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DIVERSITY-RELATED EXPERIENCES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE  
PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ORIENTATION, MULTICULTURAL  
OPENNESS, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

by

Alexandra K. Reveles

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTERS OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

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Logan, Utah

2017

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## ABSTRACT

Diversity-Related Experiences Among College Students in the Promotion of Social Justice Orientation, Multicultural Openness, and Community Involvement

by

Alexandra K. Reveles, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2017

Major Professor: Renée V. Galliher, Ph.D.  
Department: Psychology

College acts as an introduction to society and can be a catalyst in the cultivation of critical consciousness, how to critically view the world and act to create change toward justice. The purpose of this study was to examine how engagement in diversity-related activities in college predicts levels of critical consciousness among students of color and White students.

Students of color reported more engagement in extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, and experiences of microaggressions than White students; White students reported more instances of curriculum inclusion. Diversity-related experiences were found to be positively associated with other diversity-related experiences and critical consciousness outcomes for students of color. This was similar for White students, however microaggressions were not related to curriculum inclusion or social justice orientation.

Engagement in diversity-related activities was positively related to levels of critical consciousness for students of color and White students. Community involvement was predicted by extracurricular diversity activities ( $\beta = .71, p < .001$ ), positive cross-racial interactions ( $\beta = .44, p < .001$ ), curriculum inclusion ( $\beta = .51, p < .001$ ), and experiences of microaggressions ( $\beta = .52, p < .001$ ). Multicultural openness was predicted by extracurricular diversity activities ( $\beta = .18, p < .001$ ), positive cross-racial interactions ( $\beta = .16, p < .001$ ), curriculum inclusion ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ), and experiences of microaggressions ( $\beta = .20, p < .010$ ), along with social justice orientation: extracurricular diversity activities ( $\beta = .32, p < .001$ ), positive cross-racial interactions ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ), curriculum inclusion ( $\beta = .30, p < .002$ ), and experiences of microaggressions ( $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ). Differences emerged between students of color and White students in the relationship between extracurricular diversity activities and community involvement, which was stronger for White students. The relationships of extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, and experiences of microaggressions with social justice orientation were stronger for students of color than White students. Engagement in diversity-related activities linked to critical consciousness among students. These findings may inform curriculum development, diversity based initiatives on campuses, and adherence to mission statements to foster inclusive environments for all students.

## PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Diversity-Related Experiences Among College Students in the Promotion of Social  
Justice Orientation, Multicultural Openness, and Community Involvement

by

Alexandra K. Reveles

Institutions of higher education serve students in more ways than simply fostering academic growth. University and college campuses are often the introduction people have to the societal, interpersonal, and career/field specific expectations they will be guided by after completing their degree. One way for universities to do this is through the cultivation of critical consciousness by way of encouraging engagement in diversity-related activities. This study examined associations between engagement in diversity-related activities and reported levels of critical consciousness, along with differences between students of color and White students in patterns of association.

Diversity-related experiences, including extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, and experiences of microaggressions, strongly correlated to levels of critical consciousness for students of color and White students. These findings add support to previous research that suggests diversity experiences on college campuses positively influence students. However, the findings also suggest differences in the outcomes that these diversity-related experiences links to for students of color versus White students.

Community involvement was more strongly correlated to extracurricular diversity activities for White students than students of color. In turn, social justice orientation was more strongly linked to extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, and experiences of microaggressions for students of color than for White students. Linked between diversity-related experiences and multicultural openness were not moderated by ethnicity. These findings suggest that there may be differences between behaviorally based experiences/outcomes and attitudinally based experiences/outcomes for students of color vs. White students. Overall, engagement in diversity-related activities was strongly correlated with critical consciousness among all students. Findings provide guidance for curriculum development, the development and implementation of diversity-based initiatives on college campuses, and adherence to mission statements to foster more inclusive environments for all students.

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Alexandra K. Reveles



## CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
PUBLIC ABSTRACT .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
CHAPTER	
I.    INTRODUCTION .....	1
II.   REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	5
Multiple Dimensions of Cultural Competence .....	6
Critical Consciousness.....	8
Diversity-Related Experiences.....	16
Summary and Research Questions.....	23
III.  METHOD .....	25
Participant Characteristics .....	25
Procedures.....	29
Measures .....	30
IV.  RESULTS .....	34
Descriptive Statistics.....	34
Primary Analyses.....	36
V.   DISCUSSION.....	43
Diversity-Related Experiences.....	44
Correlates of Critical Consciousness .....	46
Implications for Educators and Researchers.....	48
Limitations .....	51
Conclusion .....	52
REFERENCES .....	54

APPENDICES .....	60
Appendix A: Recruitment Email .....	61
Appendix B: Informed Consent.....	63

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Demographic Information of Sample .....	26
2. Diversity-Related Academic Experiences for Sample.....	35
3. Critical Consciousness Outcomes for Sample .....	35
4. Summary of Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Diversity-Related Experiences and Critical Consciousness Subscales as a Function of Dichotomous Ethnicity .....	37
5. Summary of Moderation Analyses for Community Involvement .....	40
6. Summary of Moderation Analyses for Multicultural Openness.....	40
7. Summary of Moderation Analyses for Social Justice Orientation.....	41

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

College acts as an introduction to society, the expectations of the work-field, the relationships that will be formed with colleagues, and the workings of the real world in general. Many universities across the U.S. include service for their communities and society at large within their mission statements, which shows the importance institutions place on inspiring their students to have an orientation toward social justice (Cornell University, n.d.; Marquette University, n.d.; University of Houston, n.d.; University of Wisconsin-Madison, n.d.). With the ever increasing diversity among the U.S. population, college has also become a place where students can learn how to navigate this increasingly diverse world and is, at times, even the setting in which people have their first cross-racial interactions. With these roles it is reasonable to suggest that institutions hope for students to develop multicultural competencies such as a social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement.

University settings can be a catalyst in the cultivation of critical consciousness, a way that marginalized peoples and their allies critically view their world situations and act to create change toward justice, through various mechanisms. The multicultural competence dimension of the Multiple Dimensions of Cultural Competence model describes the optimal development of people's cultural competence (D. W. Sue, 2001). The model suggests targeting the areas of knowledge, belief/attitude, and skills in order to increase cultural competence (D. W. Sue, 2001). Institutions can directly address these areas by requiring formal didactic training in multicultural/diversity issues, providing

extracurricular activities that include diverse perspectives, and increasing students' positive cross-racial interactions as ways to achieve the ultimate goal of cultivating critical consciousness mentioned above. Ethnic minority students and faculty often carry the burden of providing or supporting these diversity-related offerings, but some people contend that White students benefit more from diversity programming than students of color and there have been differences found in what is most useful to White students versus students of color in these types of programming (Acosta, Moore, Perry, & Edwards, 2005; Martinez, 2014; Seward & Guiffrida, 2012).

One critical consciousness outcome is a social justice orientation. Social justice orientation is the view that all people deserve equality in their economic, political and social rights and opportunities (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], n.d.). Diversity inclusive curricula have been found to increase students' personal awareness of issues of oppression and improve their capacity to recognize instances of racism and other oppression, thus promoting social justice attitudes (Burrell Storms, 2012). Multicultural openness, defined as having an awareness and appreciation for differences between people, represents another aspect of diversity-related attitudes that can be influenced by college experiences. Participation in required diversity courses or programs is significantly positively related to openness to diversity (Ryder, Reason, Mitchell, Gillon, & Hemer, 2015). Cross-racial interactions have also been found to increase individual multicultural openness (Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006; Koch, Ross, Wendell, & Alesandrova-Howell, 2014; Longerbeam, 2010; Smith, Parr, Woods, Bauer, & Abraham, 2010). A final optimal multicultural outcome is community involvement,

which is defined as performing community services, discussing politics, demonstrating for causes, along with other prosocial behaviors directed at strengthening communities. Many studies have found that enrollment in service-learning courses, in particular, impacts community involvement as well as shifts in diversity attitudes, personal and professional development, and structural understandings of poverty (Koch et al., 2014; Seider, Gillmor, & Rabinowicz, 2011; Weiler et al., 2013)

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between diversity-related experiences (DREs) and critical consciousness. Specifically, inclusive didactic curricula, positive cross-race/ethnicity interactions, and diversity-related extracurricular involvement are hypothesized to correlate with higher levels of multicultural openness, community involvement, and social justice orientation. In contrast, experiences of racial microaggressions may serve as a barrier to the development of multicultural competence, although the literature related to microaggressions is more mixed (Hope, Keels, & Durkee, 2016; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solorzano, 2009). To build on previous research, this study aims to examine predictors of critical consciousness, differences in these outcomes between students of color and White students, and whether students of color have a greater likelihood than White students in developing critical consciousness. More specifically: (a) What are the associations between diversity-related college experiences and the outcomes of social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement? (b) Is there a difference between students of colors and White students with regard to social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement? (c) Do students of color and White

students demonstrate different patterns of association between diversity-related experiences and social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This section will provide an elaboration on the theoretical foundation for the present study along with a report of relevant findings in social justice, multicultural openness, community involvement, and diversity-related experiences as they relate to college student development.

#### **Multiple Dimensions of Cultural Competence**

The Multiple Dimensions of Cultural Competence (MDCC) model was proposed as a way to organize three primary dimensions of multicultural competence, including: (a) specific racial/cultural group perspectives, (b) components of cultural competence, and (c) foci of cultural competence (D. W. Sue, 2001). The second dimension of this model, focusing on cultural competence, will be used as the theoretical framework for the current study. D. W. Sue defined cultural competence as, "...the ability to engage in actions or create conditions that maximize the optimal development of client and client systems" (p. 802). This definition refers specifically to the competence of counselors, therapists, or other mental health professionals, but is relevant for college students in that there is a goal to maximize the optimal development of people in general. The components of cultural competence are beliefs/attitudes, knowledge, and skills (D. W. Sue, 2001). In regard to this study, cultural competence is tied to the development of multicultural openness in college students. D. W. Sue noted that the ultimate goal of cultural competence is to promote social justice, especially in providing relevant



treatments to all populations in the field of mental health and at all levels (e.g., individual, organizational, societal). The goal of cultural competence leading to social justice also fits with the current study's aims of examining the development of a social justice orientation in college students. The third component of cultural competence, skill, also ties into the promotion of community involvement as a desired outcome for college students as they become citizens of the world.

The belief/attitude component of multicultural competence refers to the awareness and sensitivity a person has of their own heritage, valuing and respecting differences, awareness of background experiences and biases that a person may possess and how those influence psychological processes, and being comfortable with differences that exist between people (D. W. Sue, 2001). It also includes being aware of negative emotional reactions a person may have toward racial/ethnic groups, the ability to be nonjudgmental, being aware of stereotypes and preconceived notions about others, respecting the religious/spiritual beliefs of others, respecting cultural practices, and valuing bilingualism (D. W. Sue, 2001).

The knowledge component includes having knowledge one's own racial/cultural heritage and how it impacts perceptions, having knowledge about racial identity and development and specifically being able to acknowledge one's own racist attitudes, beliefs, and feelings (D. W. Sue, 2001). It also entails being knowledgeable about one's own social impact and communication styles, being knowledgeable about groups that you may interact or work with, and having knowledge of sociopolitical influences, immigration, poverty, and powerlessness (D. W. Sue, 2001). This component also

consists of knowing about the impact of institutional barriers people may face and how discriminatory practices operate at a community level (D. W. Sue, 2001).

The final component of cultural competency, skill, describes specific behaviors acquired to address inequity, support social justice, and interact effectively with culturally different others. The skill development component of cultural competence was described by D. W. Sue and Sue (1990, p. 48) as "...an active process, that it is ongoing, and that it is a process that never reaches an end point" and expanded upon by S. Sue (1998) as including three specific characteristics: (a) scientific mindedness, (b) dynamic sizing, and (c) culture-specific expertise. Scientific mindedness refers to the ability to "form hypotheses rather than make premature conclusions about the status of culturally different [others]," as well as the ability to test those hypotheses and act in accordance to the data discovered rather than acting on the "myth of sameness" (S. Sue, 1998, p. 445). The ability to form such hypotheses can free a person from ethnocentric thinking that appears through biases or theories made about different groups. Dynamic sizing builds directly upon this by demonstrating a person's ability to know when it is appropriate to "generalize and be inclusive" and when it is better to "individualize and be exclusive" (S. Sue, 1998). This allows people to avoid stereotyping while still showing an appreciation for cultural differences, and the importance of those differences. The final characteristic, culture-specific expertise refers to a person's understanding and knowledge of their own worldviews along with specific knowledge of cultural groups they interact with and skills they have for working with those groups (S. Sue, 1998). These skills are considered to be orthogonal, which means one of these skills can be present while the others absent. Skill

may be present for one cultural group but not others, or all of these skills may be absent (S. Sue, 1998); of course, ideally all three characteristics would be present.

This model provides a framework for not only understanding the relevance and importance for college students to develop a social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and engage in community advocacy/involvement, but implies the actions that can be taken in pursuit of these goals by individuals and institutions, such as universities.

### **Critical Consciousness**

Critical consciousness (CC) is a concept developed by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, that describes how people from marginalized backgrounds come to critically analyze their social situations as well as act to change those situations (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Critical consciousness was developed to be a tool for liberation for marginalized peoples and a way for them to understand their world so that they can promote justice and social change within that world (Freire, 1993). Freire stated that the lesson of how to achieve liberation rather than becoming an oppressor of the oppressors “...must come, however, from the oppressed themselves and from those who are truly in solidarity with them,” such as White allies, or allies from nonmarginalized groups (Freire, 1993, p. 45). There are three key components to critical consciousness: critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action (Watts et al., 2011). Critical reflection is the “social analysis and moral rejection of social inequities...that constrain well-being and human agency” (Watts et al., 2011, p. 46). Political efficacy refers to “the perceived capacity to effect social and political change by individual and/or collective activism” (Watts et al.,

2011, p. 46). Critical action then refers to “individual or collective action taken to change aspects of society...which are perceived to be unjust” (Watts et al., 2011, pp. 46-47). In the present study, these three components will be operationalized in the form of multicultural openness, social justice orientation, and community involvement.

### **Multicultural Openness**

Multicultural openness, also referred to as openness to diversity in the literature, will be defined for the present study as not only having awareness of differences between people, but having an appreciation for those differences and engaging with those differences interactively (Longerbeam, 2010). This concept is most closely tied to Freire’s component of critical reflection. Multicultural openness can be developed through cross-racial interactions and friendships, multicultural/diversity curriculum, as well as exposure to and participation in student activism (Koch et al., 2014; Longerbeam, 2010; Smith et al., 2010). Cultivating a sense of multicultural openness in students at first glance seems like a behemoth task. However, there have been studies that demonstrate ways in which this is possible.

One way to encourage multicultural openness in students is through actions that institutions can take to impact the campus as a whole. Ryder et al. (2015) investigated student-level data from 15 institutions and found that students’ perceptions that the learning climate supported exploring diverse perspectives, cultures, or worldviews, and encouraged researching controversial ideas were positively related to openness to diversity and challenge. Students’ perceptions that classes help in exploring diverse perspectives, cultures, and worldviews were strongly related to openness to diversity and

challenge (Ryder et al., 2015). A study examining the educational benefits of cross-racial interactions looked specifically at differences in peer levels of cross-racial interactions in institutions and found that even students who had low levels of cross-racial interactions individually but were a part of a student body with high average levels of interactions had greater individual gains in openness to diversity than students with the same level of interaction but were a part of a student body with low average levels (Chang et al, 2006). This study speaks to the importance of creating shared spaces for students, such as clubs, common areas, and social events to enable and encourage cross-racial interactions to happen as frequently as possible.

The university/college community influences students' thinking and perceptions about the world, which makes it a source of intervention for promoting multicultural openness. Chang et al. (2006) examined the impact of cross-racial interactions at an individual level on openness to diversity, cognitive development, and self-confidence, and found that cross-racial interactions had a strong significantly positive effect on openness to diversity compared to students with low frequency of cross-racial interactions. The continued admission and retention of students of color has implications not only for their futures, but the futures of their peers who are positively impacted from exposure to their worldviews. One study examined the relationship between student perceptions of the multicultural climate at their university and their own personal acceptance of diverse racial ethnic groups finding that for White students, campus programming increases their acceptance of diversity (Simmons, Wittig, & Grant, 2010). Simmons et al. also examined this relationship within Latinx students and discovered that

there was no relationship between perceptions of multicultural programming and acceptance of diversity, which suggests that universities need to be mindful about the different needs of their students in terms of multicultural programming and education.

### **Community Involvement**

Community involvement, for the present study, refers to activities such as, performing community services, helping raise money for a cause, discussing politics, and demonstrating for a cause, among other activities (Higher Education Research Institute [HERI], 2015). Community involvement is also labeled as civic engagement, community involvement, community activism, social agency, and civic outcomes within the literature, but will be referred to as community involvement in the present study.

Community involvement is being conceptualized as a manifestation of the political efficacy component of critical consciousness. Ehrlich (2000) defined civic engagement as

Working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. (p. vi)

Enhancing students' capacity for community engagement is a goal that appears to be held by a majority of universities in the U.S., as evidenced by the inclusion of community involvement and service within mission statements for public and private universities (Marquette University, n.d.; University of Wisconsin-Madison, n.d.; University of Houston, n.d.; Cornell University, n.d.). Many universities offer, or require, "service learning," which is "a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach

civic responsibility, and strengthen communities,” which connects with their mission statements (Utah State University [USU], n.d.). A qualitative study of nine students who participated in an immersion service-learning course in Belize found that the course led to positive changes in diversity attitudes, growth in professional development and skills, an increase in knowledge, growth in personal development, an increase in participants own cultural identity, and that many of these were long-lasting effects (Koch et al., 2014). The most compelling of these findings are the shifts in diversity attitudes where some students seemed to have an increase in cultural sensitivity, as evidenced by saying “And to actually see it for myself, see people laying on the roads...this isn’t only happening in Belize, but it’s happening, you know, in America.... So it definitely made me more sensitive, more aware,” (Koch et al., 2014, p. 1227).

An investigation of the impact of community service on 362 students enrolled in a service-learning program found that a shift occurred in the structural understanding (e.g., job shortages, low wages, unequal educational opportunities) students had of poverty, which shifted away from individualistic attributes (e.g., laziness, lack of intelligence) (Seider et al., 2011). Students enrolled in the service-learning program who were nonbusiness majors also displayed a moderate decrease in their belief in a just world, becoming more skeptical over the course of the program that people get what they deserve (Seider et al., 2011).

Service learning has also been found to impact the likelihood that students will be involved with their communities, community service, and politics in the future. Weiler et al. (2013) examined differences among 648 college students who were either in a service-

learning course or comparison group and found that the service-learning group had significantly higher civic attitudes than the comparison group. They also discovered the service-learning group had higher community service self-efficacy, self-esteem, higher self-reported interpersonal and problem solving skills, and significantly higher political awareness than the comparison group (Weiler et al., 2013).

### **Social Justice Orientation**

The NASW (n.d.) has defined social justice as, "...the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities." Social justice education is described as "...helping students engage in critical reflection on dehumanizing sociopolitical conditions and [the] actions they can take to alter those conditions" as well as the facilitation of connections between diversity and the process of working toward democratization (Ross, 2014, p. 871). In the present study, social justice orientation maps on to critical action from Freire's concept of critical consciousness. Funge (2011) noted that the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has articulated one of the goals of promoting a social justice education is to "...engage in practices that advance social and economic justice" (p. 74). Social justice attitudes are becoming increasingly important as the populations of people of color continue to grow within the U.S. They are also crucial during the present cultural climate that is experiencing not only increasing awareness of police brutality against peoples of color, but dangerous political rhetoric that further separates the citizens of the country, as well as disparities within education, housing, healthcare, and the workplace.

One way for institutions to facilitate a social justice orientation within students is



through course and curriculum construction. A qualitative investigation of six students' perception of the curriculum and teaching strategies in a social justice education course indicated that inclusion of students' lived experiences, personal awareness, increasing empathy and confidence within students, and gaining tools for action helped prepare them to engage in social action (Burrell Storms, 2012). Students were better able to identify and recognize instances of racism, sexism, and other oppression after hearing from peers about their own experiences with such injustices (Burrell Storms, 2012). Creating a safe space for students to learn from their peers is one way to structure courses that will contribute to the development of a social justice orientation. The inclusion of course materials such as articles, books, and classroom activities like examining magazines for examples of sexual exploitation also led students to perceive growth in their personal awareness of issues of oppression (Burrell Storms, 2012). In contrast to the unpredictability and relative difficulty of creating the classroom as a safe space for students to share with and learn from each other, including course materials and activities that explicitly address various forms of oppression is an achievable task for instructors with virtually any level of teaching experience. These different techniques also make it possible to include these materials in introductory courses that target a larger university population, as well as more specialized courses that students more often self-select into (e.g., women and gender courses, social work courses, multicultural psychology courses).

Another way for universities to promote a social justice orientation in their students is for the university to be more explicit about its own social justice values or engagement as a community. A study examining differences between social justice

attitudes in 304 ministry and general undergraduate students at a faith-based institution found that the perception of the school's mission for social justice was more strongly related to higher scores in social justice attitudes and engagement in ministry students than for general students (McAuliff, Antler, & Ferrari, 2013). The link between students' perceptions of their university's social justice commitment and their own social justice attitudes may be dependent on students' understanding of their institution's values and mission as a whole, which further suggests the need for an institution to be clear and overt. Social justice attitudes and orientation in students have also been linked to a sense of campus community belonging. McAuliff, Williams, and Ferrari (2013) examined the relationship between a sense of community on campus and social justice attitudes in a sample of 427 undergraduates and found that students with a strong school sense of community reported higher social justice attitudes compared to students who did not have a strong school sense of community. This study also found that students involved in clubs and groups on campus had stronger social justice attitudes, further supporting the need for students to interact with peers from groups different than their own (McAuliff et al., 2013).

Social justice education has been linked to a number of positive outcomes in college students. Krings, Austic, Gutiérrez, and Dirksen (2015) found that in a sample of 803 students enrolled in social justice education courses (SJE; i.e., service-learning, intergroup dialogue and diversity courses) and a comparison course (Introduction to Psychology) there was a statistically significant difference between the SJE courses and the comparison course in regard to reported commitment to political participation, civic

engagement, and multicultural activism. The main findings of this study highlight the importance of the inclusion of social justice education, or educational methods, within college curriculum and demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between social justice education and social justice attitudes, which is also seen in aforementioned research.

### **Diversity-Related Experiences**

Diversity-related experiences (DRE) refers to those experiences that students have, both formally and informally, that expose them to people, ideas, and perspectives of groups with which they do not identify (HERI, 2015). The current study will examine four types of DRE: formal didactic training, extracurricular experiences, witnessing or experiencing microaggressions, and informal cross-racial/ethnic interactions. Previous research has found that diversity-related activities have a moderate effect on reducing racial bias in both curricular and co-curricular activities (Denson, 2009). These specific experiences are hypothesized as the mechanisms through which critical consciousness can be achieved.

### **Curriculum Inclusion**

Curriculum inclusion refers to enrollment in courses focused on multicultural or diversity issues as well as courses that contain materials or readings about gender, race and/or ethnicity, socioeconomic class differences, sexual orientation, and disability, opportunities for students of different backgrounds and beliefs to dialogue, and opportunities for service learning (HERI, 2015). In a study by Henderson-King and Kaleta (2000), students who were not enrolled in courses focused on social diversity

issues demonstrated a decrease in tolerance of others (e.g., Latinxs, African Americans) over the course of a semester, whereas courses focused on social diversity issues acted as a buffer of intergroup intolerance for the students enrolled. The presence of diverse group members in classroom dialogues has been shown to increase complexity in the inclusion of multiple perspectives and dimensions of the conversation (Antonio et al, 2004). Findings from a meta-analysis examining the role of curricular and cocurricular diversity activities in reducing racial bias show that the use of enlightenment and intergroup contact approaches were key in diminishing cross-racial bias (Denson, 2009).

These types of courses have also been found to have long-term impacts on peoples' views on diversity after leaving their undergraduate institutions. An examination of 6,100 incoming law students found that those students who had exposure to diversity in the classroom were also more likely to favor equal opportunity (Gottfredson et al., 2008). The previously mentioned study also found that both exposure to diversity in the classroom and during interpersonal interactions had a positive impact on cognitive openness, which was defined as, "a student's proclivity to seek out and incorporate a multiplicity of perspectives before forming an opinion" (Gottfredson et al., 2008, p. 83). The long-lasting impact that diversity in the classroom can have on students in their worldviews is a compelling reason for the need to include diversity in multiple curricula on university and college campuses.

Although formal inclusion of diversity or multicultural issues within curriculum has been found to be beneficial, there is also evidence of how this can be problematic for some students. Seider, Huguley, and Novick (2013) discovered that in a study of 362

college students who participated in the Social Action Program at Beacon University, students of color reported feeling uncomfortable discussing race with their White classmates, felt a weaker sense of community than did their White peers, and often remained silent during discussions that could have been strengthened with diverse perspectives. Specifically, these students of color feared being seen as “representing their race,” appearing overly sensitive about racial issues, and feeling frustrated when trying to convey their perspectives on race and racism to their White classmates (Seider et al., 2013). These findings highlight the delicate nature of incorporating issues and topics in a course as a way to challenge White students’ perspectives while taking into consideration the safety of students of color, which not all instructors may be capable of doing.

### **Extracurricular Experiences**

Extracurricular experiences refer to student experiences outside of the classroom, such as attending presentations, performances, or art exhibits on diversity, attending debates and/or panels on diversity issues, participation in on-going campus-organized discussions on racial/ethnic issues, and participating in diversity center and/or spiritual group and club activities (HERI, 2015). The involvement in extracurricular activities, such as intramural sports, performing arts or music, and visiting speakers have been found to make positive contributions to cross-racial interactions, which in turn lead to positive multicultural outcomes (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2009). People who engage in leisure activities in general are more likely than those who do not engage in leisure activities, to report high life satisfaction scores, but cultural activities were not significantly related to life satisfaction in a sample of 32,707 citizens of the United

Kingdom (Brown, MacDonald, & Mitchell, 2015).

Some research has suggested that there is a relationship between extracurricular cultural activities and various positive outcomes. Harris and Wise (2012) examined whether participation in extracurricular activities impacted medical students' sense of belonging and found that for students of low family prestige, participation in cultural activities, as well as race, were key factors in creating a sense of belonging, whereas this was not the case for students from families with higher prestige. In a sample of 164 adults in the U.S., engagement in cultural/intellectual activities was found to compensate for education effects on levels of cognitive functioning, such that people with low levels of education and high participation in cultural/intellectual activities reached the same levels of cognitive functioning as their counterparts with high levels of education (Soubelet, 2011). The positive outcomes that people experience from their participation in extracurricular activities with a focus on diversity issues suggests that these types of activities should be readily available to college students as a way to enhance their educational experience.

### **Microaggressions**

Microaggressions, as defined by D. W. Sue et al. (2007), are the “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (p. 273). D. W. Sue et al. categorized three separate forms of microaggressions in his taxonomy: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. Microassaults are “an explicit racial derogation characterized

primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions” (D. W. Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Microinsults are “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity” (D. W. Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Microinvalidations are “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274).

D. W. Sue (2010) also developed themes of microaggressions that emerged from his taxonomy. Some of these themes are particularly relevant to college populations because of the frequency of their occurrences on college campuses. For example, research with college populations has found that ascription of intelligence, assumption of criminality, and second-class citizenship often come up for students of color (Torres et al., 2010; Yosso et al., 2009). Ascription of intelligence is defined as assigning a certain level of intelligence to a person of color based on their race (e.g., Asians are good at math; D. W. Sue et al., 2007). When a professor comments on a student of color’s articulation when speaking this leads not only that student to think that it is unusual for someone of their race to display intelligence in this way, but has the potential of reinforcing this belief in White students as well (D. W. Sue et al., 2007).

While there are still many gaps in the literature, the phenomenon of *costs of racism to Whites* has begun to emerge in order to examine the impact racism and discrimination has on White people who may not be directly involved in discriminatory exchanges (Kivel, 2002). Some areas that have been suggested to be impacted by racism

for Whites is having limited exposure to people of different races and cultures as well as having distorted beliefs about race and racism (Spanierman, Poteat, Beer, & Armstrong, 2006). The impact of racism to these areas has real implications for college students' futures, especially when thinking about their future workplaces. An examination of diversity in the workplace suggested that perceptions of the diversity climate were likely to impact the degree that employees felt they could be themselves at work, which directly impacts decision making, creating solutions, and identifying with the organization for which they work (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013).

The experience of microaggressions is known to have various detrimental effects to psychological, academic, and physical well-being, but there are also growth opportunities associated with experiencing microaggressions. An investigation of student activism among Black and Latinx college students found that Latinx students who had experienced a high level of exposure to microaggressions were more likely to be involved in the Black Lives Matter and advocate for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals than those students who reported low levels of exposure (Hope et al., 2016).

### **Positive Cross-Racial/Ethnic Interactions**

Positive cross-racial interactions (PCRI) refers to engaging in activities with students from racial/ethnic groups different from their own such as, dining or sharing a meal, having meaningful and honest discussions about race/ethnic relations outside of class, sharing personal feelings or problems, having intellectual discussions outside of class, studying for class, socializing, or making an effort to get to know people from diverse backgrounds (HERI, 2015). Cross-racial interactions have been found to



significantly positively increase openness to diversity, cognitive development, and self-confidence in college students (Chang et al., 2006). Bowman and Park (2015) found that cross-racial interactions were significantly and positively related to a number of student outcomes, not limited to: ease of getting along with people from other races, college satisfaction, self-reported growth, and postcollege volunteering intentions. A previously mentioned study supported the impact of cross-racial interactions on students' cognitive openness, which is the ability to incorporate multiple perspectives when formulating an opinion (Gottfredson et al., 2008).

Cross-racial interactions during college can also lead to long-lasting benefits that persist into adulthood. Luo and Jamieson-Drake (2009) examined how interracial interactions may benefit college students in skill development and career achievements and discovered that students with high levels of interracial interactions had significantly higher levels of the following skill areas: developing awareness of social problems; relating well to people of different racial, national, or religious groups; acquiring new knowledge and skills independently, formulating creative ideas or solutions; understanding the role of science and technology in society; appreciating the arts; and identifying moral and ethical issues. These are invaluable skills that directly impact a person while they are in college, starting their career, and navigating life in general. It was also found that students who engaged in substantial cross-racial interaction were significantly more likely than other graduates to take on leadership roles and report higher levels of achievement in promoting racial understanding as well as staying current on developments in science and technology. Again, this type of positive development in

college graduates is a goal of most, if not all, higher education institutions.

### **Summary and Research Questions**

College is a time for personal growth, gaining knowledge, and developing a professional identity that will be carried out into society. Institutions have the ability to shape students in becoming competent, well-rounded citizens by influencing their attitudes toward social justice, diversity, and their role in their communities.

Aforementioned research has found that actions taken by institutions, such as promoting inclusive curriculum, positive cross-racial interactions, and diversity-related extracurricular activities, were positively linked to the development of multicultural competencies, such as a social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement. Research has also suggested the presence of differences between students of color and White students in the engagement of various diversity-related activities and the development of optimal multicultural competencies. This study sought to examine associations between diversity-related experiences and multicultural competencies, along with differences between White students and students of color in the nature of those relationships. Specific research questions were as follows.

R<sub>1</sub>: What are the associations between diversity-related college experiences and the outcomes of social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement?

R<sub>2</sub>: Is there a difference between students of colors and White students with regard to social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement?

R<sub>3</sub>: Do students of color and White students demonstrate different patterns of association between diversity-related experiences and social justice orientation, multicultural openness, and community involvement?

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Participant Characteristics

Participants consisted of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at a large predominantly White university (PWU) in Utah. Participants were recruited via email, during the spring 2015 semester, to complete an online survey. Participants had the option to enter into a drawing for 1 of 10 iPad minis for completion of the survey. In an attempt to oversample minority students, all ethnic minority students were identified through the university registration system and invited to participate in the survey ( $N = 2,498$ ). To provide a sample that more closely resembles the general university demographics, a random sample of 2,000 students was also identified from the university registration system and asked to complete the survey via email. A total of 908 students completed the survey, including 382 students who marked an ethnic/racial background other than White. Participants were asked to give their student identification number to determine if they were enrolled in classes at USU for the Fall 2015 semester.

Participation in the study was confidential, with the student identification number being used to align enrollment data for each participant and email addresses used to send a summary of survey results or provide information about additional studies and to enter participants into the iPad drawing.

Table 1 presents demographic data for the sample. For ethnic identification questions, participants were prompted to select all that apply, resulting in numbers adding

Table 1

## Demographic Information of Sample (N = 902)

Variables	Asian (n = 122)			Black (n = 28)			Hispanic or Latinx (n = 152)			Middle Eastern (n = 6)			Native American or Alaska Native (n = 44)			Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n = 24)			European American or White (n = 526)		
	M	SD	n	%	M	SD	n	%	M	SD	n	%	M	SD	n	%	M	SD	n	%	
Age	25.5	6.25			24.3	6.48			24.8	6.8			24.7	4.3			22.54	4.0		25.2	7.1
Class standing																					
First year	12	9.8		3	10.7		18	11.8		0	0.0		8	18.2		6	25.0		48	9.1	
Sophomore	13	10.7		7	25		28	18.4		1	16.7		7	15.9		3	12.5		74	14.1	
Junior	20	16.4		4	14.3		35	23		0	0.0		11	25.0		8	33.3		111	21.1	
Senior	19	15.8		6	21.4		44	28.9		5	83.3		11	25.0		3	12.5		191	36.3	
Graduate	58	47.5		7	25.0		27	17.8		0	0.0		6	13.6		4	16.7		99	18.8	
Gender																					
Male	65	53.3		14	50.0		61	40.1		5	83.3		20	45.5		14	58.3		259	49.2	
Female	56	45.9		14	50.0		91	59.9		1	16.7		24	54.5		10	41.7		263	50.0	
Transgender	1	1.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		1	0.2	
Marital status																					
Single	91	74.6		22	78.6		113	74.3		4	66.7		28	63.6		16	66.7		318	60.5	
Married	31	25.4		5	17.9		38	25.0		2	33.3		16	36.4		7	29.2		204	38.8	
Parenting																					
Yes	17	13.9		7	24.9		23	15.1		1	16.7		14	31.7		4	16.7		115	21.9	
No	105	86.1		21	75.0		128	84.2		5	83.3		30	68.2		20	83.3		407	77.4	
Sexual orientation																					
Heterosexual	115	94.3		27	96.4		135	88.8		4	66.7		36	81.8		23	95.8		481	91.4	
LBGTQ	6	4.9		1	3.6		15	9.9		2	33.3		8	18.2		1	4.2		44	8.4	
Speak language other than English at home																					
Yes	84	68.9		7	25.0		100	65.8		6	100.0		13	29.5		5	20.8		56	10.6	
No	38	31.1		21	75.0		52	34.2		0	0.0		313	70.5		18	75.0		469	89.3	

(table continues)

Variables	Asian (n = 122)			Black (n = 28)			Hispanic or Latinx (n = 152)			Middle Eastern (n = 6)			Native American or Alaska Native (n = 44)			Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n = 24)			European American or White (n = 526)		
	M	SD	%	M	SD	%	M	SD	%	M	SD	%	M	SD	%	M	SD	%	M	SD	%
Lived in Utah majority of life																					
Yes	44	36.1		13	46.4		64	42.1		1	16.7		22	50.0		14	58.3		333	63.3	
No	78	63.9		15	53.6		84	55.3		5	83.3		21	47.7		10	41.7		190	36.1	
Religious identification																					
LDS	29	23.8		8	28.6		44	28.9		0	0.0		13	29.5		20	83.3		368	70.0	
Other Christian	44	21.3		10	35.8		66	41.2		2	33.3		9	20.4		2	8.3		49	9.4	
Buddhist	15	12.3		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		1	2.3		0	0.0		5	1.0	
Muslim	3	2.5		1	3.6		0	0.0		1	16.7		0	0.0		0	0.0		2	0.4	
Hindu	11	9.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0	
Other religion	4	3.3		1	3.6		2	1.3		0	0.0		3	6.8		0	0.0		4	0.8	
Non-religious (Atheist, agnostic, other)	34	27.8		8	28.5		39	25.7		3	50.0		26	36.3		2	8.4		96	18.2	
Political views																					
Far left	0	0.0		0	0.0		8	5.3		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		9	1.7	
Liberal	34	27.9		12	42.9		40	26.3		4	66.7		8	18.2		3	12.5		81	15.4	
Middle of the road	66	54.1		8	28.6		73	48.0		1	16.7		25	56.8		11	45.8		192	36.5	
Conservative	19	15.6		8	28.6		28	18.4		0	0.0		8	18.2		10	41.7		221	42	
Far right	0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		0	0.0		2	4.5		0	0.0		14	2.7	
Citizenship																					
First gen.	17	13.9		2	7.1		39	25.7		1	16.7		1	2.3		2	8.3		3	0.6	
Second gen.	13	10.7		2	7.1		29	19.1		0	0.0		2	4.5		10	41.7		17	3.2	
Third gen.	13	10.7		16	57.1		40	26.3		0	0.0		39	88.6		10	41.7		477	90.7	
Foreign-born national	17	13.9		3	10.7		10	6.6		0	0.0		0	0.0		1	4.2		6	1.1	
Student Visa	53	43.4		4	14.3		24	15.8		5	83.3		0	0.0		0	0.0		13	2.5	
Other	9	7.4		1	3.6		8	5.2		0	0.0		1	2.3		1	4.2		8	1.6	

up to over 100%. The mean age of participants was 25.12 ( $SD = 6.98$ ; range 18-61); 69.7% of the sample was 25 years of age or younger. A series of ANOVAs and chi squares assessed for differences among the ethnicity groups for all categorical demographic characteristics. Middle Eastern students were excluded from chi-square analyses due to their small sample size. The assumption of expected values of 5 in each cell was violated with Middle Eastern students. Participants were not asked to indicate their most salient ethnic identity, so for the purposes of comparisons, individuals who selected more than one ethnic minority label were categorized by the first ethnicity chosen to allow for mutually exclusive categorization. Furthermore, multiethnic individuals who selected White as one of their identities were categorized into the racial/ethnic minority group they selected. A total of 11 analyses were conducted to examine demographic variables.

Significant differences appeared among the ethnic minority participants in class standing, parenting, language spoken at home, sexual orientation, political views, and preferred religion. Asian students were significantly more likely to be of advanced class standing than Latinx, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island, and Native American/Alaska Native students. The chi-square analysis for class standing was significant,  $\chi^2(4, n = 891) = 76.83, p < .001$ . Native American/Alaska Native students were significantly more likely than their Asian counterparts to be a parent,  $\chi^2(5, n = 891) = 31.20, p < .05$ . Asian students were also significantly more likely to speak a language other than English at home,  $\chi^2(5, n = 894) = 276.79, p < .001$ , than Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island, and Native American/Alaska Native students. Asian students were more likely to be foreign-

born students on a visa than their Black, Latinx, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island, and Native American/Alaska Native counterparts. The chi-square analysis for citizenship was significant,  $\chi^2(5, n = 891) = 572.40, p < .001$ . White and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island students were more likely to have conservative political views, while Latinx, Asian, and Black students were more likely to have liberal political views. The chi-square analysis for political views was significant,  $\chi^2(4, n = 891) = 94.63, p < .001$ . White students were more likely to identify as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), while Asian students were more likely to identify as Hindu, Latinx students were more likely to identify as Roman Catholic or other Christian. The chi-square analysis for religion was significant,  $\chi^2(5, n = 892) = 474, p < .001$ . All other ANOVAs and chi-square analyses yielded non-significant results.

### **Procedures**

Survey completion occurred online after participants clicked on the survey link given to them through the email inviting them to participate in the study (see Appendix A). The email invitation included information about the details of the study, requirements for participation, information about the iPad drawing and qualifications for entry, and a link to the survey; this measure is not included in the appendices because it is copyrighted. After clicking on the survey link, participants were transferred to the Qualtrics survey, which required them to read the informed consent (see Appendix B) and give consent to participate in the study. Once consent was obtained, participants were asked about their role at USU and their experiences as a student on campus.



Demographic questions were placed at the end of the survey in an attempt to avoid priming participants to answer the survey questions in a certain way. Demographic information was requested after giving a disclaimer about the relevance of this information and restating the confidential nature of the study. Participants were given the option to enter their student identification number at the end of the survey in order to combine their survey data with their enrollment status for the Fall 2015 semester. Participants were also asked to provide their email address for entry into the iPad drawing. Participants also had the opportunity to receive information about the results of the study upon its completion and could also request to be contacted for future study participation.

### **Measures**

The primary measure used in this study was the Diverse Learning Environments Survey (HERI, 2015). The Diverse Learning Environments Survey (DLE) evaluates student perceptions about the university climate including experiences with faculty, staff, and peers, as well as academic outcomes for students. Specific components of the survey include: student financial difficulty, discrimination and harassment experiences, cross-racial interactions, sense of belonging, institutional commitment to diversity, diversity in curriculum, and student support services (HERI, 2015). The following subscales were derived from the DLE survey.

Social Justice Orientation consists of six items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-4 (*1 = not important, 4 = essential*), which assesses the personal importance of

democratic and social justice values to students. Examples are, “Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: Influencing the political structure, Working to achieve gender equity, Helping to promote racial understanding.” This scale was modeled after “Anticipated Involvement in Redressing Social Inequality” scale, which had a reported reliability  $\alpha = .866$  (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013). The scale demonstrated good reliability in the present study ( $\alpha = .807$ ).

Multicultural Openness consists of five items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-3 (1 = *not at all*, 3 = *frequently*) that assess students’ engagement with cultural others, as well as diverse types of thinking (e.g., recognizing bias, challenging discrimination). Examples are, “How often in the past year did you: Use different points of view to make an argument, Make an effort to get to know people from diverse backgrounds, Recognize the biases that affect your own thinking.” This scale was modeled after the “Critical Consciousness and Action” scale, which had a reported adequate reliability ( $\alpha = .799$ ; Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013). The scale demonstrated adequate reliability ( $\alpha = .777$ ) with the current sample.

Community Involvement consists of 11 items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*), which assess students’ participation in community related activities while attending USU. Examples are, “Since entering Utah State, how often have you: Performed community service, Helped raise money for a cause or campaign, Discussed politics.” This scale demonstrated a reported reliability of  $\alpha = .801$  in previous research (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013) and good reliability for the present study ( $\alpha = .886$ ).

Curriculum Inclusion, referred to as formal didactic diversity training in the present study, consists of eight items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-4 (1 = *none*, 4 = *5 or more*) that assesses information students have been exposed to in courses during their time at USU. Examples are, “How many courses have you taken at Utah State University that included the following: Materials/readings about gender, Materials/readings about race/ethnicity, Opportunities for intensive dialogue between students with different backgrounds and beliefs.” This scale had a reported reliability of  $\alpha = .854$  in previous research (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013) and a high reliability for the present study ( $\alpha = .903$ ).

Co-Curricular Diversity Activities, referred to as extracurricular experiences for the present study, consists of five items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 (*1=never*, *5= very often*), which assesses students’ participation in diversity activities outside of coursework while attending USU. Examples are, “Since entering Utah State, how often have you: Attended presentations, performances, or art exhibits on diversity, Participated in ongoing campus-organized discussions on racial/ethnic issues.” This scale had a reported reliability of  $\alpha = .903$  in previous research (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013) and good reliability for the current study ( $\alpha = .879$ ).

Microaggressions consists of nine items ranging from 1-5 (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*) that assesses students’ experiences of subtle discrimination at USU. Examples are, “Please indicate how often you have: Heard insensitive or disparaging racial remarks from: Students at USU, Faculty at USU; Please indicate how often you have personally experienced the following forms of bias/harassment at USU: Verbal comments,

Exclusion (e.g., from gatherings, events).” This scale had a reported reliability of  $\alpha = .889$  in previous research (Hurtado, Arellano, Cuellar, & Guillermo-Wann, 2011) and a high reliability for the present study ( $\alpha = .893$ ).

Positive Cross-Racial Interactions consists of six items on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*), which assesses students’ positive experiences with students from different racial/ethnic groups at USU. Examples are, “To what extent have you experienced the following with students from a racial/ethnic group other than your own? Dined or shared a meal, Shared personal feelings and problems, Had intellectual discussions outside of class.” This scale demonstrated a reported reliability of  $\alpha = .884$  from previous research (Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013) and good reliability for the current study ( $\alpha = .898$ ).

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations, or frequencies, for all study variables are presented separately for each ethnic minority subsample, as well as for White students and the combined sample of ethnic minority students (see Tables 2 and 3). Overall, participants reported average levels of curriculum inclusion, extracurricular diversity activities, and microaggression experiences near the low end of the scale, and average levels of positive cross-racial interactive experiences at the mid-point of the scale. Average levels of community involvement and multicultural openness were near the low end of the scale, and average levels of social justice orientation were near the mid-point of the scale.

Significant differences among the ethnic minority subgroups emerged for curriculum inclusion,  $F(5, 368) = 4.32, p = .001$ , and social justice orientation,  $F(5, 370) = 6.66, p < .001$ . Native American/Alaska Native students reported significantly more experiences of curriculum inclusion than Asian students (mean difference = .521,  $p = .004, d = .665$ ). Asian students indicated significantly lower levels of social justice orientation than Black students (mean difference = .44,  $p = .014, d = .784$ ), Latinx students (mean difference = .300,  $p = .002, d = .543$ ), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island students (mean difference = .44,  $p = .026, d = .543$ ), and Native American/Alaska Native Students (mean difference = .34,  $p = .035, d = .724$ ). The decision to collapse the

Table 2

*Diversity-Related Academic Experiences for Sample (N = 902)*

Variables	Asian (n = 122)		Black (n = 28)		Hispanic or Latinx (n = 152)		Middle Eastern (n = 6)		Native American or Alaska Native (n = 44)		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n = 24)		European American or White (n = 526)		Students of Color (n = 376)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Curriculum inclusion <sup>a</sup>	1.7	0.7	1.9	0.7	1.9	0.7	1.8	0.4	2.2	0.8	1.8	0.7	2.0	0.7	1.9	0.7
Extracurricular diversity activities <sup>b</sup>	1.8	0.9	1.7	0.8	1.9	1.0	1.7	1.1	2.0	1.2	1.9	1.0	1.6	0.7	1.9	1.0
Positive cross-racial interactions <sup>b</sup>	3.1	1.1	3.3	1.0	3.1	1.0	3.3	1.2	3.0	1.0	3.2	1.2	2.7	1.0	3.1	1.1
Microaggressions <sup>b</sup>	1.6	0.7	1.6	0.6	1.7	0.7	1.8	0.6	1.8	1.0	1.5	0.5	1.5	0.5	1.7	0.7

<sup>a</sup> Possible range = 1-4. <sup>b</sup> Possible range = 1-5.

Table 3

*Critical Consciousness Outcomes for Sample (N = 902)*

Variables	Asian (n = 122)		Black (n = 28)		Hispanic or Latinx (n = 152)		Middle Eastern (n = 6)		Native American or Alaska Native (n = 44)		Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n = 24)		European American or White (n = 526)		Students of Color (n = 376)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Community involvement <sup>a</sup>	1.9	0.8	2.0	0.8	2.0	0.8	1.9	0.9	2.1	1.0	2.0	0.8	1.8	0.6	2.0	0.8
Multicultural openness <sup>a</sup>	2.2	0.5	2.4	0.5	2.4	0.15	2.4	0.6	2.3	0.6	2.3	0.4	2.2	0.5	2.3	0.5
Social justice orientation <sup>b</sup>	2.6	0.6	3.0	0.4	2.9	0.5	2.6	0.7	2.9	0.5	3.0	0.5	2.7	0.5	2.8	0.6

<sup>a</sup> Possible range = 1-5. <sup>b</sup> Possible range = 1-4.

minority groups into one group, students of color, was made for several reasons. The first reason was due to the minimal differences between minority subgroups among the diversity-related experiences and critical consciousness variables. Secondly, the predominantly White context of the university and community where the study was conducted presents unique nuances to minority students in that they often have very similar experiences as ethnic/racial others in their interactions with White peers. Lastly, this research study was conducted in part to expand the literature about critical consciousness, specifically by determining the possibility of students of color being more prone to exhibit higher levels of critical consciousness due to their life experiences as people of color than White students.

Significant differences between students of color and White students emerged for extracurricular diversity activities (mean difference = .304,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = .348$ ), positive cross-racial interactions (mean difference = .4,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = .389$ ), experiences of curriculum inclusion (mean difference = -.123,  $p = .014$ ,  $d = .143$ ), experiences of microaggressions (mean difference = .201,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = .328$ ), community involvement (mean difference = .12,  $p = .015$ ,  $d = .282$ ), and multicultural openness (mean difference = .11,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = .199$ ).

### **Primary Analyses**

Bivariate correlation analyses for students of color and White students were conducted to examine the associations between diversity-related experiences and critical consciousness as well as differences in those associations between groups (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Summary of Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Diversity-Related Experiences and Critical Consciousness Subscales as a Function of Dichotomous Ethnicity*

Subscales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Extracurricular diversity activities	--	.439**	.332**	.518**	.916**	.408**	.351**	1.9	1.00
2. Positive cross-racial interactions	.351**	--	.220**	.302**	.481**	.401**	.429**	3.1	1.10
3. Curriculum inclusion	.324**	.235**	--	.232**	.364**	.304**	.256**	1.9	0.72
4. Microaggressions	.509**	.257**	.070	--	.504**	.324**	.229**	1.7	0.73
5. Community involvement	.882**	.455**	.342**	.503**	--	.473**	.443**	2.0	0.81
6. Multicultural openness	.373**	.488**	.294**	.291**	.448**	--	.490**	2.3	0.50
7. Social justice orientation	.142**	.233**	.242**	.053	.250**	.287**	--	2.8	0.60
<i>M</i>	1.6	2.7	2.0	1.5	1.8	2.2	2.8		
<i>SD</i>	0.7	1.0	0.74	0.55	0.65	.45	0.5		

*Note.* Intercorrelations for students of color ( $n = 382$ ) are presented above the diagonal, and intercorrelations for White students ( $n = 524$ ) are presented below the diagonal. Means and standard deviations for students of color are presented in the vertical columns, and means and standard deviations for White students are presented in the horizontal rows.

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Because preliminary analyses indicated that Asian students reported significantly different levels of many variables relative to other ethnic minority subsamples, primary analyses were conducted once using the entire minority sample and then excluding Asian students. While the magnitude of the correlations differed slightly when Asian students were excluded, the pattern of significant correlations remained identical.

Extracurricular diversity activities were positively correlated with positive cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, microaggressions, community involvement, multicultural openness, and social justice orientation for both students of color and White students. Positive cross-racial interactions were correlated with extracurricular diversity activities, curriculum inclusion, microaggressions, community involvement, multicultural



openness, and social justice orientation for both students of color and White students. Curriculum inclusion was positively correlated with extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, community involvement, multicultural openness, and social justice orientation for both students of color and White students, and was positively correlated with microaggressions for students of color but not White students. Microaggressions were positively correlated with extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, community involvement, multicultural openness, and social justice orientation for students of color, but was not significantly correlated with social justice orientation or curriculum inclusion for White students. Community involvement was positively correlated with extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, microaggressions, multicultural openness, and social justice orientation for both students of color and White students. Multicultural openness was positively correlated with extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, microaggressions, community involvement, and social justice orientation for both students of color and White students. Social justice orientation was positively correlated with extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, community involvement, and multicultural openness for both students of color and White students, but only positively correlated with microaggressions for students of color.

Primary moderation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2013). The PROCESS macro utilizes bootstrapping techniques and ordinary least square regression to calculate direct effects of the independent variables (diversity-related

experiences) on the dependent variables (critical consciousness), as well as the interaction of the moderator (ethnicity) and independent variables. Bootstrapping techniques may be problematic in samples with missing data, due to the utilization of automatic listwise deletion for missing data. In these analyses the number of missing cases ranged from 13 to 21, representing no more than 2% of the sample. The pattern of missing data was not related to ethnicity,  $X^2(1) = .30, p = .583$ , gender,  $X^2(1) = .38, p = .984$ , first generation college status,  $X^2(1) = 2.97, p = .085$ , or graduate vs. undergraduate status,  $X^2(1) = .81, p = .368$ , suggesting that data were missing at random.

Tables 5-7 present the results of tests of direct and interacting effects of diversity-related experiences and ethnicity on levels of community involvement, multicultural openness, and social justice orientation, respectively. The main effects for all diversity-related activities were significant for community involvement. The main effect for ethnicity did not significantly predict community involvement. Ethnicity significantly moderated the effect of extracurricular diversity activities on community involvement, such that the positive relationship between extracurricular diversity activities and community involvement was stronger for White students, effect = .82,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .78, ULCI = .86, than for students of color, effect = .77,  $p < .0001$ ; LLCI = .73, ULCI = .86. Two marginally significant interactions emerged. Ethnicity demonstrated a trend toward moderating the effect of positive cross-racial interactions on community involvement, such that the effect of PCRI on community involvement was stronger for students of color, effect = .37,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .31, ULCI = .43, than for White students, effect = .30,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .24, ULCI = .35. Ethnicity also demonstrated a

Table 5

*Summary of Moderation Analyses for Community Involvement*

Model	F or F change	df	p	R <sup>2</sup> or R <sup>2</sup> change	coefficient	t	p
Extracurricular diversity activities	1281.1	3, 891	<.001***	.81	.71	18.29	<.001***
Ethnicity					.02	0.47	.64
Interaction	4.4	1, 891	.036*	.001	.05	2.10	.04*
Positive cross-racial interactions	86.11	3, 889	<.001***	.23	.44	6.43	<.001***
Ethnicity					.22	1.7	.09
Interaction	2.9	1, 889	.09	.003	-.07	-1.7	.09
Curriculum inclusion	44.3	3, 884	<.001***	.13	.51	4.9	<.001***
Ethnicity					.04	.33	.74
Interaction	2.83	1, 884	.09	.003	-.11	-1.7	.09
Microaggressions	103.4	3, 891	<.001***	.3	.52	5.1	<.001***
Ethnicity					-.1	-.6	.6
Interaction	.4	1, 891	.54	.003	.04	.61	.54

\*  $p < .05$ .\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 6

*Summary of Moderation Analyses for Multicultural Openness*

Model	F or F change	df	p	R <sup>2</sup> or R <sup>2</sup> change	coefficient	t	p
Extracurricular diversity activities	57.43	3, 889	<.001***	.16	.18	3.3	.001***
Ethnicity					-.1	-1.4	.162
Interaction	.77	1, 889	.4	.001	.032	.87	.102
Positive cross-racial interactions	80.0	3, 891	<.001***	.21	.16	3.5	.001***
Ethnicity					-.12	-1.4	.18
Interaction	1.3	1, 891	.3	.001	.03	1.1	.3
Curriculum inclusion	33.04	3, 885	<.001***	.10	.24	3.4	.001***
Ethnicity					-.08	-.9	.4
Interaction	.5	1, 885	.5	.001	-.03	-.71	.5
Microaggressions	35	3, 891	<.001***	.10	.20	2.8	.010**
Ethnicity					-.1	-1.1	.3
Interaction	.13	1, 891	.7	.0001	.02	.4	.72

\*\*  $p < .01$ .\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 7

*Summary of Moderation Analyses for Social Justice Orientation*

Model	F or F change	df	p	R <sup>2</sup> or R <sup>2</sup> change	coefficient	t	p
Extracurricular diversity activities	22.5	3, 887	< .001***	.81	.32	5	< .001***
Ethnicity					.21	2.6	.01**
Interaction	6.3	1, 887	.013**	.007	-.11	-2.5	.013**
Positive cross-racial interactions	39.7	3, 889	< .001***	.12	.35	6.5	< .001***
Ethnicity					.40	3.8	.0002***
Interaction	12.3	1, 889	.001		-.12	-3.5	.001***
Curriculum inclusion	20.3	3, 883	< .001***	.06	.30	3.2	< .001**
Ethnicity					.04	.44	.7
Interaction	.91	1, 883	.34	.001	-.05	-1.0	.34
Microaggressions	8.3	3, 889	< .001***	.03	.31	3.7	< .001***
Ethnicity					.21	2.2	.02*
Interaction	5.5	1, 889	.02*	.006	-.13	-2.4	.02*

\*  $p < .05$ .\*\*  $p < .01$ .\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

trend toward moderating the effect of curriculum inclusion on community involvement, such that the effect of curriculum inclusion on community involvement was stronger for students of color, effect = .41,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .31, ULCI = .50, than for White students, effect = .30,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .22, ULCI = .38.

The main effects for all diversity-related experiences were significant for multicultural openness. The main effect for ethnicity was not significant for multicultural openness. No significant moderated effects were found through ethnicity.

The main effects for all diversity-related experiences were significant for social justice orientation. The main effect for ethnicity was significant for social justice orientation in three of the four models. Ethnicity significantly moderated the effect of

extracurricular diversity activities, such that the positive relationship between extracurricular diversity activities and social justice orientation was stronger for students of color, effect = .21,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .15, ULCI = .26, than for White students, effect = .10,  $p < .001$ , LLCI = .04, ULCI = .17. Ethnicity significantly moderated the effect of PCRI, such that the relationship between PCRI and social justice orientation was stronger for students of color, effect = .23,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .19, ULCI = .28, than for White students, effect = .12,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .07, ULCI = .16. Ethnicity significantly moderated the effect of microaggressions, such that the positive relationship between microaggressions and social justice orientation was stronger for students of color, effect = .18,  $p < .0001$ , LLCI = .11, ULCI = .30, than for White students, effect = .05,  $p = .25$ , LLCI = -.03, ULCI = .13.

Primary analyses were conducted with the exclusion of Asian students and yielded differences in direct and interacting effects of diversity-related experiences and ethnicity on levels of social justice orientation. The main effect of ethnicity did not significantly predict social justice orientation in the extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, or microaggressions models. The main effect of ethnicity did significantly predict social justice orientation in the curriculum inclusion model. The main effects of curriculum inclusion and microaggressions did not predict social justice orientation. Ethnicity did not significantly moderate the effects of extracurricular diversity activities and microaggressions on social justice orientation. Excluding Asian students did not change the pattern of results in predicting community involvement or multicultural openness.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This study aimed to understand the relationships among various diversity-related experiences and critical consciousness for both students of color and White students, in order to highlight the ways in which college prepares students to become effective citizens of a diverse world. College serves as an introduction to societal expectations, work place expectations, and expectations for interpersonal interactions with people who are both familiar and strangers. Not only do many colleges promote engagement in social justice action among their students, but they are often the settings in which people learn to navigate a multiracial world (Marquette University, n.d.; University of Wisconsin-Madison, n.d.; University of Houston, n.d.; Cornell University, n.d.). Universities can promote further growth of their students in the context of this ever-expanding diverse world with the multicultural competence dimension of the Multiple Dimensions of Cultural Competence model (D. W. Sue, 2011). This study builds upon previous research by examining specific diversity-related correlates of levels of critical consciousness for students of color and White students.

The current study found evidence to support the hypothesis that extracurricular diversity activities, curriculum inclusion, positive cross-racial interactions, and experiences of microaggressions are all significantly positively associated with community involvement, multicultural openness, and social justice orientation among students of color and most DREs are positively associated with critical consciousness among White students. Diversity-related experiences were all found to be significant

predictors of levels of critical consciousness. Ethnicity was found to moderate several relationships between diversity-related experiences and critical consciousness. Ethnicity also emerged as a significant predictor for social justice orientation suggesting that there is a difference between students of color and White students, with ethnicity predicting social justice more strongly for students of color. The racial/ethnic subgroups reported similar experiences with DREs overall, but some significant differences emerged. Asian students had significantly lower levels of experiences with curriculum inclusion and lower levels of social justice orientation compared with other ethnic subgroups, particularly Native American/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island, and Black students. In this sample significant qualitative differences appeared for Asian students compared to other minority groups: Asian students were more likely to be of advanced class standing, to speak a language other than English, to be foreign-born students on a visa, and to identify as Hindu.

### **Diversity-Related Experiences**

Overall, the sample reported relatively low levels of inclusive curricular experiences, extracurricular diversity activities, and microaggression experiences, while indicating moderate levels of positive cross-racial interactions. Significant differences emerged between students of color and White students for curriculum inclusion, extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, and microaggressions. Students of color reported lower levels of experiences of curriculum inclusion than White students, which could suggest that students of color have different

experiences with, or higher expectations of, the content that implies inclusive curriculum is present in the courses they take. Students of color have been found to be more knowledgeable about diversity and multicultural issues when they initially enroll in courses specific to, or that have an emphasis on these issues. In a study of 17 graduate students of color enrolled in a graduate-level diversity course, 65% of participants expressed awareness and understanding of oppression at baseline that went beyond their personal experiences with those issues (Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010). Students who had previous awareness of racism in their lives reported that the diversity course brought those issues “into sharper focus,” but did not introduce them to the issues like it might White students (Curtis-Boles & Bourg, 2010).

Alternatively, in the present study students of color indicated higher levels of experience with extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, and microaggressions than White students. Previous studies have observed differences between students of color and White students in their predispositions to engage in diversity activities, such that there was a moderate effect size showing that students of color had about a half of a standard deviation higher levels of engagement in diversity activities than White students at a PWU (Hall, Cabrera, & Milem, 2010). Hall et al. also found that this predisposition was influenced by past interactions with diverse peers and that those who had past interactions were more likely to join campus-based diversity activities, especially in their freshman year. The current study was conducted at a PWU, which inherently makes most interactions for students of color cross-racial whereas White students may not have as many opportunities to engage with students from



different racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Similarly, racial/ethnic microaggressions are experiences that are unique to students of color, which explains the low levels reported by White students, who likely may have been reporting witnessing such interactions rather than personally experiencing them. However, misunderstanding about the nature and definition of racism leads some White individuals to report that they have experienced discrimination when they have been made uncomfortable due to their race, which also explains the non-zero levels of microaggressions reported by White students. Previous research has demonstrated the numerous negative impacts microaggressions have on both the physical and psychological health of people of color (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014; Torres et al., 2010; Torres & Taknint, 2015). However, the literature has also documented some growth outcomes from microaggressive experiences. Hope et al. (2016) found that students of color who experienced high levels of discrimination were more likely to be involved in social justice advocacy, such as activism within the Black Lives Matter movement, than students who reported low levels of experiences with discrimination.

### **Correlates of Critical Consciousness**

In general, the sample reported moderately low average levels of community involvement and multicultural openness, while indicating moderate average levels of social justice orientation. Extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, and experiences of microaggressions all significantly related to critical consciousness outcomes for both students of color and White students.

There was little evidence to suggest that this relationship was either stronger or weaker for students of color or White students, but a small number of moderating effects of ethnicity did emerge. Extracurricular diversity activities were found to be more strongly related to community involvement for White students than for students of color.

Extracurricular diversity activities, positive cross-racial interactions, and experiences of microaggressions were all more strongly related to levels of social justice orientation for students of color than for White students.

However, these findings for social justice orientation were not present when analyses were conducted excluding Asian students. This speaks to the nuanced position that Asian students have in the U.S., which may be attributed to their “model minority” status (Pettersen, 1966; Poon et al., 2016). The model minority myth is the stereotype that targets Asian American and Pacific Islanders as a uniformly hardworking racial/ethnic minority group whose academic and professional success defies the claims of systemic racism made by other racial/ethnic minority groups (Poon et al., 2016). Seery and Quinton (2015) found that self-esteem acted as a buffer for Asian students when they attributed racism or discrimination to poor feedback.

The differences in associations between DREs and CC for students of color and White students could be attributed to the nature of the CC variables in that community involvement and social justice orientation are more action oriented compared to multicultural openness, which is more descriptive of attitudes or beliefs. Extracurricular diversity activities were found to be more predictive of community involvement for White students, which could be explained by the action oriented nature of both of the

variables. The action orientation of community involvement may be more salient, and thus more accessible, for White students who lack personal experiences with diversity, or discriminatory, experiences. Similarly, social justice orientation was predicted by DREs and also more action oriented and behavior based than multicultural openness.

Differences emerged between students of color and White students for the behavioral components of critical consciousness (community involvement and social justice orientation), but not for the attitudinal components (multicultural openness). Thus, DREs may more be more useful in predicting behaviors than they are in predicting beliefs and students may more readily identify behaviors they engage in related to diversity than beliefs or attitudes they hold, especially if they are behaviorally based DREs.

### **Implications for Educators and Researchers**

This study has demonstrated the positive correlates of engagement with diversity-related experiences in terms of indicators of critical consciousness, which is becoming an increasingly important concept for navigating our diverse world. Universities and institutions of higher education have become increasingly active with initiating diversity programs, recruiting and supporting racially diverse students, and implementing their commitments to diversity (Harper & Yeung, 2013; Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Muthuswamy, Levine, & Gazel, 2006). Muthuswamy et al. found that Michigan State University's diversity initiative, the Multi-Racial Living Unity Experience, positively influenced students' engagement with racial others, knowledge of racial issues, and racial attitudes when compared to a control group (Muthuswamy et al., 2006). This study

contributes to the literature by expanding upon the findings that diversity-related experiences are related to positive outcomes in college students.

The current study also sheds light on the areas universities could directly influence, which are cross-racial interactions, curriculum inclusion, extracurricular experiences, and discrimination experiences that all happen in context of the university. Universities may consider creating programs that would increase the number of positive cross-racial interactions students have along with developing protocols to diminish discriminatory experiences for students of color. This could include support for new, and existing, minority student clubs, diversity based activities that are often held by these clubs, diversity based orientation programs, and hosting events that are directly related to diversity (e.g., speakers, cultural celebrations, workshops). Warikoo and Deckman (2014) found differences among college students' experiences with diversity depending on the approach to a diversity focused orientation that the university used. Students seemed to become polarized and differences made more salient when they attended an orientation focused on racial identities, relative to students who attended an orientation focused on commonalities between racial/ethnic groups (Warikoo & Deckman, 2014).

To help diminish the negative impacts of discrimination, universities can take a stronger stance on their mission statements, which often promote social justice and inclusion, reiterate expectations of student conduct as it is described within their university codes, and generally taking a more proactive/preventative stance when it comes to ethnically and racially motivated harassment/assault. They may also consider integrating more diversity-related topics into core curriculum to aid in increasing

students' knowledge of diversity issues, which could then influence their engagement in other DREs. This could be done as simply as through the requirement of a certain number of diverse authors in a course to a more complex approach in the creation of new courses that focus specifically on these issues for different departments on campus.

The implications of the current study for researchers are similar to those of educators and can be maximized through collaboration between educators and researchers. As diversity initiatives are implemented and modified on university campuses, it is recommended that studies utilize longitudinal designs. The use of experimental designs in future studies is also called for as a way to more effectively cross-sectional samples, such as the sample used in the current study. This will allow for researchers to determine the ways, if any, in which these programs influence positive outcomes among students. Longitudinal designs will also facilitate researchers' understanding of the developmental processes behind critical consciousness and engagement in DREs. Future studies should also pay close attention to differences in outcomes based on various DREs. Qualitative methods are also indicated to examine the nuances among students of color as they engage in DREs since this study, and previous research, have found differences in levels of engagement between students of color and White students. Exploration and better understandings of these nuances will allow universities to implement aforementioned activities, programs, and events that cater as much to the needs of students of color as they do to White students in order for students to be more equally benefitted by their participation.

## Limitations

One limitation of this study was the decision to allow participants to select multiple racial/ethnic identifiers, in an attempt to be inclusive, without asking participants to identify their most salient identity, thus forcing the research team to categorize participants who had selected multiple racial/ethnic identifiers ( $n = 18$ ) into a single racial/ethnic group for comparisons. Participants who identified as multiethnic/multiracial who selected White as one of their identities were also categorized into the racial/ethnic minority category they selected ( $n = 104$ ), by the research team. These categorizations may not have represented participants' most salient identities.

Another limitation to the study was the lack of clarification of the mode in which participants attended classes (i.e., main campus, online, branch campus, combination). Students attending USU have the opportunity to attend classes at a number of branch campuses across the state, which could present varied academic and diversity experiences. However, all USU campuses are predominantly White, though the distribution of students of color differs across regional campuses (USU Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation, 2016). The spring semester during which data were collected had a range of 7.8% of students of color at the main campus to 29.1% at USU Eastern; other regional and distance education sites had an enrollment rate of 9.2% for students of color.

An additional limitation of the study was the cross-sectional nature of the sample and the confounds that cross-sectionality introduced to the analyses. Concepts such as microaggressions may not have been understood in the same way by study participants

due to differing levels of knowledge, experience, and exposure to diversity issues that often take place in more advanced courses unavailable to first or second year college students. This is similar to extracurricular diversity activities because at the time of survey completion students did not have equal opportunities to engage in these experiences as a function of the varying amount of time students have been present on campus.

A further limitation of the study is that the religious context in which it was conducted was predominantly The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). This presents a possible limitation regarding the ability of these results to generalize to university contexts that are more secular. It is suggested that future research carefully consider the unique demographic characteristic of college campuses when making comparisons across campuses.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, diversity-related experiences were found to be notable correlates of critical consciousness among both White and ethnic minority students. Higher education institutions may benefit from creating more opportunities for students to have positive cross-racial interactions, circumstances to learn more about diversity issues, and for students to engage with and act upon their critical consciousness leanings. Additionally, institutions should try to cater to the differences in these experiences between White students and students of color, as fulfilling these differing needs is crucial in promoting inclusiveness on campus. Future research may wish to examine the role of other diversity

experiences in predicting critical consciousness, as well as various components of critical consciousness not examined in the current study. Researchers may also want to focus on students' qualitative reports of the types of action they are engaged in and how that relates to positive diversity outcomes.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A  
Recruitment Email



## **Recruitment Email**

### Why am I getting this email?

The Diversity Council at USU would like to invite you to participate in a research study designed to explore the multicultural experiences of students at Utah State University. The Diversity Council was formed to take intentional steps to improve the campus climate for underrepresented individuals. The goal of this research study is to gain a better understanding of the formal and informal opportunities USU students have to learn about people whose cultures and backgrounds are different from their own, as well as about students' experiences of discrimination and harassment, barriers to college success, and academic outcomes.

### What would I have to do?

Your participation would involve completing an online survey about your educational and multicultural experiences at USU. This should take you around 20 - 30 minutes. All survey responses will be confidential.

### What is in it for me?

You may choose to submit your email address to be placed in a drawing for one of 10 iPad minis. Email addresses for the drawing will be held in a separate database, and survey responses will not be traceable to specific email addresses. In addition, you can choose to receive a summary of the study results by email.

If you have any questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact us, Nicole Vouvalis at (435) 797-7416 or [Nicole.Vouvalis@usu.edu](mailto:Nicole.Vouvalis@usu.edu) or Renee Galliher at (435) 797-3391 or [Renee.Galliher@usu.edu](mailto:Renee.Galliher@usu.edu). Thanks!

To participate, please follow the link below:

Appendix B  
Informed Consent

## **Informed Consent**

Introduction/ Purpose: Nicole Vouvalis and Renee Galliher, representing the Diversity Council at Utah State University are conducting a research study to understand USU students' multicultural experiences, access to university resources, and experiences of discrimination/harassment. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are enrolled in courses at Utah State University. Approximately, 1000 students will participate in the study.

Procedures: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete on-line questionnaires about your formal (e.g., coursework) and informal (i.e., free time) activities with people from cultures and backgrounds different from your own. In addition, we are interested in students' experiences and observations of discrimination or harassment at USU. You will also be asked to submit your A# at the end of the survey. We will use your A# to determine whether you are continuing your education at USU in fall 2015 or not.

Risks: There are minimal anticipated risks to this study. The personal nature of some questions may cause discomfort. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering a question, you may skip the question(s) and proceed with the questionnaire. In addition, there is some risk that you will be identified as a research participant through submission of your identifying information. In order to minimize the risk of loss of confidentiality, the research team will maintain all research data files on password protected computers in locked offices of the research team members.

Benefits: There may not be any direct benefits to you from participating in this study; however, we hope you will benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your college going experiences. The researchers will learn about the diversity experiences of USU students, which will help inform the inclusiveness efforts of the Diversity Council, student services, faculty and staff, and administration. In addition, this study will generate generalizable knowledge that will contribute to the larger literature related to college campus climates for diversity.

Explanation & offer to answer questions: If you have any questions, concerns, complaints, or research-related problems, please contact Nicole Vouvalis at (435) 797-7416 or by e-mail at [Nicole.Vouvalis@usu.edu](mailto:Nicole.Vouvalis@usu.edu) or Renee Galliher at (435) 797-3391 or by e-mail at [Renee.Galliher@usu.edu](mailto:Renee.Galliher@usu.edu).

Payment/Compensation: You may choose to enter your email address at the end of the survey to be placed in a drawing for one of 10 iPod minis.

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence:

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence.

Confidentiality: Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and

state regulations. Only the investigators will have access to the data, which will be downloaded and stored on a password-protected computer to maintain confidentiality. As soon as incentives are dispersed and follow-up registration is collected, all identifying information will be deleted.

IRB Approval Statement: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human participants at USU has reviewed and approved this research study. If you have any pertinent questions or concerns about your rights or think the research may have harmed you, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567 or email [irb@usu.edu](mailto:irb@usu.edu). If you have a concern or complaint about the research and you would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator to obtain information or to offer input.

Copy of Consent: Please print a copy of this informed consent for your files.

Principal Investigators

Renee V. Galliher, Ph.D., co-Investigator

Nicole Vouvalis, Diversity & Special Projects Coordinator, co-Investigator

Participant Consent: If you have read and understand the above statements, please click on the “CONTINUE” button below. This indicates your consent to participate in this study.

Thank you very much for your participation! Your assistance is truly appreciated.