritized students (Dougherty & Reddy, 2013; Dougherty et al., 2014; McLendon et al., 2006). This is because these stakeholders are most likely to have the seat furthest away from the decision-making table during the policy development stage. In the literature, these effects are palatably described in most cases as "unintended" outcomes of performance-based funding models (Dougherty & Reddy, 2013; Dougherty et al., 2014; McLendon et al., 2006 Umbricht et al., 2017). However, if not taken into consideration during the development and implementation phases of performance-based policies, despite existing evidence warning stakeholders of the common negative consequences mentioned above, these effects can only be considered intentionally neglected at best.

With the passage and enactment of TX HB 51, state agents and external stakeholders responsible for funding and legitimatizing universities in Texas have decided to hone in on the idea of academic prestige. Based on the eligibility benchmarks stated in the policy, prestige has been disproportionately predicated on an ideal that directly and exclusively maps onto values and norms associated with institutional rankings, rather than concern for meeting the needs of those served by Texas's broad access colleges and universities. The concept rests firmly on a foundation primarily concerned with faculty research endeavors, restricted research expenditures and endowments, and traditional notions of academic excellence that privilege White, affluent students at enrollment (such as ACT and SAT scores and linear, well-resourced pathways from high school straight to a 4-year institution) and consider racially minoritized students as liabilities who will require additional support and resources once accepted (Iverson, 2007).

The institutions designated as "emerging institutions" include those who have been cited in the field within the stratified system of higher education as the best at engaging in the function of teaching and academically developing students from marginalized backgrounds (Crisp et al., 2010; Doran, 2015; Lipson, 2011). These institutions have more resources than community colleges and create better access points for achievement of a four-year degree and, ultimately, access to greater

socioeconomic mobility (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Chetty et al., 2017; Hemelt, & Marcotte, 2011; Henson, 1980). Despite minimal efforts to encourage the maintenance of support programs geared toward students of color, low-income backgrounds, and/or first-generation students, the benchmarks of TX HB 51 are primarily benchmarks that aim to draw these institutions away from that mission by making the institutions more selective.

If TX HB 51 is found to have the same negative impact on equity and access as other state performance-based programs (Umbricht, 2017), it will not only poorly affect students' individual ability to access their best opportunity for economic and personal growth, but it will also be a travesty for the Texas economy and social climate as articulated by the 60x30 state agenda. The 60x30 state agenda espouses to increase the number of college graduates in Texas to 60 percent by the year 2030 to meet labor market needs. The agenda recognizes that an integral component to achieving this goal is related to increasing access among low-income and racially marginalized students through improved college-readiness initiatives and efforts to improve ease of community college student transfer (THECB, 2015). While the agenda does not purport to be concerned with equity as it pertains to accessing specific sectors of education, it is unlikely that a student stakeholder would not be acutely concerned with this factor. Though research is certainly one of the purposes of American higher education, the extent to which it is recognized as a function of the state by TX HB 51 pits it against other longstanding purposes of higher education—teaching, student development, and equity in access (Astin, 1993; THECB, 2000). When the Texas legislature further incentivizes comprehensive regional institutions to abandon those missions, it ought to think critically about whether it can afford the economic tradeoffs and the ethical optics of such tradeoffs. Further research is needed to determine the degree to which these institutions have protected their mission on these fronts or succumbed to the forces of TX HB 51, which propel them away from those traditions, particularly in the case of transfer-intending students from racialy and/or financially marginalized backgrounds.

Conclusion

Performance-based funding models (and similar funding mechanisms, such as TX HB 51) often have the potential consequence of changing the missions of institutions and curbing access to institutions of higher education for racially marginalized and low-income students (Dougherty & Reddy, 2014; Dougherty et al., 2014; Schudde & Grodsky, forthcoming). Unfortunately, in response, the majority of attention has been allocated to relying on the stratified nature of the field or support programs to address such consequences (Dougherty et al., 2014; Massy et al., 2013; McLendon et al., 2006). Legislative bodies imposing higher education accountability policies must do more to incorporate equitable access and success metrics into the performance-based funding formulas that have the greatest ability to move institutions of higher education towards behavioral change, like TX HB 51 (Jones et al., 2017).

Scholars concerned with equity and access must offer serious inquiry into the societal repercussions of ahistorical, color- and need-blind performance-based funding models. It is crucial to critique the widely accepted reality of high concentrations of racially minoritized and low-income students within broad access and/or under-resourced institutions of higher education, particularly when funding models (un)intentionally exacerbate this issue (Jain, Bernal, Lucero, Herrera, & Solórzano, 2016; Winston, 1999). This taken for granted (and sometimes glorified) reality is in fact evidence of considerable historical educational inequity across the P-20 pipeline, rooted in racism and elitism (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Davis & Moore, 1945; Gundaker, 2007; Labaree, 2013; Watkins, 2001). As a result, the stratification of racially marginalized

and low-income people, in both education, and the workforce, often goes untroubled by those in power to benefit from such inequity, such as industry stakeholders and wealthy legislatures, who often have lucrative ties to or financial footing in a state's industry sector.

Returning to the idea that higher education has an obligation both to public and private citizens, colleges, and universities must be simultaneously preoccupied with fulfilling the needs of all its stakeholders. That includes meeting the concrete needs of their immediate consumers (students), as well as the more abstract and distant needs of the society in which they are situated (such as legislatures, public and private industry, and socially vulnerable populations). Dependent upon the perspective of the onlooker, it can often appear that these needs are pitted against one another in competition for limited sweat equity and scarce financial resources. However, the needs of Texas's various stakeholders are not inherently at odds with each other—it is ideological tensions within higher education policies that create this contentious atmosphere within the polis.

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Inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago: A Dream in Progress

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Inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago:
A Dream in Progress

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Equal opportunities for all people around the world, including those with physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, and learning disabilities, have been emphasized in all aspects of research and policy. Specifically, ensuring that persons with disabilities are given the same accessibility and options as those without disabilities in countries with underdeveloped and developing economies has been a challenge. Unfortunately, the circumstances that these nations face stem from the limited availability of resources and facilities, thus rendering this pursuit of inclusion difficult. Globally, it has been the goal of nations to create a more inclusive environment for persons with disabilities in school and job settings. However, in the Caribbean region, addressing equality and the needs of this population has seemed to be on the backburner and, as such, is not viewed as a priority in research as seen in the lack of existing literature in this topic.

Although the right to education for all exists throughout the world, many barriers to achieving inclusion persist. Ainscow and Sandhill (2010) explained that implementing inclusion in schools have been a major global difficulty for education systems. For countries with developing economies, specifically in the Caribbean, limitations and frustrations may be more prevalent regarding the adoption of inclusive practices (Tsang, Fryer & Arevalo, 2002). One of the most significant challenges educational systems face worldwide is implementing inclusive educational practices (Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010). Inclusion supports all students learning in regular classrooms with all the essential supports assessible to them (Bergsma, 2000).

Educational and employment policies can adequately acknowledge the challenges persons with disabilities face. National policies can ensure that all teachers are mandatorily trained in special education teaching practices and resources are allocated and made available to students with and without disabilities. Within the context of inclusive employment, national policies can allow for more job opportunities available for people with all different types and severities of disabilities. In order to address the issue of accessibility to inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago, this country should consider incorporating stipulations such as accommodations based on the diverse needs of employees and standardized equal expectations into their policies.

A plethora of research has been conducted regarding inclusive education and inclusive employment, especially in countries with developed economies, such as the United States (e.g. Tanner, Linscott, Deborah, & Galis, 1996; Lalvani, 2013; Grynova & Kalinichenko, 2018). In the existing literature, however, research on the barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities is limited in the Caribbean context. In fact, there is a scant amount of research generally concerning the state of inclusion in the Caribbean and by extension, Trinidad and Tobago (Armstrong, Armstrong, Lynch, & Severin, 2005; Pedro & Conrad, 2006; Blackman, Conrad & Brown, 2012; Charran, 2016; Johnstone, 2010). This poses a significant issue because the current research that exists does not account for the cornucopia of barriers which the Caribbean faces. Therefore, any implementation of strategies and proposed frameworks are wholly inadequate for such countries with developing economies.

The intent of this critical forum of the *Texas Education Review* is to contribute to the special education literature on inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago. Understanding the reality of the inclusivity of persons with disabilities in a country that is a part of a region which is often overlooked in the literature is a significant aspect of this conversation. In fact, examining the extent to which the broader principle of education for all students is upheld, as well as the degree of inclusive employ-

ment in Trinidad and Tobago can pave the way for more research and changes in policy. The pieces in this critical forum focus on the inclusivity of persons with disabilities in the education and employment sectors in Trinidad and Tobago. In this particular piece, I will provide an overview of the issue of inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago and discuss the relevance of this literature and policy issue in which this country faces. Therefore, this paper and the other pieces in this forum can provide new insight into the barriers that schools in the Trinidad and Tobago face in creating and sustaining inclusive practices in the general education classroom. Further, this paper and one of the pieces in this critical forum will highlight the limitations and lack of opportunities which exist to employ persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago.

Equity for Persons with Disabilities

Armstrong et al. (2005) expressed that having equal opportunities available for many Caribbean citizens is a faraway reality due to several constraints such as funding and poverty. However, given the challenges the Caribbean experiences with achieving equality, we are compelled to explore the issue of access to inclusive education and employment for persons with disabilities. Paterson et al. (2012) stated that schools that promote inclusion are those that are equitable in their response to learners' needs. Inclusion of students with disabilities in schools is indicative of the opportunity to attend schools with typically-developing students, thus creating more opportunities for socialization as well as encouraging comradery. "The fundamental principle of inclusive education is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties and differences they may have" (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002, p.113).

Inclusive education, defined as "the integration and education of most students with disabilities in general education classrooms" (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002, p. 113; Friend et al., 1998), is critical to long-term academic outcomes. Inclusion is also related to the accessibility of an educational curriculum that is used for all students but has the necessary accommodations and modifications in place, and having the appropriate supports available to assist in these students' learning process such as teaching aides and availability of any physical accommodations to learning. In Trinidad and Tobago, although the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities is recognized, the implementation of its practice has been minimal. Policies addressing inclusion stress equity and equality for all people. In spite of this, the existing research has identified challenges to inclusion such as insufficient resources, facilities, and lack of teachers with special education training (Bergsma, 2000; Pedro & Conrad, 2006).

Future Directions for Inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago

In the three pieces that follow in this critical issue of the *Texas Education Review*, inclusion of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago is explored through the lens of education and employment. In the first piece, authors Chelseaia Charran and Kavish Seetahal focus on the current scope of inclusive education in Trinidad and Tobago as it aligns to the international agreements and documents to which this country is signatory as well as the current policy and legislation that exists regarding persons with disabilities. In the second piece, author Chelseaia Charran highlights relevant findings of an empirical study on the extent of special education services available to students with disabilities. The third piece, authored by Kavish Seetahal and Chelseaia Charran, examines the existence of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago and explores whether non-discriminatory practices are upheld in this country based on the current legislation, policy, and international mandates. The intent of these pieces is to raise awareness of the inclusion of

persons with disabilities in the education and employment sector with the hope to encourage advancement in policies and legislation in Trinidad and Tobago.

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The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Education Review
College of Education

Education for Some?
The Exploration of Inclusive Education in Trinidad and Tobago

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Education for Some?
The Exploration of Inclusive Education in Trinidad and Tobago

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All children with disabilities have the right to education according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1994). This inalienable right exists in Trinidad and Tobago as a consequence of the country's accession to international treaties which specify this right and is fostered through inclusive education. In Trinidad and Tobago, the draft National Policy on Persons with Disabilities (NPPWD, 2018), defines inclusive education as "persons with and without disabilities learning together in pre-school provision, schools, colleges and universities, with the appropriate networks of support" (p. ix). It is important to recognize that although governments acknowledge the need for inclusion, the global implementation of the practice is far removed from reality (Forlin, 2012). While this right to education may exist theoretically, there are many barriers to the country's ratification and incorporation of this right for persons with disabilities. These barriers range from a lack of resources, lack of teacher preparation and training, negative teacher perceptions concerning disabilities, cultural stigma, and lack of prioritization of the government of the country. In the 1980s, Trinidad and Tobago tried to implement inclusion by enrolling children with disabilities in the regular classroom. Based on teachers' perceptions on inclusive education and due to the lack of trained special education teachers and limited supports, this attempt was futile (Lavia, 2007).

In this article, we examine the current state of inclusive education in Trinidad and Tobago by analyzing the existing literature on this topic and the current national policy on persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. This piece is intended to bring the issue of accessibility to inclusive education and the rights of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago to the forefront. In doing so, it is our hope that researchers, policymakers, and the government of Trinidad and Tobago will understand the importance of inclusive education and as such, prioritize the special needs population in their research, allocation of funding, resources and legislation processes. There is a definitive discrepancy between what is required of the country with regard to education for persons with disabilities and the practical, realistic implementation of these mandates at a national level. As a result, it is imperative to analyze the national policies and determine what the literature postulates in this regard. But first, it is imperative to justify why the Trinidad and Tobago context is important and relevant in relation to inclusive education.

Why Trinidad and Tobago?

Trinidad and Tobago is the most southernmost Caribbean island located just off the coast of Venezuela. In the special education literature, the Caribbean region is often overlooked and the same is true of the Trinbagonian context. Regarding children with disabilities, the Census recorded approximately 3,302 children (i.e., persons aged 1-17) with a disability, which is equivalent to 6.3% of the population of persons with disabilities and 1% of the population of children (330 and 102 children, respectively) in Trinidad and Tobago. The NPPWD (2018) defines persons with disabilities as "those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interac-

tion with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (p. ix). In this paper, we address all persons with disabilities in this context.

Scholarly research on inclusion has not been a priority in countries with developing economies like Trinidad and Tobago as seen in the limited existing literature on this region. Inclusive education, defined as "the integration and education of most students with disabilities in general education classrooms" (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002, p. 113), is critical to long-term academic outcomes (Friend, Bursuck, & Hutchinson, 1998). However, Trinidad and Tobago has one of the largest economies in the Caribbean region and, as such, retains a good prospect of successfully implementing inclusion in education throughout the country. Furthermore, a national policy on inclusion being implemented in Trinidad and Tobago can have a ripple effect for other countries within the Caribbean region and other nations with similar economies. Trinidad and Tobago can provide a prototype model for the entire region including Latin America as it pertains to inclusive education. As such, the relevant international treaties and the existing national legislation will be explored.

International Mandates and Agreements

With regard to the equality of all persons and the right to education, Trinidad and Tobago is party to the United Nations (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the United Nations (2006) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994).

The UDHR (United Nations, 1948) acknowledges that all persons, without distinction, are equal, including persons with disabilities. Article 26 of the UDHR further specifies that all persons have the right to education. Furthermore, Article 24 of the UNCRPD recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to education which includes the right not to be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education united the world in a commitment to "give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their educational systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individuals differences and difficulties" (UNESCO 1994: ix). As asserted in the Salamanca Statement, equal opportunities for children with disabilities is a fundamental right (UNESCO, 1994). This includes the right to an education and access to the same learning environment as peers without disabilities. "The fundamental principle of inclusive education is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties and differences they may have" (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002, p. 113). However, the adoption of inclusive educational practices for children with disabilities has yet to be realized in many countries around the world, more specifically in Trinidad and Tobago, even though Trinidad and Tobago is part of the agreement to the Salamanca Statement.

Trinbagonian Laws

The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago enshrines the equality of all persons and this equality is a fundamental right. However, the Equal Opportunities Act of Trinidad and Tobago (EOA, 2000) is the only national piece of legislation which references the rights of persons with disabilities (NPPWD, 2018). The EOA (2000), among other things, generally prohibits acts of discrimination and promotes the equality of all persons in Trinidad and Tobago including persons with disabilities. As it pertains to education, section 15 of the EOA prohibits discrimination by all educational establishments throughout the country. However, section 18A of the EOA provides an excep-

tion to section 15 which permits discrimination. The section states that it is not unlawful to refuse a person's application for admission as a student, if the student would require services or facilities that are not required by students who do not have a disability and the provision of which would impose unjustifiable hardship on the educational establishment. This section seems to contradict Trinidad and Tobago's treaty obligations under the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the UNCPRPD.

The Education Act of Trinidad and Tobago (EA) requires children from ages 5 through 16 to attend an educational establishment. The EA places this obligation on parents to ensure that their children receive full time education (Section 77, EA). A recent survey on parents in Trinidad and Tobago indicated that 43% of parents of children with disabilities kept their child with disabilities out of school due to the lack of services available (Charran, 2016). Section 78 of the EA permits a parent to homeschool a child only if the Minister of Education is satisfied that the child is receiving satisfactory instructions at home. The 43% statistic is not surprising given the fact that the national legislation permits discrimination on the part of educational establishments, which leads to a lack of inclusive education nationally. The government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is aware of the discriminatory nature of the EOA and has indicated that it plans to rectify this issue (NPPWD, 2018).

Existing Policy for Persons with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago

In the existing draft of policy for persons with disabilities, it was stated that the government of Trinidad and Tobago will make certain that the appropriate legislation is enacted for students with disabilities to have access to a non-discriminatory educational experience in elementary, secondary, and college settings (NPPWD, 2018). Within this policy, it was also expressed that the Trinbagonian government will ensure "adequate allocation of the appropriate resources for physical and informational accessibility, funding and delivery of inclusive education"; will review and restructure "delivery of the national curriculum to ensure that it is inclusive for persons with disabilities"; will provide appropriate training programs for teachers to "meet the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities"; and will "provide access to a team of professionals with the ability to assess, recommend and provide required interventions for students with disabilities" (NPPWD, 2018, p. 20) in order to create more accessibility for inclusive education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Having an understanding and insight into the current policy can help conceptualize the gap that needs to be addressed within the scopes of research, practice, and policy. To further put this into perspective, the current state of inclusive education in other developing economies will be discussed.

Inclusive Education in Developing Economies

While research on inclusion in Trinidad and Tobago is limited, research for countries with developing economies can provide vital information. Research on countries with developing economies indicated that the needs of persons with disabilities do not form a priority for the government, the national policies and the nation's expenditure (Brohier, 1995; Kisanji, 1995; McConkey & O'Toole, 1995). In several countries with developing economies, students with disabilities are not enrolled in schools, not even special education schools (Srivastava, de Boer, & Jan Pijl, 2015).

Mba (1995) noted that the factors which give rise to this perspective by the government include a lack of resources and the argument that the needs of persons without disabilities are prioritized over those of individuals with disabilities and a general lack of awareness of the abilities of per-

sons with disabilities. The cost of services for persons with disabilities is considered a waste of scarce funds in countries with developing economies and their potential to contribute to the nation's economy is considered low (Mba, 1995).

Srivastava, de Boer, and Jan Pijl (2015) stated "the debate on inclusive education in developing countries is not much more than a decade old" (p. 191), and, as such, developing economies are being propelled to move forward, faster based on international agreements and mandates. With this information in mind, it is apparent that Trinidad and Tobago's goal to inclusive education is similar to that of other countries with developing economies.

Barriers to Inclusive Education in Trinidad and Tobago

In the special education literature in Trinidad and Tobago, it is revealed that there are several barriers to achieving this goal of inclusive education for persons with disabilities. The literature highlighted that limited special education teacher training, lack of teacher preparation, limited special education resources, limited government supports, and limited understanding of disabilities are the main barriers to implementing inclusive education.

Limited Special Education Teacher Training

In Trinidad and Tobago, teacher training in special education is available but is limited. Armstrong, Armstrong, Lynch, and Severin (2005) and Tsang, Fryer, and Arevalo (2002) expressed that there was a significant need for special education teacher training, especially since the training currently available in Trinidad and Tobago are limited. The allocated resources are insufficient to accomplish real inclusive classrooms. Conrad et al. (2011) discovered that the Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago did not adequately provide special education services to the schools.

Lack of Teacher Preparation

Each study on special education in Trinidad and Tobago revealed teachers are not properly prepared to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms (Armstrong et al., 2005; Johnstone, 2010; Myers, 2010; Tsang, Fryer & Arevalo, 2002). Further, in these studies, it is a common trend that teachers are aware of disabilities but, in general, are unclear about inclusive classrooms. Johnstone (2010) found that teachers with general education certifications in Trinidad and Tobago were not very knowledgeable about special education in terms of differentiated instruction for teaching students with disabilities. Furthermore, Blackman, Conrad, and Brown (2012) found that Trinidadian teachers lack understanding of disabilities and inclusion. This seems to be a consistent issue pervading the special education sector in Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, teachers have limited preparation for teaching students with disabilities in terms of administering the available curriculum.

Limited Special Education Resources

From a national perspective, Trinidad and Tobago lack special education resources due to their developing economy (Armstrong et al., 2005; Pedro & Conrad, 2006; Tsang, Fryer & Arevalo, 2002). This lack of resources has filtered into teachers' perspectives (Conrad & Brown, 2011; Myers, 2010). Research has depict that there are insufficient services and resources available. Furthermore, teacher training was insufficient for teachers working with students with disabilities (Myers, 2010).

Limited Government Supports

Studies indicated that there are limited government supports for inclusive practices in Trinidad and Tobago (Armstrong et al., 2005; Myers, 2010; Pedro & Conrad, 2006). This limitation is a serious one and arguably causes all the barriers to inclusion or, at the very least, exacerbates them. A lack of government support means that schools at a national level and teacher training are affected significantly. But more importantly, governments hold the power to help change the nation's cultural approach to persons with disabilities. The priority for the governments of Caribbean countries is not special education. This is so, even in light of the mandates from international agreements. At a national level, there are much larger concerns, such as general education rather than special education. As such, many governments choose to prioritize what they believe is most important for the country's present and future; to which special education is often secondary. Considering all of these barriers to inclusive education discussed above, there is a significant need for policy changes for persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago.

Need for Policy Changes in Trinidad and Tobago for Persons with Disabilities

The mere act of using the verbiage from international mandates in national policies without adhering to the basis of implementation in local and regional contexts will not ensure a valuable advancement towards inclusive education (Forlin, 2012). Forlin (2012) expressed that "policies for promoting inclusion are often difficult to enact in developing countries and may be unrealistic in their expectations if based on international creeds without due consideration for local contexts" (p. 27). The truth in this statement is directly related to the current state of inclusive education in Trinidad and Tobago, as the current policy for persons with disabilities reflects the inconsistencies between the availability of resources and the expectations expressed in the existing policy for this demographic. It is important to consider adopting similar policies from international contexts, at least remotely compatible with the country's economic, cultural, linguistic, and racial/ethnic contexts (Forlin, 2012). Considering these factors in any modification of policies for persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago is the first step into promoting attainable goals to inclusive education.

Conclusion

There are many barriers to inclusive education, all of which hamper the right to education of persons with disabilities. These barriers include limited teacher training and teacher preparation, limited human and material resources, and limited government support. These limitations are supported by discriminatory legislation, which is incongruent with international standards and mandates. In general, limited research pertaining to inclusive education in the Caribbean region exists. And as such, emphasis should be placed on scholarly research in Trinidad and Tobago, as there lies the potential for these countries to create an effective model for inclusive education for the Caribbean.

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Special Education Services Available in Trinidad and Tobago

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Numerous organizations have asserted the right to education for all people, including those with disabilities. This principle is upheld in various documents including article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, the extent to which this right has been realized in countries across the world varies. A well-formed international policy of special education, which can be adopted and implemented by countries across the world, is needed to achieve education for all.

Consequently, interest in the international framework of special education has grown in recent decades. Several countrywide studies of special education have been conducted in countries around the world, in places such as South Korea and India (Vakil, Welton, & Khanna, 2002; Yoo & Palley, 2014). These studies are important, because they lay the foundation for positive changes in educational policy. However, little research has examined special education in Caribbean countries, specifically, the twin island of Trinidad and Tobago. There have been qualitative reports that suggest a scarcity of resources in the special education sector in Trinidad and Tobago (Bergsma, 2000; Pedro & Conrad, 2006; Wills-Williams, 1998) but no empirical studies have been done to characterize such.

Located off the coast of Venezuela, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is situated farthest south of the other Caribbean islands (Johnstone, 2010). The population of Trinidad and Tobago is about 1.3 million (Shelley, 2013). Heavily influenced by the British education system, general education in Trinidad and Tobago emphasizes examinations and academic performance with regards to student placements (De Lisle, Seecharan, & Ayodike, 2010). Children are placed in secondary school based on their performance on the Secondary Entrance Examination (SEA), which is taken at the end of primary school. Primary and secondary school are free to the public, as well as post-secondary education for those pursuing undergraduate degrees (Ali, 2015). There are approximately 136, 374 students enrolled in public primary schools and 106,367 students enrolled in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago (The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2008).

Though research characterizing the special education framework of Trinidad and Tobago is limited, official policy documents suggest that the provision of special education services is a priority of the government of Trinidad and Tobago. The stated mission of the Student Support Services Division (SSSD) of the Ministry of Education (MOE) is "to provide ongoing support for all students to maximize their learning potential, do well at school, achieve to their capabilities and develop holistically" (The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2013). A variety of special education/diagnostic services have been stated to be available, including auditory and visual screening, pyscho-educational identification, consulting, referral and follow up, parent education, teacher support and education, specialized services for students with sensory difficulties in regular schools, monitoring of curriculum, services for students in institutional schools, and counseling (The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2013).

Despite the assertions of government agencies, questions remain regarding the extent to which special education services are readily available to children that need them in Trinidad and Tobago. Based on an extensive search, presently, there is no government-collected data that indicates the frequency with which these services are being provided, and whether they are easily accessible to students with disabilities. Moreover, a variety of sources suggest that educational change has been

difficult for Trinidad and Tobago, especially that associated with the provision of Special Education services to and the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classrooms (Conrad & Brown, 2011; Johnstone, 2010). Statements from some nongovernmental sources, such as UNESCO, suggest a complete lack of special education services: "in the regular schools there are no special provisions, no support services, for those with special needs" (Bergsma, 2000).

What could account for this discrepancy between the stated priorities of the MOE and the lack of special education services provided in the country? Like other developing countries, Trinidad and Tobago has struggled to obtain the resources needed to provide appropriate facilities and services that support education for children with disabilities. Pedro and Conrad (2006) noted that a deficit of available human and material resources has inhibited education change in the country. Similarly, Wills-Williams (1998) cited the initial inclusion of children with hearing impairments in the general education setting as "a burden on the school's already scarce resources" (p.31).

To date, there are no official or scholarly reports that empirically examine or detail the special education services received by students with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. Such reports are needed to serve as the foundation for policy recommendations. Empirical reports have the potential to identify specific areas of deficit that can be remedied with targeted policy changes. Recommendations based on data collected in Trinidad and Tobago will have more utility than those based on data from other countries, because they will be fine-tuned to the individual needs of Trinidad and Tobago. These steps must be taken if the country is to realize the international goal of achieving education for all children, including those with disabilities.

The purpose of this research was to conduct a descriptive study of special education services in Trinidad and Tobago, by surveying parents of children with disabilities in that country, using a short study-specific questionnaire. The research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent are publicly-funded special education services available in Trinidad and Tobago?
   a. What special education services are children with disabilities presently receiving in Trinidad and Tobago?
   b. What is the current intensity of special education services received by children with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago in terms of hours per week?
   c. Which special education services were offered to children with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago at the time of diagnosis?
2. To what extent does a lack of public special education services in Trinidad and Tobago force parents to privately fund special education services or keep their children at home?
   a. What proportion of parents keep their children at home because of a lack of available special education services in Trinidad and Tobago?
   b. What is the proportion of parents in Trinidad and Tobago that privately fund special education services for their child?
   c. For parents that privately fund special education services, what services are they funding?
   d. For parents that privately fund special education services, what is the approximate cost per year of services?
3. What special education services would parents like their child to receive in Trinidad and Tobago?

Method

Participants

Seventy parents participated in this study by completing either a paper or online survey. Eligible participants were adult parents or caregivers (age 18 or older) living in Trinidad and Tobago that self-reported having one or more school-aged children (age 18 or younger) with a diagnosed disability that qualifies them for special education services. Eligible disabilities, based on documents published by the MOE in Trinidad and Tobago, included the following: autism, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech or language impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairment, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, multiple disabilities, and developmental delay (The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Education, 2013). Excluded participants were parents that were minors (under the age of 18), parents that did not report having children with disabilities, and those that lived outside of Trinidad and Tobago at the time of the study. Two participants were excluded because they reported their child did not have a disability. Minimal descriptive information was collected on participants themselves. However, the sample was characterized in terms of the qualifying diagnoses given to their children, and this is reported in Table 1.

Table 1
Reported Diagnoses of Participants' Children (N = 64)

Diagnosis	Number of Children
Autism	29
Down Syndrome	6
Cerebral Palsy	4
Intellectual Disability	4
ADHD	4
PDD-NOS/Aspergers	3
Speech Impairment	3
Other	11

Note. Other category included disabilities such as Optic Atrophy, Chromosome 21, bone defect, Amniotic Band Syndrome, and hydrocephalus.

Setting

Eligible participants were recruited in Trinidad and Tobago by the first author and research assistants, who visited disability-oriented non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Schools and NGOs that served as recruitment sites were located in Northern, Central, and Eastern parts of the country. Recruitment flyers were also given out in Tobago. Recruitment flyers, which included researcher contact information and a link to the online survey, were distributed to teachers who were asked to give them to parents of children with disabilities. Paper surveys were distributed and completed at one of the schools. Additional participant recruitment was conducted through snowball sampling, wherein participants provided other potentially eligible participants with flyers.

Procedure

An anonymous survey, which collected no identifying information, and a survey cover letter, was given to participants by the author or research volunteers. The cover letter explained that participation in the study was voluntary, that no identifying information would be collected, and that participation in the study would have no effect on the educational services received by their child. In addition, the cover letter stated that only adults could participate in the survey. Participants also had the option to access this survey online. Using language identical to the paper cover letter, the online survey included a written assurance of the anonymous, voluntary, and non-coercive nature of the survey. Completed paper surveys were collected by the author in person or returned to the author by research volunteers in a sealed envelope. These procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Texas at Austin, and the MOE of Trinidad and Tobago.

Survey

Each survey featured nine questions, which were designed to collect information regarding the nature of the parent's experience with special education services in Trinidad and Tobago. Participants were permitted to skip questions, leave answers blank, or discontinue the survey for any reason. On average, participants required approximately 5 minutes to complete the survey. Questions on the survey were directly tied to eligibility criteria and the stated research questions, and answer formats varied from open-ended to multiple choice. Survey questions are presented in Table 2 (in the Appendix).

Reliability

Of the seventy completed and eligible surveys, 15 (21%) were randomly selected and coded for inter-rater reliability. Intraclass Correlation Coefficients (ICCs) reflecting the level of agreement between both coders were calculated for data from questions with categorical or dichotomous response choices. The first author collected and coded the data, and the second author independently coded reliability data. The average inter-rater reliability across all data was .98 (range: .85-1).

Analysis

For questions 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d: Analysis of these multiple choice and dichotomous yes/no answer formats was conducted by tallying answers from each answer category and dividing by the total number of respondents to calculate the percentage of respondents that had chosen an answer.

For question 3: Analysis of this open-ended survey question associated with the final research question was conducted using an exploratory qualitative approach, wherein we examined responses, identified recurring themes, categorized answers that fit within these themes, and tallied answers in each category.

Results

Extent of Available Publicly Funded Special Education Services

We sought to characterize the publicly funded special education services that are currently available in terms of type, intensity (in terms of hours per week), and the nature of services offered at the time of diagnosis.

Of all the participants, 41 (59%) indicated that they were receiving any public special education services coordinated by the government. The service that participants most frequently indicated their child received was a teaching aide or tutor in the classroom (n=25, 61%). Approximately a quarter of participants indicated that their children received speech language pathology services (n=12, 29%) and special instruction in the classroom (n=11, 27%). Other results are presented in Figure 1.
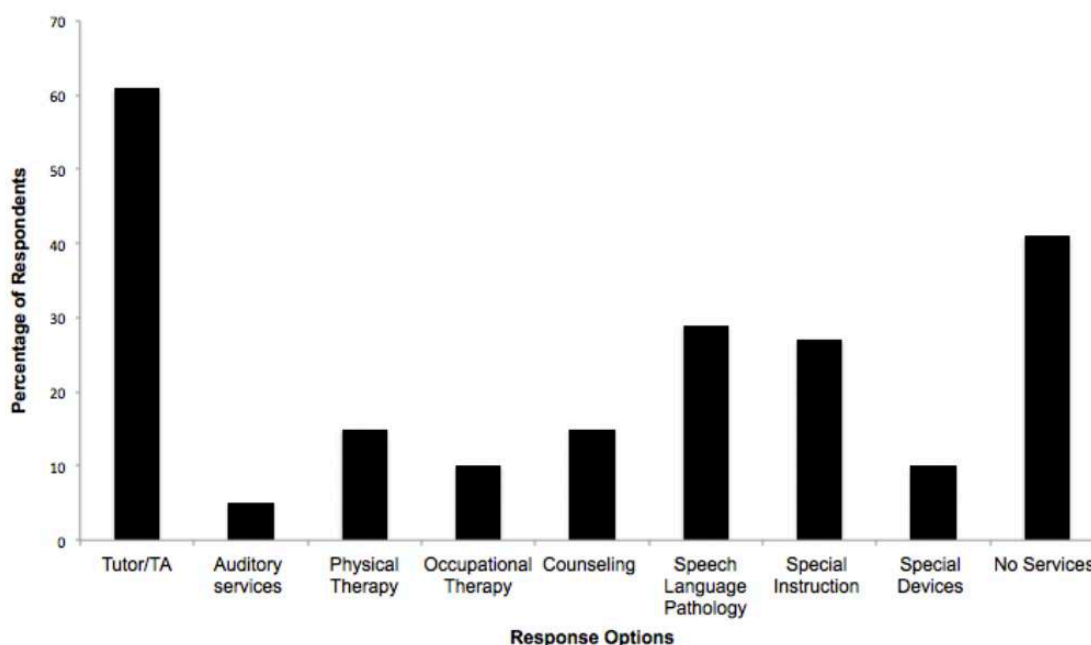

Figure 1. Histogram indicating percentage of responses to survey question, "What special education services, if any, is your child receiving from the school/government? Check all that apply."

Of all 70 participants, 67 (96%) indicated how many hours of special education services their children were receiving per week. About one third of the participants (n=22, 33%) reported that their children received no services per week. One quarter of the participants (n=17, 25%) participants reported that their children only received 1-5 hours of special education services per week. Other results are shown in Figure 2.
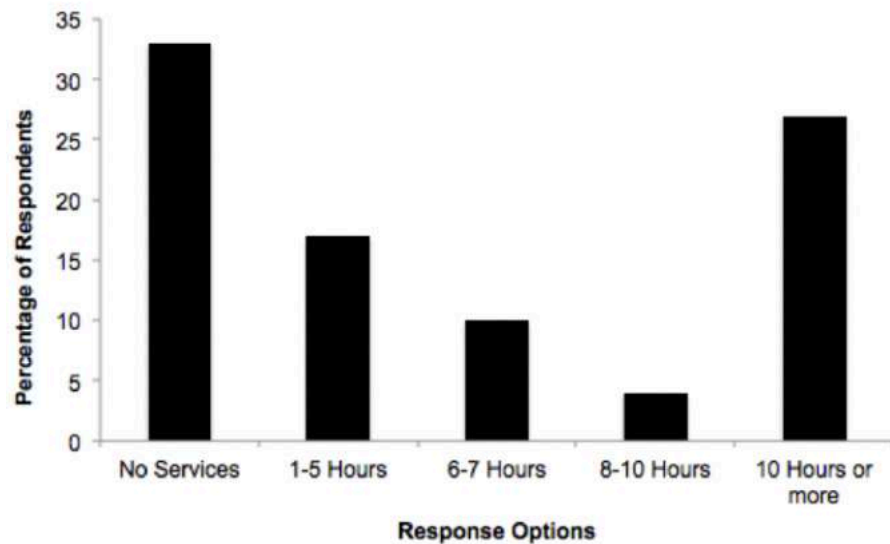
Figure 2. Histogram indicating the percentage of responses to the multiple choice survey question, "How many hours of special education services does your child receive per week, if any?"

Of all 70 respondents, 48 (69%) indicated that their children were offered any services at the time of diagnosis. Over half of the participants (n= 26, 54%) reported that their children were given assessment services at the time of diagnosis. Regarding referral and follow up services, more than half of the participants (n=28, 58%) reported their children were offered such. Other results are presented in Figure 3.
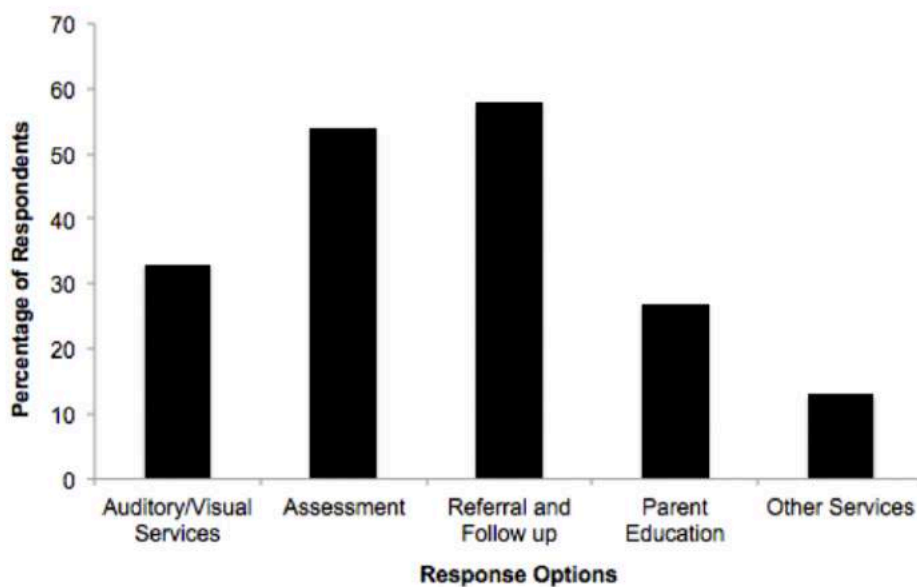

Figure 3. Histogram indicating the percentage of responses for multiple choice survey question, "If any, which special services were offered when your child was diagnosed with a disability?

Effect of Public Special Education Services on Parents' Decisions

We sought to characterize whether the lack of publicly available special education services compelled parents to pay for services privately and/or keep their children at home. Thirty participants (43%) indicated that they had to keep their children at home due to the lack of special education services available to their children. Thirty-six (51%) participants indicated that they privately fund special education services for their child, and 14 participants (39%) indicated they privately pay for a teaching aide or tutor in their child's classroom. About one third of the participants (n=12, 33%) reported that they are paying for occupational therapy for their child. The majority of the participants (n=16, 44%) reported that they were paying for speech language pathology services privately. Other results are indicated in Figure 4.
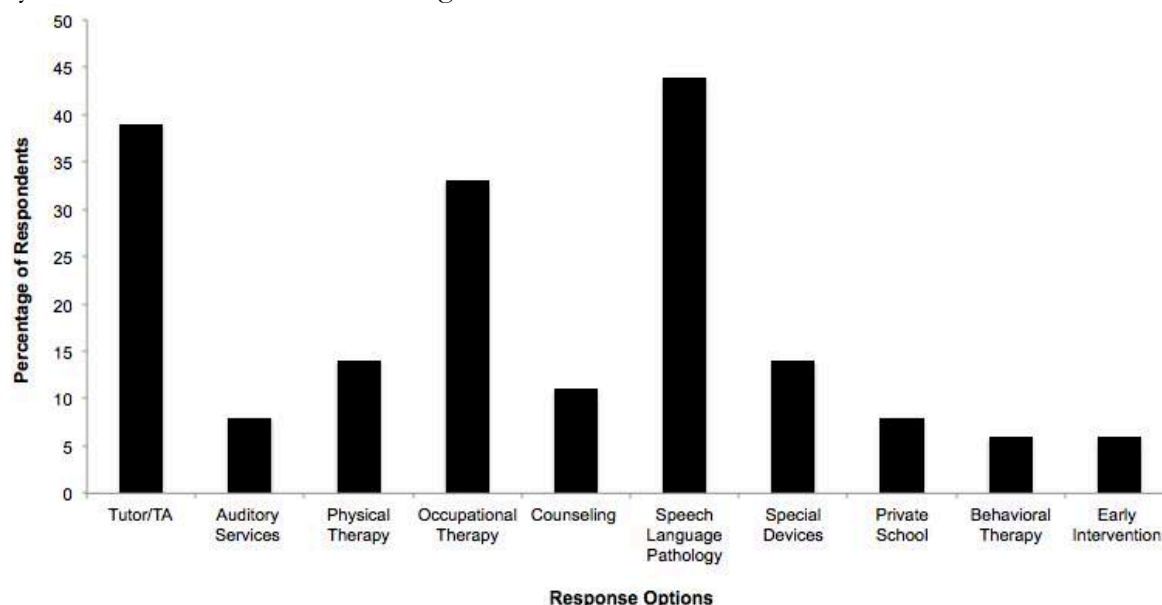

Figure 4. Histogram indicating the percentage of responses for multiple choice survey question, "Are you paying for services yourself? If so, what?"

Ten (28%) participants indicated that they pay between 5000 and 6000 Trinidadian (TT) dollars or 753 and 904 USD per year to cover the cost of private special education services. Six (17%) participants indicated that they pay between 7000 and 9000 TT dollars or 1054 and 1355 USD. Twenty (56%) participants reported that they were paying 10,000 or more TT dollars or 1506 or more USD for special education services for their child. These results are shown in Figure 5.
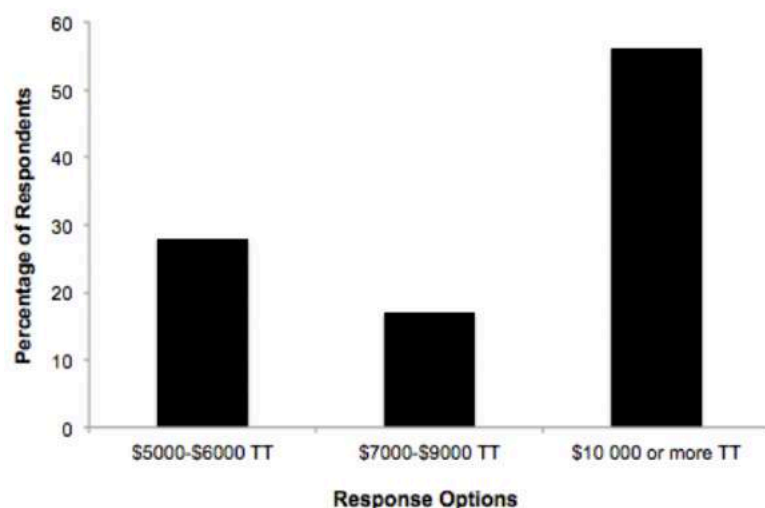
Figure 5. Histogram indicating the percentage of responses for multiple choice survey question, "If you are paying for services yourself, what is the approximate cost of the services per year?"

Services Parents Would Like Their Children to Receive

We asked an open-ended survey question in order to characterize the special education services parents wanted their children to receive. There were three recurring themes that were identified in answers to this question. Most answers could be broadly categorized as a stated desire for their child to receive at least one of the following: a) related services (such as physical, occupational, or speech therapy), b) increased access to special education services across the country, and c) teaching from trained special education teachers. Twenty parents (28%) indicated that they would like their child to receive related services such as physical, occupational and speech therapy. Three parents (4%) reported that they would like special education services to be readily available in different locations in Trinidad and Tobago, since the majority of services are available primarily in the capital, Port of Spain. Finally, fifteen parents (21%) indicated that they would like more trained special education professionals working with their children in the classroom.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this research was to describe the extent to which the nation of Trinidad and Tobago has realized its stated goal of publicly funded special education. The results of this research provide a detailed report on the current availability of special education services that can serve as the basis for future policy recommendations, which will improve universal education for students in Trinidad and Tobago. The results suggest that access to special education is greatly limited in Trinidad and Tobago, in terms of both amount and type of services provided. More than half of the participants (59%) indicated that their children are receiving special education services from the government. Of those who are receiving services, 25% reported receiving less than 5 hours of service per week. Thus, the vast majority of respondents reported their children receive little or no access to the services they require to be successful in an academic setting.

The consequences of limited access to special education are extensive in Trinidad and Tobago. Nearly half of the respondents (43%) felt they were compelled to keep their children at home because of the lack of available special education services. In addition, many parents (51%) resorted

to privately funding special education services for their children, in some cases spending as much as 10,000 or more TT per year. In other words, a large portion of parents have been forced to exhaust financial resources and/or sacrifice time caring for their children during the school day. This is time that might have otherwise been devoted to employment. Thus, the country's failure to provide special education services is costly to citizens, and this likely has ramifications for the country's economic growth.

Strengths and Limitations

This empirical study is the first of its kind to characterize special education services in Trinidad and Tobago. There were a high number of participants in this study; however, there are some issues that limit our confidence that our sample was representative of the general public of Trinidad and Tobago. First, while we attempted to directly recruit participants across the country, we were unable to do so in southern parts of Trinidad and Tobago. Some of the online respondents may have lived in this region of the country, but we did not track respondent location in the survey questionnaire. Second, many of the respondents (41%) were parents of children with autism. We were surprised by the high representation of this diagnosis in our sample, because estimates in other nations that serve students with disabilities (such as the United States) indicate students with autism comprise approximately 8.2% of school-aged students with disabilities (US Department of Education, 2015). Multiple explanations may account for this. First, recruitment occurred at schools and nongovernmental disability-related organizations across Trinidad and Tobago, and one of these recruitment sites was an organization for families of children with autism. Second, it is also possible that an increased awareness of autism has led to an increase in diagnoses in Trinidad and Tobago. Finally, the developmental deficits experienced by children with autism are often more extensive and apparent earlier in life than those associated with high incidence disabilities. As a result, children with autism may be identified as eligible for special education services more readily than children with less severe developmental delays, especially in a country in which educational resources are limited. Another limitation is that we did not collect additional family demographic information that could have helped to characterize the population.

Recommendations

The results of our qualitative analysis of parent desires for special education services in Trinidad and Tobago are useful for forming recommendations for educational policy change. Broadly, parents indicated that they wanted three things for their children with disabilities. First, parents expressed the need for more teachers to have training in special education. Children with disabilities that face learning challenges often require differentiated and specialized instruction to succeed in the classroom. To address this issue, coursework that covers effective special education instruction strategies should be integrated into certification programs for general education teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, and more special education certification programs should be established. Second, parents indicated that they would like their children to receive related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Access to related services can help students with disabilities achieve developmental goals. While these services address skills that are not strictly academic, global development will facilitate academic success for students with disabilities, as well as promote their involvement in the general education classrooms. Thus, it is important to establish a system for related service delivery when forming an effective special education policy. Finally, participants stated that they would like increased access to special education services throughout the country. To

achieve the goal of increase access to services throughout the country, Trinidad and Tobago could establish SSSD offices in regions throughout country, where a representative from SSSD could address family concerns and direct them to services that are specific to the children's individualized needs. The aforementioned services are currently provided in the United States and as such, there is a template that can be followed in order to establish a strong framework for special education. Such policy changes are needed to achieve Trinidad and Tobago's stated goal of universal primary and secondary education.

Future Research

While this empirical study has provided useful information about the current state of special education in Trinidad and Tobago, more research is needed to pave the way for policy recommendations. Qualitative data suggested that access to special education services varied across country locations, specifically those that were far from city centers. Future research should quantify the extent to which special education services are available to students with disabilities in rural parts of the country. In addition, more quantitative work could be done to characterize the available workforce in special education. Specific data indicating the number of trained special educators and paraprofessionals in Trinidad and Tobago could serve as a starting point for setting goals to increase human resources in the special education sector. Finally, further research could examine the extent to which child diagnoses determine the level and quality of special education services they receive. This could indicate populations of children that are under-identified and under-served in Trinidad and Tobago.

Conclusion

This paper explored the present state of special education and the type and intensity of services available to children with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. Numerous qualitative reports have suggested that educational resources are scarce in this country, but no prior empirical reports had quantified the availability of such for children with disabilities. The results of this report confirm the suggestion that special education services are not readily available to children with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, the results suggest that the lack of special education services has a negative economic impact on parents of children with disabilities in the country. This report offers insight regarding the international framework of special education and the achievement of education for all in Trinidad and Tobago and in countries across the world.

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Table 2

Survey Questions, Purpose, and Answer Format

Purpose	Question	Answer Format
Eligibility Information	1. Does your child have a disability?	Dichotomous Yes/No
	2. If so, what is the name of the disability or diagnosis?	Open-ended
Research Question 1	1. What special education services if any, is your child receiving from the school/ government? Check all that apply.	Multiple Choice
	2. How many hours of special education services does your child receive per week, if any?	Multiple Choice
	3. If any, which special services were offered when your child was diagnosed with a disability?	Multiple Choice
Research Question 2	1. Are you paying for services yourself? If so, what?	Multiple Choice
	2. If you are paying for services yourself, what is the approximate cost of the services per year?	Multiple Choice
	3. Does the lack of services require you to keep your child at home?	Dichotomous Yes/No

Research Question 3	1. What special education services will you like your child to receive?	Open-ended

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The Unknown and Unemployed Masses with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago

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The Unknown and Unemployed Masses with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago

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Around the world, a large percentage of people with disabilities, including physical, visual, intellectual, hearing, and learning disabilities, are either unemployed or underemployed (Markel & Barclay, 2009; World Health Organization 2011). In 2011, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities globally was 56% (WHO, 2011). Baker, Linden, LaForce, Rutledge and Goughnou (2018) expressed concern over the high percentage of persons with disabilities who are unemployed across the globe. This is an alarming statistic which deserves to be addressed (Baker et al., 2018). These high global rates of unemployment of persons with disabilities issue is aggravated by employers' circumspect approach to the employment of persons with disabilities (Colella & Bruyère 2011; Gilbride et al., 2000).

Previous research has explored the employment rates of individuals with disabilities in many regions worldwide in order to grasp the sheer gravity of this global issue (Baker et al., 2018; Saleh & Bruyère, 2018). However, from a review of the literature, it is clear that this issue has yet to be adequately addressed in the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago. More specifically, only one published research article focused on employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago (Terrana et al., 2016). This literature gap leads to many unanswered questions regarding the inclusivity of persons with disabilities not only in the employment sector but within society holistically.

In relation to countries with developing economies like Trinidad and Tobago, inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce has not been a main priority of scholarly research as determined by the scant research available. It is our belief that Trinidad and Tobago has the prospective opportunity of successfully adopting and implementing inclusive employment strategies nationwide because it has one of the largest economies in the Caribbean (Central Statistical Office, 2011). This would, in turn, provide a model for other nations of similar economies and population size as well as those in the wider Caribbean and Latin American regions to utilize in their employment sectors. This paper brings awareness of the current reality of unemployment of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago, in spite of international directives to ensure equal opportunities and non-discriminatory employment practices. A review of the relevant international mandates, national legislation, and national and international statistics will therefore be addressed. The most recent census data available in Trinidad and Tobago is 2011, and as such, other statistical references throughout this paper will utilize data from 2011 for the purposes of consistency and drawing an accurate picture that faithfully representing the situation within Trinidad and Tobago. Given the lack of research in the region on this issue, this paper will explore countries with similar economies in order to draw conclusions that can be paralleled to Trinidad and Tobago.

Individuals with Disabilities

Global Perspectives

Individuals with disabilities of all types make up approximately 15% of the world population as of 2011 (Saleh & Bruyère, 2018). According to the United Nations (1948), the global population in 2011 was 7 billion, which means that in 2011, 1.05 billion people worldwide had either physical, visual, intellectual, hearing, or learning disabilities or a combination of any of these disabilities listed. Moreover, this number will increase as people develop disabilities due to age, chronic health diseases and conditions, incidents during employment, and other issues (Harper, 2013; Houtrow, Larson, Olson, Newacheck, & Halfon, 2014; Vos et al., 2015). When viewing the global population, more than a billion people in the world are likely facing and/or likely to face unemployment.

Regional (Caribbean) and National (Trinidad and Tobago) Perspectives

From a regional perspective, in the Caribbean there are approximately 1.3 million persons with disabilities (ECALC, 2018). Trinidad and Tobago is a small twin-island Republic, and as of 2011, there are 1,328,019 persons in the country (Central Statistical Office, 2011). Out of this approximate 1.3 million persons, there are 52,244 persons with disabilities (Central Statistical Office, 2011), representing 3.93% of the national population. Therefore, nearly 4% of the national population have disabilities of some kind, which is high given the overall small population size of the country.

The CSO (2011) data recorded 330,752 children (persons aged 0-17) in the entire population of Trinidad and Tobago out of which 3,302 are children with disabilities. Therefore, children with disabilities represent 1% of the total child population in Trinidad and Tobago, which is again high given the population size of the country. Further, there are 997,267 adults (persons 18 years and older) in Trinidad and Tobago, which is 75.1% of population. As a result, there are 48,942 adults with disabilities, which is 4.9% of the adult population of the country. This means that almost 5% of the adult population are persons with disabilities who are of the age of employment, and are part of the available workforce of the country facing unemployment. For a small twin island Republic, 5% is a blaring statistic, but is wholly in line with international trends. It is important then to note the international statistics specifically regarding the employment of persons with disabilities to put the statistics from Trinidad and Tobago into perspective.

Data Regarding Employment of Persons with Disabilities

The employment rate of people with disabilities globally in 2011 was 44%, compared to 75% for people without disabilities (WHO, 2011). From this, there is an obvious disparity between the numbers, depicting that persons without disabilities have a higher likelihood of accessing employment opportunities. The exclusion of persons with disabilities from the workforce results in trillions of dollars in annual loss in gross domestic product (GDP) (Metts, 2000; Ozawa & Yeo, 2006.) As it pertains to Trinidad and Tobago, in 2011 the national unemployment rate was 5.8% (Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, 2011). However, there is currently no data available on the number of persons with disabilities who are employed in Trinidad and Tobago. It seems as though either this data is not readily available or accessible to the public or that Trinidad and Tobago did not collect this data. Considering this, the concern lies within the question of whether Trinidad and Tobago does not have enough resources to collect this data or whether this country does not prioritize the em-

ployment of persons with disabilities. This is a major research gap that should be addressed since, as noted above, trillions of dollars are at stake and it appears that many businesses have yet to realize the numerous benefits to hiring persons with disabilities.

The Benefits of Employing Persons with Disabilities

Although individuals with disabilities are underemployed and unemployed around the world, the reality exists that there are several advantages to hiring this specific demographic. These benefits include firstly the creation of a diverse workforce and secondly a boost for workplace morale and the reputation of the organization, both of which are deemed indirect productivity boosters (ILO, 2010). In fact, many multinational corporations view "neurodiversity as a competitive advantage" for recruiting talented individuals (Austin & Pisano, 2017, p. 96). Often employers are unaware of the fact that they have constricted the talent within the organization and relinquished higher levels of productivity by choosing not to hire persons with disabilities (Kaye, Jans, & Jones, 2011). For example, research has stipulated that persons with disabilities are reliable and productive employees (Saleh & Bruyère, 2018).

In the world of business however, it seems that all that matters is the bottom line: profitability. Many employers may feel that employment of persons with disabilities is not profitable. However, recent research highlighted the fact that the employment of persons with disabilities included improvements in profitability (Lindsay, Cagliostro, Albarico, Mortaji, & Karon, 2018). Profitability is also greatly expanded through the hiring of persons with disabilities as research indicated an increased competitive advantage for businesses, the creation of inclusive work culture, and greater workplace awareness (Lindsay et. al., 2018). These are all accepted improvements through the hiring of people with disabilities.

The benefits are not solely for the organization which employs such individuals. Research showed that the employment for persons with disabilities leads to an improved quality of life, greater self-confidence, larger community and social networks for the individual, and the obvious source of income (Lindsay et. al., 2018). The nation of Trinidad and Tobago therefore stands to significantly gain by promoting the employment of persons with disabilities. However, it is not solely about money and benefits, since it is the right of persons with disabilities to access employment, and this right is enshrined in international documents.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

International Treaty Mandates

Trinidad and Tobago is party to the United Nations (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the United Nations (2006) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). These international treaties mandated the signatory countries to meet a minimum standard regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. The UDHR (United Nations, 1948) professed the equality of all persons without distinction and, for full clarity, specifically states that this includes persons with disabilities. With regard to employment, the UDHR (United Nations, 1948) stated that all persons have the right to work, to choose their employment, to fair and safe working conditions and to the protection against unemployment. In light of this, Trinidad and Tobago has an obligation to uphold the right of persons with disabilities to work and have access to employment.

Furthermore, according to the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006), persons with disabilities are entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The UNCRPD further places an onus on all signatories to the Convention (including Trinidad and Tobago) to uphold the rights for people with disabilities without discrimination. As it pertains to employment, the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006) stated that it is a country's priority to ensure habilitation and rehabilitation services and programs are in place in the employment sector for persons with disabilities. The UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006) enshrines the right to employment of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with that of people without disabilities. This right to work prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and includes the right to fair and beneficial working conditions including equality of opportunities and remuneration. Trinidad and Tobago is expected to fulfill these expectations as a signatory to this treaty.

The right to work and the access to education are inextricably linked. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) highlighted the importance of assisting young people with disabilities as they transition into adult life. Countries should ensure that these individuals are equipped with the necessary education and training to meet the demands of being an adult, which includes employment. The Salamanca Statement also highlighted the significant role of the media in that it should be used to foster a more positive mindset for employers hiring people with disabilities. In acknowledgement of the many treaty obligations that Trinidad and Tobago must adhere to, there is a need to align these obligations with national legislation and policies. As such, the national perspectives will be explored.

National Mandates

The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago, which enshrines the fundamental rights of the citizens of the country, ensures the freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, origin, color, religion, and sex. There is no specific mention of disabilities within the provision granting the freedom from discrimination in the Constitution. In fact, according to the government of Trinidad and Tobago, the sole piece of legislation addressing persons with disabilities specifically in Trinidad and Tobago is the Equal Opportunities Act (EOA) of 2000 (National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, 2018).

The EOA sought to grant, among other things, the freedom from discrimination in employment to all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. It provides the freedom from discrimination to persons of any "status," including the status of persons with disabilities. However, section 14 of the EOA places a fetter on the rights of persons with disabilities. Section 14 states that the right to freedom from discrimination in employment does not apply to the employment of a person with a disability in certain circumstances: if because of the disability the person is unable to fulfill the job requirements, it causes unjustifiable hardship to the employer to employ such a person, or it puts the prospective employee or other employees at risk. This exception to a fundamental freedom, however, does not seem to be in line with the international mandates Trinidad and Tobago has agreed to. It is understandable why such a provision exists in national law in order to ensure the health and safety of all persons employed; however, the international standards require the country to be free from discriminatory practices regarding the employment of persons with disabilities. A similar exception to the right of persons with disabilities to access educational establishments is found in section 18A of the EOA, which is crucial because the access to education is directly linked to employment.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago released its Revised National Policy on Persons with Disabilities in 2018. In this policy, the Government recognized that this legislation can be considered discriminatory to persons with disabilities and cannot be supported in light of the Interna-

tional Treaties to which the country is party (National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, 2018). As such, this includes an intent to revamp the legislation. This Revised Policy (2018) has yet to be fully implemented. It is also worth recalling that there is a paucity of research on persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago, which may provide a proper framework to successfully implement and outwork national policies and strategies.

Call for Research

In the attempts to analyze and understand the literature available on the employment of persons with disabilities, we conducted a systematic search using the following databases in EBSCO-Host: Academic Search Alumni Edition, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, Educational Administration Abstracts, ERIC, Fuente Académica Premier, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO. Our search phrases included the following: line 1: disabilities or disability or disabled or impairment or impaired or special needs; line 2: employment or job or work or career or unemployment; and line 3: trinidad and Tobago or Caribbean. From this search, 24 articles were found. However, of those articles, no articles fit the criteria and relevancy for this topic of employment of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to this, we conducted a Google Scholar using the similar search terms. Upon extensive searching, only two articles were found to be aligned to our discussion.

The limited available literature about persons with disabilities in the Caribbean region reveals that there is a reality of marginalization of persons with disabilities from the individual and governmental level. Gayle and Palmer (2005) conducted a study in Jamaica entitled "Activism of Persons with Disabilities In Jamaica," where the authors concluded that 73% of persons with disabilities are unemployed. This is a statistic worth noting within the Caribbean region, which is amplified by that fact that people with disabilities remain a low priority in terms of social policy in Jamaica (Gayle & Palmer 2005); this may explain the little research found on that issue for Jamaica. Those persons with disabilities who are employed are much likely to be underpaid and given low-skilled and low status jobs (Gayle & Palmer 2005). There is also a general lack of enforcement of the national policy initiatives on behalf of the Government. Gayle and Palmer (2005) rightfully stated that the marginalization of persons with disabilities "from the mainstream of socio-economic and political life if unchecked, robs society of the potential contribution...to its productivity," (p. 136). This goes hand in hand with the aforementioned statistic, which dictates that trillions of dollars in possible income is lost due to the unemployment of people with disabilities.

As it pertains to Trinidad and Tobago, Terrana et al., (2016) conducted a study on vocational training and rehabilitation of people with intellectual disabilities. The study concluded that the vocational services offered in Trinidad and Tobago face various challenges inclusive of social stigma and a lack of resources to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Considering this finding, with limited vocational training available for persons with disabilities, the reality of these individuals being equipped with the appropriate and relevant skills needed for employment is farfetched. It is necessary for individuals with disabilities to be able to access training. Since this is not the case in Trinidad and Tobago, unemployment rates for persons with disabilities are directly impacted and most probably increasing.

Based on our literature search, these are the only two published studies available within the region on this issue. As such, in order to gain insight, research from other developing economies will be explored to ascertain whether valuable information can be gleaned to assist in providing a framework of addressing the issue of unemployment of persons with disabilities.

Employment Rates and Disability in Developing Countries

According to Mizunoya and Mitra (2012), developing countries (like Trinidad and Tobago) have a higher prevalence of persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities have lower employment rates. To emphasize the severity of this issue, the study conducted spanned 15 countries and the authors concluded that in 13 of the 15 countries, "the employment rate of persons with disabilities is consistently lower than that of persons without disabilities." (Mizunoya & Mitra, 2012, p. 32). In nine of the countries studied there was also a significant gap in employment of persons with disabilities, meaning that persons with disabilities are significantly less employed. Furthermore, a large portion of the employed people with disabilities are self-employed. Notably, the study indicated that the gap in employment of persons with disabilities is more widespread in middle income countries, like Trinidad and Tobago (the World Bank defines middle income counties as those having a per capita gross national income of U.S.$1,026 to $12,475 (World Bank, 2011)). Seven of the nine countries with the major gap in employment of persons with disabilities are middle income countries.

According to the WTO (2012), Trinidad and Tobago is a high income developing country, however, in the recent years, Trinidad and Tobago has undergone a prolonged economic recession. As such, the World Bank (2018) indicates that the country is an upper-middle income nation. If Trinidad and Tobago has been deemed a middle income country and its statistics are consistent with the study conducted by Mizunoya and Mitra (2012), there should exist a major gap in the employment of persons with disabilities in the nation. This cannot be confirmed without detailed research into the issue but is a fair and reasonable determination of the unknown statistic, given the international trends.

Future Research

Further research is desirable pertaining to the employment rates of persons with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. If Trinidad and Tobago is in line with global statistics, it is highly likely that there is a significant gap in the number of persons with disabilities who are gainfully employed and further, who are properly remunerated in desirable jobs with upward mobility. Given the national legislation (EOA), which according to the national policy (National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, 2018) can be viewed as "discriminatory" regarding employment, and the lack of tangible implementation of international treaty obligations, the existence of alarming statistics regarding unemployment of persons with disabilities is exceedingly probable. This, coupled with the social stigma against persons with disabilities and the lack of resources as revealed in the limited literature on this issue, incites the need for research in this field which will likely shed light on very dire circumstances. Research will also reveal the amount of untapped potential that has gone unnoticed in Trinidad and Tobago. The nation has the potential to stand as an example to the Caribbean and Latin American region of the benefits to the employment of people with disabilities.

Conclusion

Although Trinidad and Tobago may be a leading Caribbean nation, the international treaties regarding the rights of persons with disabilities have yet to be fully implemented and effected. The global trends reflect that there is an international crisis with regards to the employment of people with disabilities, and Trinidad and Tobago will be no exception to this phenomenon. There are implication statistics which suggest that there may be a major gap in the employment of persons with

disabilities when compared to persons without disabilities. Therefore, data needs to be gathered and the employment rates of persons with disabilities need to be addressed.

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Experiential Learning and Its Impact on College Students

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Education research extensively focuses on childhood, adolescent, and young adult development. While we know adults continue developing cognitively, socially, and emotionally past young adulthood, there is a lack of research in this area (Murphy, Sahakyan, Yong-Yi, & Magnan, 2014). With the growing importance of a college degree throughout the United States, research on adult development is required in order to advise faculty and administrators to design programming and curriculum that advance student development. Experiential-based learning is a growing and ample area for studying adult development. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), more than half of surveyed college seniors reported engaging in experience-based activities in their college career (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2010). Experiential education is a method of action-based training traditionally used in the workplace (Kolb, 2014; Murphy, Sahakyan, Yong-Yi, & Magnan, 2014), and educators have adopted the method to teach adult students (Fenwick, 2000). Education researchers have identified the concept of experiential education, or experiential learning, as a system to improve civic and global engagement, increasingly important gaps in traditional education practices (Association of Experiential Education, 2012; Kolb, 2014). Educators facilitate learning by purposively including the method into course or programmatic design, encouraging after action reflection, and creating a collaborative learning environment. This paper reviews existing literature and theoretical frameworks regarding experiential learning (EL), provides a synopsis of common EL activities, and concludes with a discussion on how educators can expand EL in higher education settings.

Literature Review

EL is a teaching philosophy which seeks to "engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities" (Association of Experiential Education, 2012). EL is used in all levels of education and training, with the purpose of engaging learners through experience, such as internships, study abroad, and community projects. Research has shown students learn best when actively involved with their education (Caulfield & Woods, 2013; Fenwick, 2000; Kolb, 2014). This is the goal of EL. Another goal of EL is that students gain a global perspective and learn how their actions directly affect their community and the world at large.

In the increasingly more connected global community, higher education leaders have supported experiential education in varying degrees as a means to improve civic and global engagement (Association of Experiential Education, 2012; Fenwick, 2000). Research has shown adults aged over 21 years learn differently than their younger counterparts, preferring to learn through experience (Kolb, 2014). Learning through action and self-reflection primes individuals to cultivate new opinions and viewpoints, altering social and emotional intelligence (Kolb, 2014; Tarrant, 2010). In particular, adult learners have been found to learn best through experiences, making EL beneficial in higher education settings (Kolb, 2014).

Research has revealed that partaking in EL affects college students' long-term socially responsible behavior. Caulfield and Woods (2013) found that EL, with a clearly defined focus on social issues, led to long term socially responsible behavior, even if the actions taken did not exactly match the proposed actions at the end of the class (Caulfield & Woods, 2013). Socially responsible

behavior is defined as, "behavior that enhances social well-being within communities" (Caulfield & Woods, 2013, p. 33). This finding provides an added public benefit to EL by describing how these students make a difference in a larger context, which can improve students' abilities to influence their community.

Theoretical Frameworks

In recent years, higher education has incorporated EL as a way to develop students' abilities to problem solve from a real world perspective (Tarrant, 2010). One example of this includes Tarrant's (2010) work, which outlined a framework for global citizenship, including concepts of justice, the environment, and civic obligations (values, beliefs, and norms). Tarrant based the framework on Values Belief Norm (VBN) theory of Proenvironmental Behavior, a theory that considers justice from a social-psychological approach. The theory is modified to incorporate experiential education programs in order to improve global competency development of students participating in study abroad. Tarrant (2010) argued that using social models like VBN in study abroad curriculum creates more robust learning experiences, as opposed to the activities being token or service tourism.

Extant research has used several frameworks to examine subjects' social/cultural competence development in relation to EL (Cranton, 2002; Dewey, 1997; Fenwick, 2000; Kolb, 1975; Kramer, 2000). Dewey (1997) was the first to call for practical guidelines for progressive education, a term he deemed in contrast to traditional education. In his book *Experience in Education*, first published in 1938, Dewey (1997) challenged the education system to focus on the human experience of learning. For Dewey, educators must train students in a specific discipline, while also providing unique experiences that provide continuity and interaction. Dewey's theory of experiences highlighted the importance of the relationship between *continuity*, a student's ability to shape their future, and *interaction*, how individuals past experiences shape their viewpoint. Because students are all unique, this interaction differs for each person.

Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning

Working from Dewey's (1997) assumptions, Kolb (2014) linked the benefits of EL to educational settings. Kolb's (2014) theory of EL focused on internal cognitive processes in a continuous four stage cycle of learning where the reflective component is a key component to learning. The cyclical model, as seen in Figure 1, consisted of four stages: concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and abstract experimentation (Kramer, 2000). According to Kolb (2014), when an individual engages in EL, they encounter a new experience or situation and are challenged to reflect on contradictions between assumptions and actions. Reflection leads to new thoughts and ideas about the situation, which are applied and tested in the world. The cycle continues with the participant reentering the concrete experience with an expanded viewpoint. Operative learning is determined by a student's progression through the cycle.
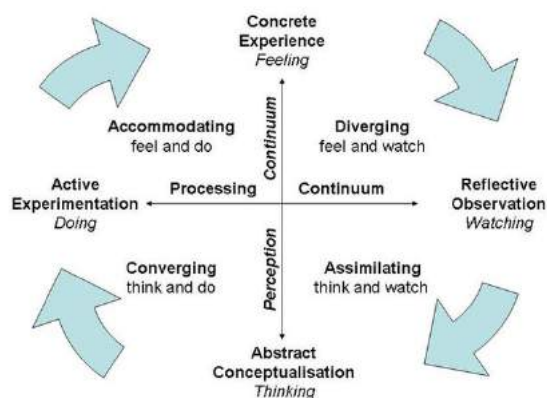
Figure 1. Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory asserts that individuals develop perspectives through a process of perspective transformation (Cranton, 2002; Mezirow, 2000). According to Mezirow (2000), learning should force individuals "to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (p. 8). Transformation theory has three key tenets: psychological, convictional, and behavioral (Mezirow, 2000). The theory is applied to adult education as a means to study adult learner's ability to transform perspectives (Cranton, 2002; Dirkx, 1998). Adult students often enter higher education programs with a more solidified sense of self and understanding of the world than their younger counterparts. Educators have used the three dimensions of change to view how adult learners can cultivate a new perspective on the world, others, and themselves through educational opportunities (Sokol & Cranton, 1998). EL provides transformative learning in a way traditional classroom experience cannot by offering adult students tangible, hands-on experiences in the field.

Cultural Competence Theory

Fenwick (2000) offered a comparative analysis of five critical cultural theory perspectives: constructivist, psychoanalytical, situative, critical cultural, and enactivist ecological (p. 267). Those with a constructivist or reflective perspective use previous experiences and personal intentions to develop knowledge. When one's culture conflicts with a new culture, learning occurs during this conflict. Individuals with a situative, or participation, perspective believe learning must occur during social, community-based interactions. In the critical cultural or resistance perspective, the focus is on political and power dynamics between authority figures and those they oppress. For those with an enactivist or co-emergence perspective, learning occurs when students interact within the environment. The learner's objective is dependent upon each experience. According to Fenwick (2000), each perspective provided a distinct relationship between EL, student, and educator, creating a different learning experience dependent on perspective.

Cultural competence is the ability to understand and appreciate differences amongst cultures and respecting otherness (Stebleton, Soria, & Cherney, 2013). Measures of competence include applying discipline-specific knowledge to global concerns, collaborating with others from different cultures, and comfortability being in another culture. The cultural competence model demonstrates

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how individuals progress from inward thinking to a capacity for intercultural collaboration (see Figure 2 below). Self-awareness of acknowledging implicit bias and preconceived notions about others is the initial stage. As individuals actively move out of homogeneous spaces and engage with other cultures, they develop through the stages of risk taking, and global awareness. Collaboration across cultures is the goal. Competence is valuable in all heterogeneous interactions in providing context and knowledge about how others process information.

Figure 2. Cultural competence model.

Theory guides researchers and practitioners when developing curricula and academic programs. Examining adult student development is an important area of research, as it provides insight into cognitive, psychosocial, and behavioral development among this population (Cranton, 2002; Fenwick, 2000; Kramer, 2000). Additionally, practitioners use theory to cultivate effective learning experiences. Student identity development theories bond the effect of experiential education practices with the learner's identity development in the areas of social and cultural competence (Cranton, 2002; Fenwick, 2000; Kramer, 2000).

Types of Experiential Learning Opportunities

There are various types of EL opportunities available to college students, both inside and outside of the classroom (Association of Experiential Education, 2012). Curricular opportunities offer students the chance to earn credit for EL activities. They also typically offer the benefit of dedicated class time to discuss and reflect on experiences. Co-curricular activities deliver non-credit based activities that mirror curricular content. The experiences may be tied to specific learning outcomes outlined in program curriculum or may be altogether non-academic, such as service learning.

Below are descriptions of different types of EL activities, including curricular, co-curricular, and non-curricular. This is not a comprehensive listing of EL activities in higher education but, instead, an examination of common activities offered to students. The activities provide a more robust understanding of the types of experiences students may participate within during their college years.

Simulation Based Learning

Simulation based learning is a method of EL that enables students to analyze real world problems in a simulated environment (Powers & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Skagen, McCollum, Morsch, & Shokoples, 2018). They are traditionally completed in a classroom environment as part of a course. Simulations offer teams a learning environment that allows for creativity and chance taking that may be intolerable or frowned upon in real life scenarios (Skagen et al., 2018). The goal of simulations is to improve specified skills or abilities in a controlled setting. Team members are encouraged to consider various opinions, frameworks, and viewpoints to solve a given problem.

Working in teams is a valuable element of simulation learning (Denholm, Protopsaltis, & de Freitas, 2013). Hong and Page (2004) found diverse teams outperform more highly skilled teams when confronting the same problem. Diverse backgrounds and experience lead to more options in problem solving and help avoid group think behaviors (Hong & Page, 2004). Teams constructed of individuals different than one another (measured in variables including gender, ethnicity, and domestic or international student status) provide more creative and well-developed solutions than homogenous groups (Tarrant, 2010).

Dependent on the simulation's objective, the activity may seek to improve participant's skills, knowledge, and abilities in a variety of areas (Denholm, Protopsaltis, & de Freitas, 2013; Powers & Kirkpatrick, 2012; Skagen, et al., 2018). Social skills are often tested and stretched in team-based simulations, which is significant, as communication skills are required for effective teamwork (Powers & Kirkpatrick, 2012). Conflict resolution is inherent when teams are confronted with a complex problem, especially when the group is constructed of diverse individuals (Hong & Page, 2004). Powers and Kirkpatrick (2012) found effective conflict resolution strategies are critical in group decision making for both the team leader and team members to feel valued. These skills are required to succeed in academic and work environments. Developing and/or practicing these skills benefit participants in other settings outside the simulation. Many students seek continuing education to develop these skills (Fenwick, 2000).

Internships

Internships offer students work experience in a chosen industry or functional area (Boose, 2011). Internships may be paid or unpaid; curricular, co-curricular, or non-curricular; or required or optional, all dependent on the institution and/or department. Three components constitute an internship: a sponsoring company or organization, the student, and the higher education institution. Boose (2011) found the most fruitful internships for all parties occur when true partnerships emerge. Internships provide individual gains for multiple parties. Students gain valuable skills as well as grow their professional network. Employers have an opportunity to meet and interact with potential hires as well as gain free or low cost labor (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000). Universities and colleges perhaps enjoy the most benefits. In a successful relationship, higher education institutions gain a learning lab for students, a pipeline for job placement, and strong community partners (Boose, 2011). All stakeholders must be fully engaged in the experience order for the experience to be successful. Relationship development and early integration are key components of a robust internship program.

Internships have a strong impact on student experiences in the workforce and community when designed and supported appropriately (Boose, 2011; Gault, et al., 2000). Gault et al. (2000) found undergraduate business students who had an internship saw significant advantages early in their careers in comparison to peers who did not have an internship in college. A larger sample of

senior college students responding to the NSSE found similar results. From the students surveyed, 73 percent perceived work experience while in college to be important in helping them to gain knowledge and skills required for their chosen field (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2010). Additionally, of the same group of students, 48 percent reported that educational experiences taught them how to make an impact on their communities. Employers also consider internships important, reporting to both the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) that internships are viewed favorably when evaluating candidates (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2010).

Study Abroad

Established study abroad practices may be one of the most widely known EL programs. At any given time, there are thousands of American students learning in another country (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Faculty-led programs provide students a known entity to learn from in a safe space, while shielding participants from fully integrating into the new culture. Short- and long-term exchange allows students an opportunity to adapt to the culture. Service non-academic programs are related to exchange with university volunteers learning outside the classroom. Closely linked are exchange programs for international students to study in the U.S. Again, these activities may last for one semester or extend through a whole degree.

The multidimensional aspect of international education leads to many models of study abroad (Helms, 2015; Kehm & Teichler, 2007). Administrators strategically develop diverse international education activities to respond to global challenges faced by postsecondary institutions and graduates (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Dewey & Duff, 2009), and program design is determined by institution type, disciplines, scalability, and capacity (Kehm & Teichler, 2007). Certain programs lend themselves to westernization practices. Outpost institutions, or branch campuses, are physical campuses of established universities in international locations, offering degree programs to foreign students (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Curricula generally aligns with programs at the home institution without taking into consideration cultural or environmental differences.

Study abroad opportunities in American college are hailed as a bridge to increased social and cultural development (Stebleton, Soria, & Cherney, 2013). Students travel abroad and experience new cultures, landing outside their comfort zone and pushing themselves to embrace differences. Ideally, students return to their home country with a changed, altruistic perspective of the world (Murphy, Sahakyan, Yong-Yi, & Magnan, 2014). While this may be the case for some students, many components must occur in the curriculum for study abroad to have an impact on students' long-term social and cultural competence (Fenwick, 2000).

Implications and Discussion

The overall rationale of experiential education relate to larger issues in higher education, such as how adult students learn and how to help students develop into socially responsible, global citizens. In an increasingly more global community, today's students must be prepared to understand not only their own needs but also those within their direct and indirect communities. As found in Caulfield and Woods (2013), utilizing EL with a focus on social issues can have a direct impact on a student's socially responsible behavior, increasing the likelihood the student will become a proactive member of their community. Applying Dewey, Fenwick, and Kolb's theoretical frameworks enable faculty to clearly define and structure EL for student's benefit. Educators can use this knowledge

when developing programs and curriculum to encourage long-term behavioral change in adult students.

Contributing Pieces

This critical forum will further explore experiential learning and adult learners in higher education. The first piece in this issue is an editorial by The University of Texas at Austin President Greg Fenves. Fenves details the ways experiential learning shaped his early college career. A summer internship at Weidlinger Associates, an engineering firm, during his undergraduate career in engineering gave Fenves the opportunity to apply theory in practice and expanded his understanding of engineering concepts. Faculty mentorship provided structure as well as a subject matter expert to test ideas. Weidlinger challenged Fenves and the assignments he worked on provided concrete evidence of how engineers practice their trade. Fenves was empowered by the work, realizing his ability to make an impact through action. The internship experience left a lasting impression, ultimately shaping one of the strategic initiatives of his presidency. Fenves' piece provides a personal account of the long-term impact of experiential education, as well as the steps Fenves is taking to increase EL at UT Austin.

The second article in the issue is by Laufer, McKeen, and Jester, a team of researchers specializing in assurance of learning in graduate education. Assurance of learning is a system of evaluating learning outcomes through assessment. The authors describe the proliferation of experiential education in graduate business programming in response to student needs. Speaking from an administrative point of view, the authors provide a set of assurance of learning standards for graduate business programs to utilize in program development. This piece provides a guide for practitioners to use when designing or evaluating experiential education programming.

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A Life-Changing Internship and the Power of Experiential Learning

GREG FENVES
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A Life-Changing Internship and the Power of Experiential Learning

GREG FENVES
The University of Texas at Austin

I have worked in higher education for my entire professional career. After starting as an assistant professor at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), I was an engineering professor at the University of California, Berkeley for more than 20 years. I had the wonderful opportunity to return to UT Austin in 2008, where I served as dean of the Cockrell School of Engineering and then as provost. Today, I am the president of UT Austin.

But before decades of teaching and research, I was a student. And my understanding of the learning process and the power of thoughtful, immersive educational experiences was forged before I committed myself to teaching students, advancing research and, ultimately, leading a flagship university.

I remember it well: one humid summer in New York City, 1977. I had a paid internship at Weidlinger Associates, an engineering firm in midtown Manhattan. At the time, I was an engineering student at Cornell University and only beginning to grasp the fundamental concepts that underlie the discipline. In classrooms and labs, my professors had been engaging, and the coursework was rigorous. But I felt it was not enough and that I needed new experiences to appreciate what I had been learning. The internship gave me that opportunity.

At Weidlinger, I was immediately put to work. There was no grace period, no tentative first steps. Just a room with a large, very advanced (for the time) computer system, and tons of lines of code that needed to be written. And, even more daunting, the program I was working on was going to be used on some of the biggest projects at the firm. There were high expectations that had not been present at Cornell. This work was not for a grade — it was much more important.

That entire summer was eye-opening for me. Every day at 8 a.m., I would get the chance to learn something new and try out ideas I had come up with the previous evening. Even though I was young and inexperienced, I felt that I was making progress. My supervisor mentored me and gave me the confidence to solve problems and learn from my mistakes. The job showed me that there was a seemingly limitless number of challenges I could take on as an engineer. I was hooked.

I would eventually decide to attend graduate school, and my life's journey took off from there. The internship had affirmed that I was, indeed, capable of making meaningful, practical contributions as an engineer. It stoked my curiosity and instilled in me a sense of purpose.

It has been four decades since that internship, but it still shapes the way I look at learning and the student experience. Since my first days as president of UT Austin, I have worked with departments throughout the campus and with many faculty members who are continuously evaluating their curricula and transforming the learning environment so that students are increasingly given the chance to learn through *experience*.

Every student has a major and topics of interest. There are fundamental ideas and theoretical concepts that are foundational to each discipline. But the attainment of basic understanding should not be the end of the learning process — it should be the beginning.

In life, many problems and tough issues do not fit into neat packages that can be evaluated or solved within a week or even a semester. They do not simply require one line of thinking or an expert with a singular understanding of a topic. Complex challenges can be addressed only with creative, interdisciplinary solutions. And, students need to understand how to search for answers and bring together varied strands of knowledge while working with individuals who have different talents, experiences, and backgrounds to draw upon.

Though bolstered by personal experience, my focus on experiential learning is informed by higher education researchers, psychologists, scientists and many faculty members I have worked with over the years. David Kolb's *Experiential Learning* (1984) was published at the beginning of my career as a professor. He defines experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38).

Experience can be grasped and transformed in many settings. Internships, jobs and travel opportunities for students can be very impactful, but experiential learning can, and should, also take place *inside* the classroom, whether or not students are able to participate in co-ops or internships. As Scott Wurdinger and Julie Carlson (2010) argue, experiential learning is "first and foremost a learning process" and "students do not need to leave the classroom to learn experientially" (p. 11).

At UT Austin, Provost Maurie McInnis assembled the Experiential Learning Faculty Working Group in 2017. The working group brought together faculty members from throughout the university to understand how to develop, scale, and integrate experiential learning in UT Austin's degree programs. The group met and led research for five months and has published a report with plans for a comprehensive initiative that is centered on the expansion of classroom-based experiential learning for the benefit of all undergraduates.

The experiential learning opportunities available to UT Austin students both on and off campus increase each year. In the McCombs School of Business, there is the Real Estate Investment Fund, which gives students a chance to manage a multimillion-dollar public-private real estate investment fund. In the School of Architecture, students are collaborating with City of Austin officials to examine issues including housing equity, transportation and the current and future role of the Austin Convention Center. In the College of Fine Arts, arts and entertainment technologies students are working in teams to design 2-D and 3-D video games and create animated projections paired with original musical compositions. These are just a few examples, but there are hundreds more within every department and school at UT Austin.

During every phase of our careers and lives, experience is capable of teaching us so much about ourselves, our potential, our limitations and what we need to learn. To truly understand, a person must learn their own lessons, fail, try, and discover success. The next generation of students must have the opportunity to do this. And the more that universities and faculty members can empower their students to learn, explore and, most significantly, experience, the better prepared they will be to lead meaningful and purposeful lives long after graduation.

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Greg Fenves, Ph.D., is the 29th president of The University of Texas at Austin. Since 2015, he and his administration have worked to expand access to the university for talented students across the state of Texas. He has prioritized diversity and inclusion, invested heavily in faculty and their research, expanded experiential learning opportunities for students and has overseen strategic efforts that have helped lead to the highest four-year graduation rates in UT Austin's history.

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Assurance of Learning Standards and Scaling Strategies to Enable Expansion of Experiential Learning Courses in Management Education

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"Experiential learning theory offers a fundamentally different view of the learning process from that of behavioral theories of learning…. that underlie traditional educational models." (Kolb, 1984, p. 20).

"At a practical operational level, questions persist about the extent to which institutions can deliver the flexibility, accessibility and levels of individualization which are often flagged as positive aspects of [experiential learning]" (Peach & Gamble, 2011, p.183).

"AACSB's assurance of learning mandate…presents some practical challenges for project-based courses in business schools. While [business schools] have gotten quite good at finding ways to assess compliance and completion in experiential courses, assessing learning and mastery is a trickier proposition." (Laufer, McKeen, & Jester, 2018, para 2).

Experiential learning, project-based learning, action learning, and work integrated learning are all terms used interchangeably to describe university-based courses or programs where students engage in experiences outside the classroom to apply their knowledge and practice skills. This article focuses on the most complex type, where teams of students are matched with an external partner, sometimes referred to as a client, with a specific business challenge that the team is tasked with addressing. The work of the team generally involves scoping the problem, collecting data, synthesizing findings and providing recommendations. This type of experiential learning provides the best opportunity for management students to practice the skills sought by employers but is also the most difficult to scale.

The theory of action learning began to emerge in the first half of the twentieth century. Reg Revans is credited with the first reference to action learning in an October 1945 report about the future of the British coal mining industry (Revans. 1982). In the report, he recommended establishing a staff college for industry managers to learn with and from each other. Since then, it has been used by and for corporations seeking to train their managers and executives by providing them with the right set of relevant experiences that could support their professional development for a greater role within the organization. It later made its way into management education curricula. A 2016 survey indicated that client-based experiential learning projects are now widely offered across MBA programs specifically, with 92% of respondents reporting use in their institutions' full time MBA programs; 70% in part time programs, and 62% in Executive MBA programs (MBA Roundtable, 2016).

While moving this methodology for learning out of the work place and into institutions of higher education has fostered an expansion of the concepts of leadership and organizational development through team-based learning, confusion remains about what does and does *not* constitute experiential learning in management education. Raelin (2009) notes that what distinguishes action learning from other experiential pedagogies is its application to real-world experiences. Revans (1982) criticized the application of the term action learning to case studies, discussion groups, outdoor adventures, and problem-solving teams because these activities did not have "real" actions in real time with real people and, therefore, learning was not critical (Marquardt & Banks, 2010). While what is meant by "real" is open for interpretation, principle number three of the National Society of Experiential Education's eight principles of good practice for experiential learning talks about *authenticity*. It states:

> The experience must have a real-world context and/or be useful and meaningful in reference to an applied setting or situation. The means that it should be designed in concert with those development.
> who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation. (National Society for Experiential Learning, 1998, para.2).

The Management Education Experiential Learning Framework (Appendix) attempts to clarify some of the confusion by offering a framework for understanding the different types of experiential learning within management education. Of all the activities along the continuum, experiential, project-based learning at the far right is the most authentic, the most complex, and most difficult to scale. It most closely resembles what Revans (1982) advocates for critical learning by matching a team of students with an external partner that has a problem it wants solved. The team explores the problem, collects information, and develops results in the form of findings or recommendations to the external partner. This process provides opportunities for individual development, peer to peer development, and leadership

Importance of Experiential Learning in Management Education

The skills required for the fourth industrial revolution extend beyond technical skills and domain knowledge to collaboration skills, resilience, and critical thinking (Schwab, 2016). Higher education institutions are grappling with market pressure from both industry and potential students to focus on instrumental outcomes (Strohl, 2006) that tend to focus on these "employability skills" that are required for the fourth industrial revolution. Employability skills "are conceptualized as a set of largely practical and behavioral graduate attributes" (Lee, Foster & Snaith, 2016, p. 96). These clusters tend to include competencies and character qualities like collaboration, creativity, and resilience (World Economic Forum, 2016) that educational literature suggests are best acquired experientially (Blackwell, Bowes, Harvey, Hesketh, & Knight, 2001; Proctor, 2011; Wilton, 2011; Nenzhelele, 2014).

Workplace/Learning Environment

The environment our students face has characteristics Skule (2004) called learning intensive workplaces, where managers must be able to adapt and navigate environments that have:

1. *High degrees of exposure to changes* characterized by frequent changes in technology (products and processes) and working methods;

2. *High degrees of exposure to demands* from customers, managers, colleagues, or company affiliations with other partners or groups;
3. *Managerial responsibilities* for decision making, project management, and work group management;
4. *Extensive professional contacts* or professional forums outside the company, professional or occupational networks, trade fairs, conferences; more extensive learning contacts with customers and vendors;
5. *Access to feedback* which offer opportunities for learning from formal internal reporting systems and the direct results of the work;
6. *Support and an expectation for learning*, tacit and/or explicit; and
7. *Rewards for proficiency* that can include higher wages, bonuses, and allocation of more interesting tasks or improved career opportunities (Skule, 2004, p. 14).

The role of knowledge-based industries in the global economy is increasing. These industries have characteristics that require employees to bring experience and skills but more importantly be able to adapt and continuously learn. The industries involve:

1. *Demanding environments*, where customers, suppliers, owners, authorities, or professional communities place rigorous demands on the standards and quality of work, which stimulates learning and innovation;
2. *Intense learning requirements* affected by the degree of exposure to external pressures, how work is organized, and how managerial and other responsibilities are delegated;
3. *Post-Taylorist organizational transparency*, where boundaries expose more employees to the external environment; and
4. *Flatter hierarchies*, which produce more widely distributed managerial responsibilities and high involvement of employees in product and process development (Skule, 2004 p. 14).

Learning agility, "a mind-set and corresponding collection of practices that allow leaders to continuously develop, grow, and utilize new strategies that will equip them for the increasing complex problems they face in their organizations" is hard to measure but heavily sought after by knowledge-based industries (Flaum & Winkler, 2015).

In experiential learning courses, students practice the soft skills that employers seek. The 2016 MBA Leaders in Experiential Project-Based Education (LEPE) survey identified teamwork, communication, critical thinking, project management, leadership, and relationship management as the most common primary learning objectives of experiential learning courses at the business schools surveyed. A 2018 Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) survey of employers found the most sought-after skills are working with others, self-management, problem solving, flexibility, listening, and organization. However, the most difficult to find skills are critical thinking, organization, leadership, and problem solving.

Experiential learning courses create "stories" and examples for interviews and networking where students can demonstrate how they applied their skills in situations familiar to prospective employers. Because project-based learning mirrors the real-world situations students will encounter after they leave school, it can provide stronger and more relevant preparation for college and work. Students not only acquire important knowledge and skills, they also learn how to research complex issues, solve problems, develop plans, manage time, organize their work, collaborate with others, and persevere and overcome challenges, for example.

Assurance of Learning in Experiential Education

While action learning has soared in popularity among management education institutions, many activities labeled action learning involve only action (Cho & Egan, 2010; Raelin, 2009). Some argue that the focus on real world problems has detracted from the necessary emphasis on developing the systems and structures needed to ensure proper time and attention is focused on student learning (Marquardt & Banks, 2010).

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) introduced the concept of outcomes assessment in 1991 as a requirement for its accredited institutions, which today include 831 business institutions in 54 countries and territories, as well as 187 institutions with specialized accreditation for their accounting programs. The accreditation standards evolved as the outcomes assessment movement matured (AACSB International 2007). In 2013, AACSB adopted new Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation. Standard 8 included a requirement to demonstrate that the learning goals of the degree program were being met. The emphasis on a documented process presented several practical challenges for program administrators and faculty involved in experiential learning courses. Administrators were forced to pivot from assessing compliance and completion in experiential learning courses to assessing learning and mastery.

Experiential learning courses have unique characteristics different from more traditional classroom learning (which may include lecture, cases, and in-class exercises). As shown in Figure 1, most notable is the need for assessment tools that differ from the established tools for classroom instruction. If experiential learning is better conceived of as a process rather than in terms of outcomes as Kolb (1984) suggested, then learning is difficult to assess.

	Classroom Learning	**Experiential Learning**
Learning Design	• Instructor "creates" the learning	• Process creates the learning; instructors are mentors
Complexity	• Fewer variable at play • Controlled environment	• Many variables at play • Real-world environment; less controlled
Outcomes	• More certain, easier to measure • Generally common across student population	• Less certain, difficult to measure • Vary based on individual learning goals, student role and other factors
Assessment	• Established tools accepted and generally suffice (e.g., tests, exams, papers, etc.)	• Established tools borrowed from the classroom may not be enough

Figure 1. Classroom vs. experiential leaning.

Figure 2 translates an assessment of an outcomes focused course to assessment questions for a process focused course. These questions can be asked in the context of a learning competency model where the learning is intentional and regardless of whether student directed or instructor directed, the steps are: Plan→ Do→ Reflect→ Consolidate & Integrate.

Assessment Process Steps	Experiential Learning Course Design Questions
1. Define learning goals and outcomes	1. What do we want students to learn, practice, and master in our course?
2. Align curriculum with goals	2. How will they learn it?
3. Identify and utilize instruments and assessment measures	3. How will we know they have learned it?
4. Collect, analyze, and disseminate assessment data	4. Who should know about what students have learned?
5. Use assessment data to improve teaching, learning and student experience	5. What will we do if they have not learned it?

Figure 2. Mapping assessment process to experiential learning course design questions.

In the context of management education, LEPE, a professional networking group of experiential learning scholars and practitioners from business schools across the U.S. has summarized the most common learning competencies outlined in experiential learning course syllabi:

- An ability to manage multiple and complex challenges and make reasoned decisions in unfamiliar situations
- An ability to adapt to a new or uncertain environment and exercise leadership
- An ability to think critically and creatively
- An ability to adopt a holistic approach to problem solving
- An ability to work collaboratively and productively on a team
- An ability to identify personal strengths and address weaknesses through reflection

A common observation of experiential learning courses is that the competencies listed in the syllabus are what a student could experience in the course, but since each project is different and six or more is too many for one course, failure to apply the learning competency model on a subset of competencies would be suboptimal.

LEPE has established a set of six learning standards that represent the most prevalent assurance of learning trends among participating business schools. The six standards are as follows:

- Tailor learning outcomes to the individual
- Create opportunities for reflection
- Provide feedback early and often to teams and individuals
- Acknowledge and incorporate the role of emotions
- Evaluate student learning in three domains: cognitive, affective, and behavioral
- Close the loop

These standards are being implemented across the 30 LEPE schools. It is instructive to consider the six standards by phase of experiential learning project, as portrayed in Figure 3. Observing the standards in their "natural state" has helped schools identify and manage where resources and attention are needed.
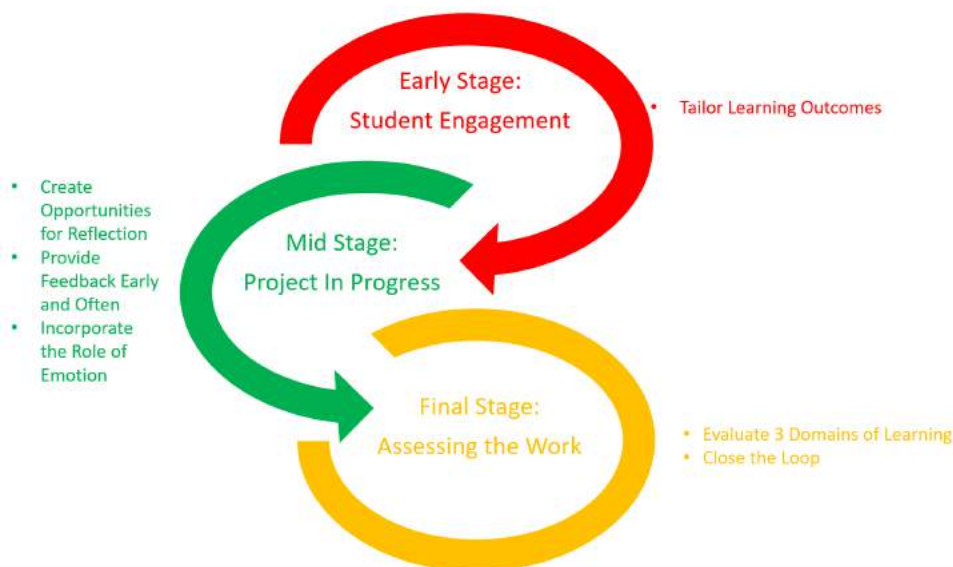

Figure 3. Experiential learning, assurance of learning standards across project stages.

Tailor Learning Outcomes to the Individual

Determining what a student should learn from an experiential learning course should be a two-part process, with a clear set of learning objectives set by the program for all participants, plus at least two goals set by each individual student and communicated to the program and the rest of the project team at the outset. Drawing from Knowles' four principles of adult learning (1984), the types of goals that students set should be ones that are meaningful and align with their personal and professional goals for the course. Eighty percent of programs surveyed by LEPE specified learning objectives in the course description; however, less than 25% of programs reported requiring students to prioritize and commit to personalized objectives (McKeen, Laufer, & Jester, 2017; McKeen, Laufer, & Jester, 2018). With most programs listing more than 10 learning objectives for their project-based courses, unless a student is intentional about setting personal objectives, the learning will be suboptimal and serendipitous.

Success comes from making the attention to the personalized learning objectives real and not perfunctory. The objectives should be linked to other parts of the degree program. Individual learning objectives can be found in personal development plans utilized by many schools as part of a leadership program or career readiness planning. Students in experiential learning courses are encouraged to map the possible learning objectives outlined in the syllabus to their personal development plans to find the two on which they most want to focus. The objectives chosen should remain front and center for the duration of the program and revisited frequently. Feedback and reflection are most valuable if the individual objectives are included in both.   Sharing objectives with team members and faculty is crucial and technology can be used to tailor feedback forms to the objectives identified by each student. Limited resources was the most common response (33%) to a LEPE question about the challenges of implementing individualized learning outcomes.

Provide Feedback Early and Often to Teams and Individuals

One of the most critical factors for achieving powerful learning outcomes from experiential-learning programs is the inclusion of opportunities for feedback (Eyler, 2009). Feedback goes hand in hand with reflection. Offering students an objective evaluation of their performance from multiple sources (peers, faculty advisors, and clients) provides a richness of information on which to reflect. Feedback should be offered individually and at the team level. It should be specific and relevant and should be offered early enough for the recipients to change course if concerns are surfaced. This allows a team and its members to self-assess and adapt their behaviors and processes to achieve better outcomes for the client and to solidify learning.

A 2017 LEPE school survey indicated that the importance of feedback is widely acknowledged in project-based experiential learning courses across management education programs (McKeen et al., 2017). Four fundamentals appear to be in place on a large scale among schools that report implementing the standard well:

1. Having a clear infrastructure and process in place for providing feedback to students
2. Feedback is timely and relevant, and it is delivered throughout the project experience
3. Feedback is provided not only to teams as a whole, but also to individuals
4. Technology is effectively used to gather and deliver feedback efficiently, and on a large scale

Of all the assurance of learning standards presented in this section, feedback is the standard that LEPE schools report they are able to implement most effectively relative to other standards (McKeen et al., 2018). While this is encouraging and provides a strong foundation on which to innovate and improve, we should not let it mask areas where further improvement is needed. For example, while 84% of courses reported providing mid-course feedback, only 64% provide individual feedback and only 48% tie individual feedback to individual goals. This indicates that there is much more work to be done to provide students participating in project-based experiential learning the kind of feedback necessary to facilitate deep learning.

Create Opportunities for Reflection

Reflection must be a key component to students' experiential, project-based learning work. Education scholars understand that there can be no learning without reflection. Seventy percent of schools surveyed by LEPE reported having an individual reflection assignment of some kind. Common examples include final reflection papers, a 360-degree instrument for peer and/or self-assessment, team and/or individual debrief sessions, or some combination of these. While any exercise where students are asked to reflect on their experience will improve learning outcomes, the nature and quality of the reflection also matters.

The ability to reflect on practices is a prerequisite to learning from experience. Reflective practice focuses on the recording and subsequent review of accounts of episodes from the course. This is not a trivial undertaking. It begins with a consideration of how experiences are to be noticed in the first place. Without first registering an experience as notable, subsequent reflection is going to be fruitless (Mason, 2002). Reflection worthy moments are personalized and can be experienced during client interaction, team interaction, self-regulation, data collection, data analysis, formulating findings, or presenting results. Registering an experience is specifically addressed conceptually in terms of sensitization, awareness, and noticing (Marton & Booth, 1997). The strategies that enable learning how to experience are explicit and can be learned.

Too frequently, reflection in project-based courses tends to focus on team results and client satisfaction at the expense of individual learning. Course learning outcomes can be assessed with a specific 360-degree instrument that focuses on those that are the same for all, and individual learning outcomes can be assessed through a required reflection assignment written by the student and assessed critically by a faculty coach or mentor. All course directors and faculty coaches/mentors must also be better trained to design and facilitate reflection exercises. Students also need specific skills if they are to make the most of their experiential learning course.

Reflection should be emphasized throughout the phases of a project in experiential learning courses. Waiting until the end of a three to six month project for reflection misses learning opportunities at the beginning of the project and can be clouded by the emotions experienced when a project is complete. Reflection and feedback need to be intertwined. Without the benefit of feedback blind spots can go unobserved or even reinforced through reflection. Most LEPE schools require reflection on the part of students but few require reflection by teams. Facilitated team reflection intertwines feedback and reflection.

Evaluate in Three Domains: Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral

Experiential learning programs can better assess student engagement by broadening the scope of how students are evaluated. One definition of experiential learning includes the idea that "experiential learning exists when a personally responsible participant cognitively, affectively and behaviorally processes knowledge, skill and /or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement" (Hoover & Whitehead, 1975, p. 25). Experiential learning not only draws from the cognitive learning emphasized by management education but also stresses the learning of behaviors and attitudes. By including an assessment of cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, faculty and administrators can advance and deepen the learning experience of students, while also providing insights as to skills and capabilities necessary for problem solving in a dynamic global environment.

Faculty and administrators see evaluation in the three domains as providing an opportunity for a more holistic and comprehensive view of their students. In addition, they believe it can help move students across the learning continuum and provide greater programmatic insight by allowing for a longitudinal perspective of their experiential programs and its overall impact (McKeen et al., 2017). However, concerns about evaluating the domains include:

- Constrained or limited resources dedicated to doing this type of evaluation;
- Student resistance to engage in a multilayered process of evaluation;
- The ability to provide adequate instruction to faculty and administrative staff in order them to be effective;
- Developing objective tools to measure effectiveness; and
- Challenges in capturing learning, given the dynamic nature of experiential learning.

A review of the ways in which school faculty and administrators were assessing their students suggests that many may already assess students across the three domains, although they have not necessarily connected them. For example, under the core domain of cognitive (linked to understanding information and the evolution of that learning) assessment types were categorized to include written reports, presentation content, and recommendations. Through the behavioral domain (which links to performance and the practical application of learning), presentations, client engagement and interaction as well as team engagement and interaction were identified as the types of behaviors as-

sessed in this domain. Finally, under the domain of affective (linked to motivation and the willingness to contribute, empathy, and how concern and listening are expressed), class participation, reflection papers, and student self-reporting were included. While these represent examples, they do illustrate the accessibility of the domains and how a more holistic approach to evaluation might work within an experiential learning program.

Examining student performance across the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains align with the soft skills many employers seek. Domain performance could be linked to learning objectives and captured within the types of deliverables that are already part of most experiential learning programs. The domains are also closely aligned with the other five standards noted in this article, as they provide:

- A framework for broadening student learning outcomes to specifically address the types of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that companies want;
- A means of assessing and helping to advance students' reflective practice;
- An additional lens through which individualized feedback can be given;
- A method for helping students and the faculty and administrator that support them incorporate the role emotion and pull meaningful lessons and insights; and
- A more robust understanding of the impact of the course or program design, as faculty and administrators seek to "close the loop," highlighting what has worked and areas for individual and team, and thus course level, improvement.

Experiential learning is an iterative process with multiple feedback loops for learning. The multidisciplinary aspect of this type of learning engagement necessitates evaluating team and individual effectiveness across several different areas, which can be done through an evaluation using the three domains.

Acknowledge and Incorporate the Role of Emotions

While management education administrators seem to intuitively understand the ways in which emotion plays a role in student learning, it is not intentionally utilized as a vehicle for insight and learning. For example, while administrators might anticipate a wide range of feelings among students including fear, anger, frustration, euphoria, and excitement, they do not look for ways to intentionally mine and incorporate these emotions into individual, team, and class learnings. Unlike traditional course lectures, experiential learning courses are, by the nature of their design, ambiguous. The pervasiveness of ambiguity can lend itself to tension and frustration, as teams are subject to working with incomplete information; forced to satisfy multiple stakeholders whose interest may not be aligned; working with peers who may have vastly different expectations or agendas; and working with companies and/or teammates whose culture and ways of working may be foreign. Having to function in new and different environments and differing views on how to proceed with the team's work all can lead to conflict. These events can lead to frustration, anger, and resentment, generating what Mezirow (1990) calls a "disorienting dilemma," where an individual's frame of reference or way of thinking is fundamentally challenged. Left unaddressed, negative emotions can become a barrier to and a distortion of individual learning by narrowing the field of further experience, becoming an obstacle to team success.

In their neuroscience and education research, Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) noted that advances in neuroscience show the connections between emotion, social functioning, and decision-making. The cognition that is most heavily utilized in school—learning, attention, memory, de-

cision making, and social functioning—is linked to emotion. However, during the most recent survey of LEPE participants (2018), fewer than five schools identified an intentional incorporation of emotion into their assessment process, despite recognizing its importance.

However, research (Immordino-Yang, 2018; Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007) and the experience of LEPE schools that incorporate emotion suggests that when acknowledged and incorporated into a team's process, emotions can catalyze learning, leading to a shift in mindsets and beliefs. Furthermore, faculty and administrators who utilize emotion as part of student learning, tend to recognize and use situations where students exhibit negative emotions, but neglect to fully mine the learnings that emerge from strong positive emotions. As Brown (2000) notes, the experience gained from action is largely embedded in emotions, both positive and negative. The engagement in action and the resulting emotions are an important catalyst for learning.

Faculty and administrators have identified several challenges in attempting to incorporate emotion into the student learning process. First is the constraint of scale: "how will we actually get this done" when the intensity of experiential learning makes attending to emotion, on top of the other issues that must be addressed, feel burdensome. In addition, administrators note that many students, faculty and administrators lack the expertise or experience to manage emotion; it lies far beyond their traditional roles as well as their own comfort zone. Administrators also recognize the reluctance their students might have in attending to this issue as it may call for them to expose their or their classmates' weaknesses. Students may be reluctant to use tools such as team charters (meant to assist students in developing work agreements) or peer feedback surveys (used as evaluation tools) if there is concern about its impact on the final evaluation of the individual and/or the team.

Nevertheless, while administrators and faculty both recognize the necessity of incorporating emotion and are interested in determining how best to do this, the 2017 and 2018 LEPE surveys suggest that schools may look to couple emotion with other tools already in place. For example, pairing learning from emotion with other assessment measures such as the Global Mindset Inventory (Schmieder-Ramirez, 2015), which links individual reflection and learning or using program alumni to normalize the events of experiential learning projects. Feedback mechanisms and coaching that recognize emotions and encourage teams to verbalize them can help de-escalate conflict, minimize future occurrences, and create entirely new paradigms for understanding team dynamics and one's own role in shaping them.

Buchanan (2007), noting the relationship between emotions and memory retrieval, concluded that events categorized as emotional are more easily and intensely memorable and retrievable than events without an emotional component. Acknowledging and incorporating emotion is believed to be very important part of the learning process. Identifying it as part of an assurance of learning best practice, will help further drive intentionality in incorporating this standard.

Close the Loop

Closing the loop is about acting to improve student learning. It represents one of the greatest opportunities to learn from experiences and translate that learning into course improvements, yet it does not happen nearly enough. However, a lack of understanding of what closing the loop means, coupled with limited expertise within management education institutions on how to do it, are chief barriers to implementing this standard. Rexeison and Garrison (2013) presented three issues dominating future assurance of learning challenges in management education program: 1) faculty ownership of the process, 2) closing the loop, and 3) resource constraints. It is, therefore, not surprising that while eighty-four percent of programs surveyed reported that they regularly collect as-

sessment data on how to improve teaching, learning, and the student experience, only 56% reported using that data to make changes to the program (McKeen et al., 2017).

According to Martell (Davidson, 2015, para. 4), "The most significant problem related to assurance of learning is not measurement; it is how to use the data to improve student learning." This suggests both an overemphasis on data collection versus making sense of the data, as well as on changing assessment tools versus changing the curriculum or the delivery method. Inclusion of closing the loop in these standards is both practical and aspirational. It underscores the responsibility of project-based experiential learning course directors to implement more formal closing the loop processes that contribute to broader program-level assurance of learning activities.

For those looking to create or improve existing closing the loop processes, the following set of questions, adapted from Rexeison and Garrison (2013), can provide a helpful roadmap:

1. How do you identify student learning weaknesses?
2. How do you generate ideas for course interventions/changes? Is it through outside or internal experts? Is it through literature? Is it in committee?
3. How do you evaluate ideas generated and decide on interventions?
4. Where do faculty advisors or coaches (and others) fit into this process? What is their role?
5. Are your closing the loop processes addressing identified weaknesses? How do you know?

To be successful, closing the loop involves assigning clear and specific accountability for assurance of learning in experiential courses and considering the longitudinal benefits of the learning from these courses.

Scaling Experiential Education Courses

Despite the benefits to learning outcomes of experiential learning courses, there are obstacles to spreading and scaling them. The approach places greater demands on university staff and faculty. Most commonly cited challenges are sourcing new projects each semester, developing tools to evaluate and assure learning outcomes are achieved, and monitoring team and individual team member progress. As the demand and benefits of experiential learning courses grow, administrators do not have enough resources (e.g., time, funds or skills) to successfully execute these popular programs.

Experiential learning courses ready students for the ambiguity and complexity of problems they will face in the work force. However, experiential learning courses—project-based, collaborative, and real-world oriented—differ significantly from classroom based, individualized learning (Sachs et al., 2016). Sourcing projects, forming teams, matching teams to projects and advising, mentoring and evaluating students is more intensive than traditional classroom courses. The effective integration of practice-based experience into the formal study program present major challenges for curriculum design and resourcing (Peach & Gamble, 2011). In experiential learning courses, different students are at different organizations doing different things on different projects at different points of time.

Experiential learning "requires considerable knowledge, effort, persistence, and self-regulation on the part of students; they need to devise plans, gather information, evaluate both the findings and their approach, and generate and revise artifacts" (Blumenfeld et al, 1991, p. 393). The ambiguity and uncertainty imposed on the students by these requirements can be challenging but are also where the most intense learning happens. When circumstances require students to go beyond reciting a theory and apply what they have learned in an uncharted situation, the emotional stakes

are high are but the process of application and real time feedback from clients or teammates reinforces the lessons. Teams and students require more individual attention from faculty through the uncertainty and ambiguity. The added faculty time can be expensive for programs.

Business school staff and faculty purse multiple strategies to offset the additional resources necessary to deliver experiential learning courses. Sixty-one percent of surveyed schools (McKeen et al., 2017) charge external partners a fee for hosting a student team and twenty-one percent solicit donations to offset the cost of delivery. Most schools surveyed have a faculty member of record responsible for the experiential learning course, but they use a mixture of professional staff, adjunct faculty, alumni executives, and tenured faculty to advise and monitor the student teams. Administering alternative funding sources and coordinating faculty advisors is an additional resource intensive task.

One of the biggest challenges reported by experiential learning staff and faculty is sourcing quality projects for the students. Experiential learning requires a constant stream of projects from organizations external to the educational institution with which students can apply the tools they are learning. Collaboration among staff, faculty, alumni relations, and advancement staff can be effective in identifying and retaining corporate partners. Experiential learning courses provide engagement opportunities for corporate partners and alumni. Frequently the engagement opportunity can lead to additional engagement such as graduate hiring, philanthropy, or sponsored research. The potential benefits from deeper external engagement are shared across different school units providing incentive for staff in other school units to collaborate in sourcing projects. This collaboration can be hindered by lack of a customer relationship management (CRM) tool at the school or different CRMs used by different school units.

In the past, researchers and educators studying group-based learning have primarily used qualitative methods that focus on retrospective, historical assessments that do not easily scale (Oh, Labianca & Chung, 2006). Learning analytics, a new area enabled by advances in data science focuses on the measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of data about learners and their contexts for the purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs. This emerging field provides tools and techniques for quantifying what has historically been a qualitative experience. These advances provide for data collection, tracking of individuals, and team sense making from qualitative observations and reporting. Identification and personalization of feedback delivered during an experiential learning project will improve the learning. Learning analytics that better predict learning outcomes and identify when students need support provide an efficiency gain. Analytics will allow faculty advisors to more efficiently allocate their time. Example data collection tools can be pulse checks delivered via mobile phone apps and reflection tools. Data and sentiment analysis can identify team conflict or client dissatisfaction for example more quickly than traditional methods.

Conclusion

Over the past 25 years, experiential learning has moved from the fringes into the mainstream of management education curricula. Employers want students with experiences in skills that predict career success, and students expect to practice these skills in business school through authentic, team-based projects. As a result, expectations of experiential learning professionals are higher. They are expected to source enough of the right kind of projects to satisfy high student demand for this type of learning experience. The projects must appeal to students *and* deliver value to clients. Students must also learn something from the experience, and a set of objective measures must demon-

strate that learning. Overlaying all of this is the ongoing struggle to do this work efficiently and to find ways to keep the high costs of executing experiential learning courses under control.

This article discussed two obstacles to the ongoing growth of experiential learning in management education curricula and offered some solutions. The first is assurance of learning, or the ability to demonstrate that students are learning what program faculty and staff intend. The second pertains to the question of how to scale experiential learning given its highly-customized nature. Six assurance of learning standards for project-based experiential learning courses were identified that are both grounded in research and validated by a community of experienced practitioners. These standards offer some useful guidelines for institutions to help build, evaluate, and/or improve upon their assurance of learning processes. The challenge of scaling experiential learning courses to serve larger student populations while not diluting the quality of the experience was also discussed. The issue of scale can be addressed, at least in part, through greater integration of school functions and increased collaboration. A higher level of engagement among corporate partners, alumni, and students also provides benefits beyond learning, such as improved alumni and corporate relations functions. And, the resource-intensive nature of experiential learning courses can be further managed by leveraging technology more effectively, including through CRMs and learning analytics platforms.

Moving forward, experiential learning professionals in management education must find creative ways to solve both the assurance of learning and scalability challenges to demonstrate that this pedagogy delivers on its learning objectives and deserves a central place in the management education curriculum of the future.

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Appendix

Management Education Experiential Learning Framework

Program/ Learning Design	Role play, single iteration simulation, single class or whole day session hands-on activity	Multi-session hands-on class activity or simulation; study tours	Project-based action learning
	Highly facilitated; contained within course boundaries. Inputs clear; outcomes known/expected/anticipated	Highly facilitated; usually contained within course boundaries; inputs clear/known/expected; outcomes known/expected/anticipated	Limited facilitation, heavy reliance on self-directed learning. Intentional activity design for inside and outside course boundaries but contained within academic calendar. Use external real-world business challenge to synthesize and advance learning; inputs and outputs vary; broad higher-level learning anticipated; specific outcomes for students individualized and uncertain, exceeding identified learning objectives; uncertainty creates some risk for students and program
Learning Objectives: 1. Overarching across all related MBA activities/ programs 2. Learning objectives by framework type	Overarching learning objectives for all experiential learning programs are: • An ability to manage multiple and complex challenges and make reasoned decisions using a holistic approach to problem solving • An ability to understand and analyze organizations, their context and their management to apply relevant knowledge • An ability to articulate business risk and assess the impact of decisions, behaviors and other relevant factors • An ability to effectively communicate ideas and arguments • An ability to effectively and productively collaborate as a team member and/or team leader		
	Learning objectives by framework type:		
	• Enhance technical and functional skills through double	• Enhance technical and functional skills through double loop learning processes • Experience and draw insights	• Adapt to a new or uncertain environment • Identify leadership strengths and address personal challenges through reflection • Assess and interpret important relationships across business

	loop learning processes	from a new or uncertain environment • Develop personal learning goals through self-directed learning events/activities	disciplines • Conduct research into business and management issues, synthesize data and information and make recommendations • Identify, interpret and evaluate ethical and legal considerations in decision making • Recognize opportunities and challenges presented by business, regional and global context
Size/scope of activity	Small (can be individual)	Medium to large	Varies; medium to large but must be done in teams (team size approximately 4-6)
Specificity of learning	Targeted learning; specific domain or functional skill development	Topical or broad learning; specific domain or functional skill development; some knowledge integration	Broader learning agenda; development varies; high knowledge integration
Duration of experiential learning cycle	1-2 classes	Several days to a few weeks	Between one-half semester to one whole academic year
Frequency- # of student opportunities for this type of engagement/ activity (due of time/attention demand)	High	Moderate	Low; infrequent
Types of learning involved	Formal, informal, incidental; peer learning varies (experience may be individual or group); some guid-	Formal, informal, incidental, small group; some self-directed; peer learning varies (may be individual or group; relatively short teammate engagement); some guided reflective learning	Formal, informal, incidental, self-directed, transformational; small group, peer group; coaching or facilitated instruction as scaffolding for learning; self-reflection; guided reflection/multiple iterations as a key learning method

	ed reflective learn-ing		
Pedagogy	Experiential; prob-lem-based learning	Experiential; problem-based learning	Experiential; action learning; project-based learning; problem-based learning