

Supporting Minoritized Student Leaders

by

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## ABSTRACT

Creating meaningful, supportive, and inclusive climates and situations that recognize and honor minoritized students' backgrounds and experiences while fostering a safe and welcoming learning environment and promoting minoritized student retention have become critical emphases of universities' efforts. Notably, minoritized student leaders have served important roles in these efforts by universities as these individuals represented their peers from various student organizations to university staff members and administrators advocating on behalf of their peers to enhance minoritized students' experiences at the university. Moreover, development and enhancement of important skills to facilitate these efforts was likely to aid them in being effective as they represented their peers. To support the development and enhancement of student leaders' ability to effectively represent their organizations, I devised a brief innovation to build student leaders' skills in four areas including (a) relationship building to foster peer students' belonging, (b) advocacy and activism, (c) data gathering, and (d) presentation and effective communication skills. In the dissertation, I considered the experiences of minoritized student leaders. Quantitative, survey results showed student leaders increased their skills and attitudes toward serving in their roles. Qualitative findings demonstrated five themes emerged from the interview data about the experiences of minoritized student leaders. Those themes included personal reflection on their leadership efforts, creating space to build community, leveraging their voice, working together with staff members, and recognizing the influence of identity dynamics and the importance of inclusive environments. In the discussion, I described the complementarity of the quantitative and

qualitative results, connected the findings to theoretical perspectives, offered limitations of the study, suggested implications for practice, and presented conclusions.

## DEDICATION

Para mi familia, con todo el honor del mundo. Gracias por todo su apoyo y por inculcar el valor de resiliencia. Échale ganas. Thank you for teaching me the meaning of perseverance, hard work, and the importance of education. I know moving from your home, family, and country to seek something better for us wasn't easy. To my partner—I appreciate your patience as I worked to reach this milestone. Thank you for always challenging me and for your understanding as I managed every emotion this program and life brought my way. To my friends—thank you for giving me space to process, fall apart and pull myself back together, again. I am honored to write this dissertation and to advocate for minoritized students. Once undocumented, now a first-generation Mexicana with a doctoral degree.

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## CHAPTER 1

### LEADERSHIP CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Consideration of the following scenario will be instructive to appreciate the problem of practice, the context, and a summary of the proposed intervention, which were the focus of this context setting chapter.

*Students sit at the table, waiting for the meeting to begin. Today's mission is to talk to the Dean of Students about the Council of Coalition goals and determine how she can assist. Eager, the Dean welcomes the coalition leaders and begins to focus on each student, asking about their well-being, classes, and personal goals for the semester. The conversation shifts, allowing the coalition leaders to articulate their goals for the academic year. The leaders speak about growing their organization's attendance, providing resources for students of color to build connections, translating all web pages into Spanish, indigenizing campus, and advancing the multicultural space to be more inclusive to students of color. The Dean nods and asks questions about their plans and how she can assist. She provides contacts of staff members with whom students can connect as they seek to meet their goals. The coalition leaders agree with the conversation shifting to logistics. Their time together becomes a brainstorming session in which they create a list of tasks that coalition leaders must complete with the intention of supporting their communities. In hearing about the coalition's goals, the Dean of Students asks, "What are students saying? What concerns do students have?" The leaders have heard from their peers throughout the semester through conversations at different events, but those were quite general. Nevertheless,*

*through their peers' stories, they understood the experiences shaping their connections. They had listened to students' experiences, but struggled to take advantage of the opportunity to share with the Dean to inform her of the campus climate and how it affected students.*

## **Leadership Development**

Before beginning the discussion of leadership development, I defined minoritized students because the term has been used throughout the study. Benitez (2010) conceptualized the term minoritized students to emphasize how place and environments isolated or alienated individuals of minority status especially in educational settings. Benitez argued that minority status was a social construct that limited students feeling of belonging in higher education spaces because they have been considered the exception to the norm. I have used the term minoritized to represent the experiences of students of color as they moved into culturally different structures within higher education.

Leadership development is an essential discussion when considering the growth of students enrolled in higher education institutions. Astin (1996) spoke of the disinterest of college students in civic engagement and political movements after a survey was conducted during the Reagan administration. In response, conversations were initiated to support the leadership development of students. The purpose of institutions of higher education has been to mold the next generations and make leadership development a priority for student affairs professionals. In addition, graduate employability, including the development of more competitive students has encouraged institutions to consider leadership development programs and how students have benefited (Skalicky et al., 2020). These competitive skills included problem-solving, critical thinking, and

collaborating. Although many programs existed to support students in gaining these valuable skills, little data has been gathered on the effectiveness and quality of existing leadership programs (Eich, 2008).

The work centered around student development has been an important discussion topic within higher education because it aided in addressing societal problems. These issues have included racial and gender inequities or threats to democracy (Harper & Kezar, 2021). How institutions have implemented leadership development into their curriculum or programming has been a concern to university leaders and student affairs professionals. For example, finding the balance of the student-led, staff-supported model has opened the conversation once again. The role and plan for student development professionals has been to support leaders through their development by providing opportunities where they were making decisions, navigating systems and facilitating conversations to reach their goals. The staff member supported model allowed for advisors to offer resources where applicable. Currently, the work has been reactive and based on students' progress in their leadership development.

Skalicky (2020) argued student motivation played a crucial role for those wanting to learn leadership skills. To continue developing student leaders, models such as the Social Change Model focused on the individual, their motivations for the serving in a leadership role, and how their purposes aligned with the organization's goals (Astin, 1996). By comparison, programs such as student government and existing student organization training influences students' approach to their respective roles and their processes for moving the organization forward. Notably, the distinction between these programs was with respect to the role itself and not to the individual.

Identity-based organizations have struggled with a top-down model as minoritized students have not viewed themselves as singular leaders. For example, minoritized student leaders have struggled with traditional leadership influenced generally by white individuals' perspectives and hierarchical adaptation of leadership. Moreover, minoritized students have argued for communal governance or a collective approach to goal setting and execution, including the rejection of Robert's Rules of Order, which focused on the power of the individual. Another struggle was evident in their interactions with leaders of other student organizations. Although student leaders noted opportunities for collaboration, when the other group followed more traditional roles, friction arose between student leaders.

Generally, minoritized student leaders viewed themselves as part of the organization with the same influence as other members. Because of this, minoritized students' leadership roles have been more extensive rather than the singular purpose of 'leading' a student organization. These student leaders have served as a connection to the larger minoritized community and functioned as peer mentors or role models to other students. Minoritized student leaders have taken responsibility for peer engagement because of their demonstrated ability to navigate challenging environments. Further, they have assisted their peers in understanding institutional structures. This collective and community-based mentality of student leaders has motivated students' requests to make changes that reflect their culture as they conduct their leadership roles while simultaneously representing their larger community.

Nevertheless, limited resources have supported the students' experiences as leaders and their development in leadership roles specific to their minoritized status. Too

often, advisors and student development staff members have taken the colorblind approach to develop student leaders in their roles, which has not been beneficial to minoritized students. In particular, too often those working in leadership development at higher education institutions have not considered the relation between race and leadership itself. Further, leadership development methods have not taken into account the importance of different perspectives and styles of leading. Notably, such approaches typically forced students to adapt to one form of leadership centered on the outcome and not the leader (Dugan et al., 2012). Typically, minoritized student leaders have been asked to provide feedback and ideas supporting diversity efforts at higher education institutions. These relationships have tended to be extractive because minoritized students offered information and ideas about how the institution should plan for supporting diversity within the institution, highlight the effort of students of color, and seek participation from other students of color, though they were rarely invited to the table to discuss the creation and implementation of programs specific to identity and inclusion efforts. Student leaders became the voices of their peers; they have been asked to showcase their traditions and help educate others about culture without the opportunity for them to advocate for what they, as individuals of minoritized cultures, needed to succeed.

### **Cultural Wealth**

Yosso (2005) countered Bourdieu's (1977) narrow perspective of cultural capital as measured by possessions, skills, and abilities through family or formal schooling and usually defined by privileged society. Instead, Yosso argued that all individuals possessed cultural wealth—and although it may have been different than the normative

understanding of cultural capital; all individuals possessed knowledge that aided them in educational settings. Harper (2013) argued individuals were not born into minority status or minoritized in every social environment. Rather, he asserted students were considered minorities in institutional settings that sustained an overrepresentation of 'whiteness.' Nevertheless, minoritized students have continued to enroll in higher education institutions and brought their knowledge, skills, and abilities with them to these settings. Moreover, this cultural wealth has supported their success in existing higher education systems (Yosso, 2005).

Minoritized students have learned to navigate systems and social structures and build resilience as they moved through systems, which were not designed with students of color in mind. They have faced racism, isolation, social-cultural challenges, and academic obstacles (Harper & Quaye, 2007). Many minoritized students continually resisted racism in the education system, including microaggressions, and function in spite of these challenges. As a subtle form of racism, microaggressions have been found to have a profound, lasting effect on the confidence and well-being of students (Minikel-Lococque, 2013). In addition, some minoritized students have faced educational inequities and struggled with their own backgrounds or that of their families. Yet, they developed connections within the institution to be successful. Despite the obstacles presented by systemic racism, such as access to quality education, minoritized students have attained a level of achievement by enrolling in higher education institutions.

Notably, an important type of capital has been linguistic capital, which influenced social capital because language afforded connections among students. University students have built peer networks for support, connecting with like-minded individuals or students

with similar or the same experiences. Students have made connections by joining student groups sharing similar language, forms of communication, and storytelling traditions. This form of linguistic capital has provided minoritized students with one kind of cultural wealth because they were able to navigate these spaces in various languages and with multiple perspectives (Yosso, 2005).

Often, this connection with others has become a safe space for individuals and supported their successes. Through these relationships, students also supported the success of others by sharing valuable information that helped to guide their peers through the education system. This form of social capital has afforded mutual support and unity to attain educational goals (Yosso, 2005). When students felt they were connected and supported, they experienced a sense of belonging, which supported their persistence. Notably, this sense of belonging has been found through involvement in student organizations such as Greek life, religious-affiliated organizations, or social communities (Hurtado, 2007; Rosado, 2016; Russell, 2019).

### **National Student Organizations and Student Leadership**

National organizations have been tailored to support minoritized students' experiences at their higher education institutions. These organizations include the Black Student Association, National Society of Black Engineers, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MECHA), Hispanic Business Association, and Campus Pride, to name a few. These national organizations have offered valuable resources to support students of minoritized communities. They have served as a space for students to share positive and negative experiences affecting their relationships with the institution. By making connections to these organizations, students have found mentors who shared

similar experiences, celebrated their identities, and capitalized on supportive relationships through programming and large-scale events. The organizations provided opportunities for students to grow leadership skills while facilitating events. The student-centric approach of these organizations has considered the voices and experiences of students to determine how to offer meaningful activities.

### **Local Context**

Arizona State University has served as one of three universities governed by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR). For the fiscal year 2022, ABOR reports more than 169,000 undergraduate students were enrolled at ASU, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona. ASU had the highest enrollment numbers offering degrees across all four campuses and online to more than 107,000 undergraduate students. Of the undergraduate students enrolled, 48.3 percent were Arizona residents. ASU's undergraduate student population is 54.8% female and 31.2% from historically underrepresented student populations, including Black, Hispanic, Latinx, and Native American. Also, the institution included 6.2% international students in its enrollment. As the enrollment numbers at the institution have risen, institutions have had the opportunity to re-center student experiences based on student diversity and demographics of those at the institution.

Arizona State University's charter has articulated a commitment to diversity and inclusion. In the charter, ASU indicated it has measured this success by "whom we include and how they succeed, advancing research and discovering value, and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural, and overall health of the communities it serves" (ASU Charter, 2020). The message of this charter has served as a



guide to how the institution provided necessary resources to support those who attend. Also, the institution's designed aspirations demonstrated the commitment to affecting student preparation and students' experiences to support their growth, graduation, and career development. These design aspirations included the institution's commitment to conversations and actions that influence social change. Steps have been taken by academic units, university administrators, staff members, and students to enact the ASU Charter and in so doing the institution has strived to foster enrollment, retention, and the opportunity to gain valuable skills students can take with them after graduation.

### **Situational Context**

Educational Outreach and Student Services (EOSS), a key unit at ASU, has been tasked to support students' experiences at ASU and assist retention efforts at the institution. The department, Student Connection and Community, has served as part of the larger EOSS unit. This department has existed to support students' holistic experiences and understandings of how they connected to the communities that surrounded them. Specifically, I worked with Student Cultural Engagement (SCE), which has been a part of EOSS. The role of staff members in this department has been to create programs supporting community building, cultural celebrations, and civic discourse. Further, this department has fostered a more inclusive environment and celebrated diversity in collaboration with our student leaders.

### **Student Coalitions**

In 2007, a fire occurred in ASU's Memorial Union, forcing many departments and student organizations to permanently move out of the building. The Multicultural Student Services Department, which supported identity-based organizations, was shut

down, removing physical spaces where students spent their time. The absence of this center began to weigh on students of color, in particular. They began to ask for specific resources that supported their connection and involvement with the institution. In response, EOSS along with student leaders, created seven student coalitions to focus on building community for students of minoritized communities.

Student Cultural Engagement initially supported seven coalitions representing students of color, LGBTQIA communities, and women in the ASU community. These coalitions formed because students attested to the need for focused resources to support minoritized communities. These student-led coalitions included El Concilio, Coalition of International Students, Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Asian/Asian Pacific American Student Coalition, Rainbow Coalition, Black African Coalition, and Women's Coalition. In 2021, the Accessibility Coalition joined the seven coalitions to advocate for students with disabilities as they sought additional support from university leaders and a connection to the already established coalitions.

The student coalitions at Arizona State University acted as umbrella organizations for identity-based organizations across all four campuses and existed to build a community to support the connection and engagement of the students and student organizations they supported while serving as a voice for the students they represented. These coalitions have played an integral role in supporting students from minoritized communities through general meetings, student forums, and large-scale events. Notably, these events have been used to recruit students, while also providing a platform for students to share their concerns and perspectives. At these events, student leaders sought to connect with their peers and encourage them to join a group appropriate to their

identities, values, and beliefs. These organizations have assisted students in building community, finding peers with similar experiences to gain support, and receiving guidance that helped them navigate the institution.

Student coalition leaders have served as liaisons between the students and university staff members and leaders, sharing information relevant to the experience of those they serve. For example, the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples hosted a student forum where key university staff members and leaders were present to hear about the Indigenous student experience at the institution. Student coalition leaders of this group marketed the event through word of mouth and social media to foster participation. They requested the attendance of the university staff office members of ASU Tribal Affairs, staff members from American Indian Support Services, and senior advisors to the president of ASU. Representatives of these departments were present to hear from students and student organizations affiliated with the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples to gather feedback about their experiences at the institution as Indigenous students.

## **Council of Coalitions**

More broadly, the Council of Coalitions has included two appointed leaders from each coalition to join together to share ideas and provide updates about their coalition's events and their constituents' perspectives. This Council has met biweekly with the intent to collaborate on community-building efforts and share best practices in building community. The meetings have been designed to support the student leaders in sharing the input they received from their constituents to create solutions that assist in students' feelings of safety, connection, and belonging. Finally, these meetings afforded opportunities for discussions on current events affecting campus communities as well as ideas related to support of their constituents.

The Council of Coalitions has met numerous times with the Dean of Students and other university leaders. In 2020, the Office of the President shared the LIFT Initiative on their homepage. These meetings were in response to ideas and comments encouraging the institution to undertake the goal of diversity, and growth and opportunity for Black students. Based on these meetings, the institution established 25 commitments to support inclusive and safe environments for minoritized communities. These commitments were shared on the Office of the President website in September 2020 as a response to the effects of the death of George Floyd had on the community, and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests that existed nationally and at ASU advocating for change. At this time, the Council of Coalitions furthered their advocacy and activism for minority students by requesting the removal of border patrol recruiting on campus and creating programs to support Asian students' safety and wellbeing after receiving negative remarks due to the pandemic.

Another example was the Council of Coalitions' role in advocating for a multicultural student center. After several years of ongoing efforts alongside the influence of the Black Lives Matter movement, the institution responded with the Multicultural Communities of Excellence. The institution allocated space at each of the four campuses for a multicultural student center and opened a Center for students in Tempe in September 2021 as a safe space for minoritized students to gather. Members of the Council of Coalition participated in meetings and collaborated with key institutional leaders at ASU to advocate for what to incorporate in these new spaces including resources beneficial to minoritized students. These conversations have continued and have been centered on matters such as student voice and student needs.

Unlike other student organizations, the Council of Coalitions has worked directly with university staff members and leaders. For example, in their biweekly meetings, a director or dean has been present to support students' leadership development and to listen to Council members' input about what they have heard from the constituents they serve. Each semester, they have met with the vice president of EEOS to present goals of each coalition and provide input to support greater levels of engagement by students. Some of the coalition groups were a part of planning committees with their respective communities focused on inclusion and diversity. For example, representatives from the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples have been present in recurring meetings with department members from student services offices to provide input about the needs of Indigenous students at the institution. These offices included Financial Aid, Counseling Services, the Dean of Students Office, and the Tribal Affairs Office. These meetings were unique

because most student organizations do not have direct access to senior leaders, aside from Arizona State University Undergraduate Student Government.

The Council of Coalitions has been supported by a student affairs professional within the division who has served as their primary advisor. The advisor has operated as the liaison between the student coalition and student services staff members and leaders. The role of this advisor has been to remove barriers for student leaders and find connections and resources to support coalition members' execution of their leadership positions. In addition, their role includes coaching and preparing students for conversations with senior leaders at the institution. Student coalition advisors have also supported the transition of outgoing and incoming officers. They have conducted a one-day retreat at the beginning and end of each academic year to facilitate the discussion about goals for the year. In these meetings, advisors have shared past accomplishments, reviewed the organization's purpose, and allowed time for relationship building. Depending on the availability of the student coalition leaders, leadership development has often been moved to the back of those agendas.

The time commitment to advise student coalitions coupled with their responsibilities to conducting the work of the Student Community and Connection roles has not allowed for time to be devoted to effective leadership development of student leaders. Student leaders and advisors have frequently been involved in 'on-the-job' learning based on their experiences without the benefit of the opportunity or time to participate in trainings to develop skills that may enhanced students' abilities to lead. Moreover, in recent years, advising to the leaders of the coalitions has been 'outsourced' in the sense that the advising function has been handled by calling on student affairs

professionals who were not part of the department to support the coalitions. For example, my role shifted from advising El Concilio to only supporting the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, my former advising role with El Concilio was given to a staff member from Community Relations. This change in responsibilities was designed to deal with staff member shortages and the amount of time required to advise the student coalitions.

## **Problem of Practice**

Elected student leaders at ASU representing minoritized communities demonstrated a need to develop skills and self-efficacy to build community with their constituents and advocate for them with university staff members and leaders. Notably, recent changes in the department have adversely affected students' abilities to represent their constituents. Specifically, students expressed their relationship with the advisor and the Student Cultural Engagement had weakened and prevented them from implementing strategies and goals they had established to continue building community for their peers.

Student coalition leaders have held tremendous responsibility in advocating for inclusion to senior leaders at the university. As a department and as individuals, advisors have been tasked to support student leaders and must consider how to position best our students for success. Nevertheless, Student Cultural Engagement has not provided official, effective training that has assisted student leaders in communicating the needs and interests of those they are serving. Further, as a result, we have not afforded student leaders with appropriate support and skills to obtain substantive input from all students to effect more positive learning and social environments.

Taken together, it appeared student leaders might benefit from participation in a curriculum designed to build students' leadership skills and self-efficacy to effectively and successfully carry out their roles as minoritized student leaders. These skills included (a) effectively building relationships to successfully support their communities and gather data to represent their peers and (b) communicating their constituents' perspectives to ASU staff members and leaders. Developing these skills had the potential to influence



students' leadership approaches as they served their constituents to effect change in the university's learning and social environments.

### **Intervention—A Brief Introduction**

The intervention consisted of a one-hour presentation that supported the development of the following skills—(a) relationship building, (b) advocacy and activism, (c) data gathering, and (d) presentation and communication skills. As part of the intervention, I provided ongoing support to student leaders through a Slack channel with resources, where I was able to respond to any questions they might have about the modules or their attempts to implement the skills from the modules.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this dissertation study was to develop student leaders' abilities to build relationships with their peers to appropriately understand and effectively communicate their peers' perspectives to ASU staff members and leaders. These objectives were attained through students' involvement in a student leadership development program. Two research questions guided the conduct of the dissertation study.

RQ 1: How and to what extent did participation in the student leadership development program influence participants' (a) perceptions of their skills, (b) attitudes, and (c) self-efficacy for building relationships with peers and effectively communicating with ASU staff members and leaders on behalf of members of their organizations?

RQ 2: What did the narratives of student leaders who were representing and advocating for their minoritized peers reveal?

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

First, in this chapter, I reviewed cultural deficit thinking and its influence on minoritized students' experiences. Next, I examined Critical Race Theory and its connection to Cultural Community Wealth to offer an understanding of the influences racial identity have on college experiences of minoritized students. Next, I reviewed the work on intersectionality and its relevance to the current work. Then, I have introduced activism as student advocacy and as a student development model. Subsequently, I reviewed Bandura's self-efficacy framework. Finally, I discussed the implications for this action research study. These theoretical perspectives informed and guided my understanding of the problem of practice and the research intervention.

#### **Cultural Deficit Thinking and Its Adverse Effects**

The lack of success among minoritized students within higher education institutions has often been attributed to students' background, race, and identity—what has been called a cultural deficit model perspective. Too often, those in higher education roles have resorted to cultural deficit thinking as a means to explain students' inability to navigate higher education institutions, including what they considered as a lack of academic preparedness, family support, and language barriers. "Deficit thinking takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child's education" (Yosso, 2005, p. 75).

Far too often, higher education administrators have compared the success of minoritized students with White, middle-class students, setting their experiences as the

standard (Stewart, 2013). Thus, the challenge to current education systems' leaders has been to recognize the ineffectiveness of existing programs and policies and how they might discourage minoritized students. Often, the solutions found to support students' successes focused on the acculturation of student groups to traditional perspectives, while dismissing the values or behaviors of students of color (Solórzano, 1997). This colorblind approach taken by student affairs professionals to support all students in their degree attainment and development has led to disregard for students of color experiences within the institution, and placed blame on students' background and identity. To deal more effectively with this cultural deficit thinking and its influence on student leaders of color, I reviewed critical race theory, community cultural wealth, intersectionality, activism, and self-efficacy frameworks as an opportunity to reframe the conversation. These frameworks highlighted the knowledge and influence student leaders of color have brought with them to the institution. These perspectives were central in developing advocacy and mobilizing students to create a more positive learning environment for minoritized communities.

### **Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) addressed racial disparities, as proponents of this perspective recognized knowledge as power, arguing that culture and race influenced social systems and the experiences of those navigating them. Bell (1995) described the central principle of CRT when he wrote, "Critical race theorists strive for a specific, more egalitarian, state of affairs. We seek to empower and include traditionally excluded views and see all-inclusiveness as the ideal because of our belief in collective wisdom" (p. 6).

Derrick Bell began the conversation about CRT by highlighting how perceptions of race influence the legal system, which he claimed held Black people to a different standard. Subsequently, a debate was sparked within legal studies to understand how legislation further marginalized people of color, rather than providing structures to support all people. He identified this as an opportunity to influence civil rights and alluded to Black people's experiences as alternative realities told by those on the margin (Tate, 1997; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000). These important conversations were focused on the legal system and how its disparities affected Black people. Later, Kimberlé Crenshaw moved the conversation forward by extending this work to include intersectionality.

Crenshaw (1988) suggested gender and social class added a new layer of inequities into existing legal systems, influenced by bias, stereotypes, and hierarchical viewpoints. At the time of Crenshaw's work, many proponents for racial equality continued to encourage conversations about color-blindness, race neutrality, equal opportunity, and the dilemmas faced by the civil rights communities. Despite these attempts at mitigation, Crenshaw (1988) noted, "black people do not create their oppressive worlds but rather are coerced into living in worlds created and maintained by others" (p. 1357). Moreover, the author suggested race was a leading factor in people's lack of resources and negative experiences in a system built to protect the individual. Nevertheless, gender and social class, often influenced by race, affected resources that were available to people. Crenshaw encouraged education scholars to examine how racism and social inequalities went beyond the legal system and infiltrated other areas, such as education. This work transcended the legal system as light was shined on viewpoints of inferiority resulting from school segregation.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) used race to explain education inequities. Using CRT as a foundation, Ladson-Billings and Tate pointed out that quality K-12 education was most accessible for those with property and resources. They identified students' intellectual property as "an opportunity to learn" (p. 54) and acknowledged that all students should have the same resources as their peers to meet educational standards. However, African American and Latino students lacked the same resources or intellectual property to support their success, which was limited by policies and available resources (Ladson-Billings and Tate., 1995). Instead, approaches to equity were based on assimilation and colorblindness, dismissing the cultural knowledge and wealth students of color possessed and replaced it with the concept of multiculturalism or a melting pot model where all individuals existed together regardless of their differences.

Higher education institutions approached multiculturalism through their diversity efforts, in which university leaders advanced the beliefs that all cultures exist together, despite their differences and unique strengths of individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Unfortunately, higher education leaders have generally responded to the differences of people of color by disregarding their history and experiences and presenting diversity through the celebration of foods, clothing, and dance, but not moving beyond these matters. Institutional leaders tended to focus on opportunities to showcase the number of students of color admitted while showing far less concern for the resources available that supported these students' experiences. Students viewed the lack of resources or responsiveness to their requests for more inclusive environments as disregarding their experiences as students of color (Garcia, 2019).

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) claimed, “Critical race researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower” (p. 26). As it pertained to this research study, CRT informed how student affairs professionals could have thoughtfully moved minoritized voices forward by empowering student leaders to advocate for those they represented by building advocacy skills. Adopting Daniel Solórzano's (2002) work, Yosso (2005) maintained there were five tenets of CRT, thereby suggesting new approaches to diversity and the support of students of color including:

*The intercentricity of race and racism-* CRT scholars stated race was endemic, and acknowledgment of intersectionality was essential when considering race in policymaking.

*The challenge of dominant ideology-* CRT proponents argued against the traditional claims of objectivity, including colorblindness, race, and gender neutrality; recognizing these approaches masked the power and privilege of certain groups.

*The commitment to social justice-* CRT advocates strived to recognize other forms of oppression in hopes of ending subordination. Its overarching commitment was to end racism and inequities.

*The centrality of experiential knowledge-* CRT proponents recognized experiential knowledge among people of color was critical to understanding racial subordination in education and encouraged knowledge sharing through storytelling as a method and opportunity to understand individuals' experiences.

*The interdisciplinary perspective-* CRT advocates encouraged the study of race and racism by reviewing the historical and contemporary contexts, drawing from different interdisciplinary methods and perspectives.

### **Community Cultural Wealth**

Yosso (2005) drew upon the idea of experiential knowledge in CRT and argued against assimilation efforts within higher education. Instead, she focused on the value of cultural knowledge students of color possessed. Influenced by previous critical theorists, she claimed knowledge of students of color was well represented in their experiences, and this was an important kind of capital. This form of cultural capital dismissed the traditional notion that cultural capital was defined by White, middle-class values.

Minoritized students' cultural wealth or resources were expressed in a variety of types of capital including social, familial, aspirational, linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital (Yosso, 2005). This wealth of resources allowed students to succeed in higher education systems while challenging the deficit thinking that was frequently exhibited in higher education settings.

Yosso (2005) identified six types of capital exhibited by minoritized students. Students demonstrated their use of *social capital* as they worked to build a supportive network to aid their navigation of institutions. As they used this wealth, they drew upon peer and social community resources to support the transactional processes of education and provided emotional support that encouraged students as they moved forward. *Familial capital* was based on students' use of resources that came from their home base and foundation. In this type of wealth, Yosso (2005) expanded the concept of family to take into account how students used their broader community

wealth. *Aspirational capital* promoted resiliency among students. It nurtured a culture of possibility based on hope because it asked students to set higher goals, including degree attainment. Yosso's *linguistic capital* highlighted storytelling because minoritized students were familiar with this tradition as they recalled cuentos (stories), sayings, and oral histories from their own communities. This type of cultural wealth connected students to tradition and emphasized the value of bilingualism in communication and social skills when navigating institutions that did not reflect them.

*Resistant capital* represented the skills minoritized students gained in fighting against oppressive behavior or systems. This resource had its foundations in identifying racism and offered motivation to challenge those systems. Students developed *navigational capital* as they built skills and abilities, allowing them to negotiate educational institutions and various institutional processes, including unsupportive or hostile environments. This form of capital recognized students' agency but alluded to social capital as students found and developed supportive networks and communities with one another to aid their successes.

### ***Relevant Research Related to CRT and CCW***

Using CRT, Comeaux et al. (2019) examined the effects of campus climate on Latinx, Native American, Asian/Asian Pacific Islander, and Black students at a Hispanic serving institution. The researchers explored the effectiveness of an intervention employed to mitigate the effects of an adverse campus racial climate and the strategies minoritized students used to navigate education systems and connect with the institution. Specifically, the study drew upon CRT concepts of race and racism as endemic and problematic. In the intervention, the researchers adopted the concept of experiential



knowledge as an asset for minoritized students, which was consistent with CRT and Yosso's (2002) work. In the intervention, the researchers challenged deficit thinking and used personal stories and counterstories to gather data. Results showed students created support networks to either challenge the institution or transform the education structure that often failed to serve them. Additionally, results indicated there was increased student awareness of oppressive environments and the need for institutions to enhance their diversity efforts.

Brooms (2018) employed Yosso's (2005) CCW as a guide for a study on supporting Black male students through a mentoring program during their pursuit of higher education. Specifically, Brooms used social capital as defined by Yosso to aid students in developing peer networks and social contacts that were instrumental in navigating postsecondary institutions. Narrative data from the interviews were focused on participants' experiences in navigating the institution based on the mentoring program. Results showed students developed a sense of home when participating in the program. In addition, Brooms found deepening peer relationships through student engagement supported Black students' experiences and their successes. Brooms also found students who participated in this mentorship program wanted to reciprocate what they experienced in their institutional communities and home communities.

### ***Implications Based on CRT and CCW***

With her adaptation of CRT, Yosso (2005) encouraged scholars to explore how race and racism affected existing educational structures and practices. In the research, I will use Yosso's (2005) adaptation of CRT to explore how an intervention based on Yosso's perspective can empower coalition leaders to represent their constituents'

perspectives to university staff members and administrators. In particular, the intervention will focus on providing skills and resources that strengthen coalition leaders' abilities in building relationships with their peers and gathering data that supports their advocacy to identify the needs of minoritized students for a more positive learning and social environment. Using Yosso's cultural wealth framework to guide the study, I will focus on Yosso's social capital and navigational capital to further define relationship building and advocacy in their work as student leaders.

The Council of Coalitions aims to build community among minoritized students to foster a connection to institutions and communities. Social capital celebrates students' abilities to build supportive networks within the institution for the success of their peers. Building social and navigational capital will guide the intervention. The development program will be designed to provide opportunities to develop social and navigational capital among student leaders to support better their efforts. I will use storytelling to legitimize student experiences and gather data that captures the experiences of student leaders.

CRT challenges the idea of colorblindness. It opens the door to gaining valuable knowledge and honoring the cultural wealth possessed by minoritized students by removing them from the margins and recognizing their experiences. The tenet, the centrality of experiential knowledge, will guide the work because it encourages a platform for minoritized students to share their realities within higher education by telling their stories. Acknowledging the views of coalition leaders and the information they gather from their peers with the aid of the intervention will support more positive learning and social environments within higher education.

The student leaders representing student coalitions aim to support a more inclusive environment for the students they serve, challenging the existing institutional structures. The interactions with participants of this study will focus on successfully advocating for change in the spaces they navigate. Using the tenet of the challenge of ideology to inform the research and develop the intervention curriculum requires being conscious of the coalition leaders' fight against objectivity. This approach will best support how the methods they use to gather data and how they advocate for change are tailored to their communities. In completing this study, recognizing students are challenging the status quo of the institutional environment can help in providing tools to mobilize and build relationships so they can draw upon the experiences of the minoritized students within the institution.

### **Social Change Model**

Conversations of leadership and race have been introduced within higher education institutions to understand better the influence identity has on student leaders and their development (Dugan et al., 2012). In their work, Dugan and colleagues indicated there was minimal research on these topics, which was problematic because work in the area was not responsive to the changing demographics in the United States and within higher education. The authors contended that removing colorblindness with respect to student development was necessary because student experiences and skills brought into the higher education setting served as guiding forces for their engagement. Notably, student affairs professionals were reminded of the influence of being student leaders had on students' academic achievement (Ospina, 2009). The social change model (SCM) of leadership has been one approach that was used to support student leadership

development. The SCM was based on seven values and considered students' identities as they advocated for social justice.

To more effectively develop leaders among college students, the SCM focused on changing the conversation to support individuals' self-reflection and collaboration to drive common goals and influence social change (Astin, 1996). Astin created SCM to move away from traditional approaches of leadership and the ideas defining it, including the notion that one individual held power and authority, and thus, commanded and controlled progress toward goals. In the SCM approach, there was a greater focus on the existing relationships among members, rather than focusing on a goal. Moreover, those advocating the use of SCM have established a post-industrial approach to leadership, which was transformational allowing for noncoercive relationships between the leader and followers (Dugan, 2006). Skendall (2016) maintained that SCM relied on the idea that leadership was socially responsible and accessible to all people and required a connection among group participants. In this type of leadership, participants have recognized the importance for community involvement and service to create positive change. This post-industrial perspective has been value-centered and allowed for motivated partnerships that focused on the conversation and the relationship.

The SCM afforded students with opportunities to understand themselves in the collective by encouraging an exploration of their motivations, skills, and values. The model empowered them to be strong leaders regardless of their backgrounds or experiences by encouraging introspection to improve how they worked with their group (Skendall, 2016). The model served as a values-based process encouraging individuals to perform inner work to understand themselves better. Moreover, beyond this inner work,

SCM fostered an awareness of their connections to others, which aided them in collaborating on a common goal of social change. In its implementation, proponents of SCM recognized any person could be a leader and redefined leadership as a collective approach centered around individuals' skills and talents (Kezar et al., 2017).

Notably, the SCM approach defined leadership as a process, not a position driven by social responsibility. The model removed the traditional hierarchy associated with leadership by erasing the top-down approach to leadership and replacing it with collaboration. In discussing SCM, Skendall (2016) described SCM as having seven core values for change, which were grouped into three dimensions: individual, group, and society/community. These values were considered to be interactive, but development of the values allowed student leaders to acquire each skill individually, which influenced how they approached and established the other abilities to effectively collaborate toward progress for a common goal.

The seven core values for change established by Astin and Astin (1996) and further defined by Skendall (2016) have been described below while being grouped according to the . three dimensions.

### ***Individual Values***

- Consciousness of self required an increased awareness of personal beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions with mindful personal reflection. This value necessitated continuous growth and self-reflection.
- Congruence was defined through the consistency of a person's values, attitudes, and beliefs and how they act to build trusting relationships with others.
- Commitment required passion, energy, and purposeful investment as individuals

moved toward positive social change. This value provided the power to drive change and contribute to collaboration.

### ***Group Values***

- Collaboration encouraged individuals to share responsibility toward achieving mutual goals and nurture relationships to support diverse perspectives.
- Common purpose was defined by group commitment to a common purpose and development of a common goal. Although individuals may have approached this purpose differently, the goal remained the same. It fostered trust and encouraged shared responsibility for identified goals.
- Controversy with civility afforded opportunities for differences of opinions within the group so that many voices and perspectives were heard. This value allowed for group development and collaboration toward a common purpose.

### ***Society/Group Values***

- Citizenship called for all individuals to see themselves as part of a larger whole and to understand how they influenced the strategies used to approach a common goal.

Notably, change has been the goal of SCM. Further, the model also challenged individuals to gather knowledge, form attitudes or beliefs based on that knowledge, and act (Skendall, 2016). All values described above have been intended to support change, grounded in the belief that everyone contributed to a better situation through self-assessment and a collective approach to leadership.

SCM prompted an inclusive approach to leadership and social justice because its proponents considered individuals to be socially responsive individuals and recognized

all individuals have had an opportunity to respond to societal needs. Developing the seven values for change influenced students' leadership growth and their abilities to identify a need for change (Kezar, 2020). Often, leadership development has been focused on developing leadership skills, per se, without providing room for growth in each of the value areas that supported development of a transformative approach to leadership (Astin, 1996). For example, individuals' awareness, values, and consciousness of self, shaped how they interacted with others and how they developed a common purpose. The SCM afforded the opportunity for a dynamic process to focus on the action of ongoing leadership development. The model suggested continuing reflection, involvement, and action. This experiential learning approach allowed for continued exploration to respond to the changing needs of communities.

Notably, the SCM fostered changes in individuals' attitudes including building self-confidence and constant self-reflection to support their commitment to social change. This process shaped the collective goal set by their constituents and themselves. Kezar et al. (2017) described the SCM as an opportunity to separate leadership from authority. When student affairs professionals adopted this approach, it produced a focus on student communities' needs, equity, and civic responsibility. When individuals take a non-hierarchical approach to leadership, it afforded them occasions to expand access and opportunities and encouraged respect for differences and diversity. The authors suggested when developing diverse leaders, such as the work with student coalitions, student leaders and student affairs professionals should have embraced the intersectionality of each student organization and its participants and worked collectively to identify the organizations' needs and own leadership opportunities.

### *Critiques and Suggestions about the SCM*

Kezar et al. (2017) encourage student affairs professionals to consider the influence of campus climate on student leaders and their development. They argue a positive learning environment and sense of belonging helps to determine how students engage and participate in leadership opportunities. They call for university leaders to examine the effects negative learning experiences and environments have on the development of leaders because students are unable to express their needs or concerns about their institutions when they do not feel safe or comfortable.

Kezar et al. (2017) discuss research exploring how identity influences leadership development, but those conducting research on student leadership have not previously considered the intersectionality of individuals' multiple identities. The authors characterized identity as an important factor influencing how students approached leadership and considered 'hierarchy' because this determined whether they identified themselves as leaders. As student affairs professionals consider using SCM in their student leadership development practices, they become more aware that developmental differences of students across identity categories can be used to facilitate conversations about leadership.

Harper and Kezar (2021) challenge researchers to revise the SCM and consider how Yosso's (2005) CCW framework aids in fostering conversations about social change, democracy, and justice with student leaders. The authors recognize the SCM's shortcomings because it was developed prior to more recent approaches that have changed the nature of current dialogues about race, cultural, and so on. According to the authors, dominant cultures previously have influenced leadership conversations and, in



doing so, disregard individuals from marginalized communities and their experiences. In particular, the shift in discussions regarding power and privilege and the need for social change influences new conversations and approaches. When student affairs professionals draw from their own experiences to navigate the conversation and support student development, those same experiences shape the vision and implementation of leadership.

By comparison, Harper and Kezar (2021) write about the differences in the experiences of minoritized students and their perspectives of leadership. They detail how these differences assist in extending the current SCM to be more inclusive and equitable. As students explore notions of power, they turn to activism or resistance to advocate for the needs of their communities for more inclusive environments. They support the inclusion of minoritized student voices as part of the conversation so student affairs professionals and university staff members can understand how their experiences differ from the dominant group. Often, institutions fail in supporting minoritized students when their needs and concerns are expressed, because minoritized students do not possess the privilege of others. As a result, student affairs professionals can intervene to teach and support students in legitimizing their voices and experiences and to engage in this form of leadership and advocacy. By leveling the field and providing tools to minoritized student leaders, we are responding to their minoritized status and bringing their voices to the forefront allowing for a shift in power.

As mentioned previously, Yosso's (2005) CCW challenges existing educational systems by pushing against White privilege and racism. The framework encourages educators to consider the capital minoritized students possess as they navigate educational systems. Harper and Kezar (2021) propose that a revision of the SCM be

devised when developing a new generation of leaders and it should account for the six forms of cultural capital. In such a revised model, capital includes students using language capital and social capital to build community and relate their experiences. Also, the new approach suggested by the authors allows students to consider their definitions of power and how these dynamics influence collaboration and social change.

### ***Relevant Research Related to SCM***

Using the SCM, Dugan (2006) conducted a study focusing on leadership development among college men and women. The author focused on the effects changing understandings of leadership had on its accessibility in different populations. Specifically, Dugan studied gender differences and how they related to their approaches to leadership while focusing on individuals' self-knowledge and collaboration skills. Dugan used the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) to assess leadership development among 60 participants in the study without influencing their environment. Findings showed that although women more actively participated in developing the personal values as defined by the SCM, both men and women struggled to connect to the values of citizenship and controversy with civility. In conclusion, Dugan encouraged student affairs professionals to work with students on the connection between why students engaged in their studies and their confidence and how they participated in citizenship and healthy dialogue when developing student leadership curricula or programming.

Buschlen and Dvorak (2011) explored whether student leadership can be learned and developed through institutional efforts, including programming used to support the development of future leaders. The authors assessed the effectiveness of the SCM after its implementation in a 16-week course on the seven core values of the framework. In the

study, the authors compared 108 students who participated in the course with 152 students who did not. Like Dugan's (2006) study, the researchers used the SRLS to assess students' perceptions of their leadership skills before and after the program was implemented. Results supported the authors' hypothesis when they found scores of students who participated in the curriculum scored significantly higher than those who did not.

### ***Implications Based on SCM***

The SCM will be used in this research study to guide the intervention and design of the leadership development curriculum for student coalition leaders. This model identifies the seven values important to leadership development: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, common purpose, collaboration, controversy with civility, and citizenship. Specifically, the curriculum designed to support the student coalition leaders will focus on their purpose and motivation as student leaders, their skills, and their contributions. Also, the curriculum will touch on group work with a focus toward common goals with a constant assessment to learn from their experiences.

SCM encourages defining the common purpose to drive change. The curriculum will include how student coalition leaders build connections with their peers to determine the needs of their respective communities, collectively. This curriculum will encourage a communal approach to understanding the communities' challenges. Revisiting Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth and considering the literature of Harper and Kezar (2021), this model will draw upon the narratives and experiences of the coalition members by using storytelling as another form of data collection. This approach to data gathering will consider the voices of the coalition leaders and their experiences as

minoritized students advocating for their peers to make a change in the same communities where they exist.

### **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality has been defined as the network of connections among class, race, and gender that affect individuals or groups by discriminating against them or placing them at a disadvantage. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) introduced the term and established it as a framework for her work in the legal field highlighting the limitations and discriminations Black women faced because of race *and* gender. She argued researchers missed the mark because they failed to consider the intersectionality of identity in theoretical and political developments. Nevertheless, the concept of intersectionality can be seen as early as the 1960s during the era of social movement activism, where women of color questioned their subordination to men because of gender and the problems they experienced because of race and class (Hill & Bilge, 2016). Notably, Hill and Bilge claimed the intersectionality framework was useful in arguing against social and power inequities, challenging colonialism, sexism, militarism, and capital exploitation, and advocating for social justice.

Various feminist texts associated with intersectionality documented the work of Chicana and Latinas, Asian-American women, Native American women as well as Black women and their experiences in the social movements. Although the experiences may have been different and moved them in different directions, the writers discussed the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, and sexuality in their experiences (Hill & Bilge, 2016). Nevertheless, in contrast to critics' arguments, intersectionality does not solely

focus on feminist movements and the experiences of women of color, but sets the stage to consider how various identities can shape individuals' experiences (Carbado, 2013).

Like critical race theory, the goal of intersectionality theory was shining a spotlight on the social inequities and opportunities as intersection of various characteristics influenced how people were treated. According to Cho et al. (2013), the term intersectionality was introduced in the late 1980s to highlight the dynamics of differences and solidarities of sameness in social movement policies. Proponents of intersectionality challenged the idea of a single-praxis and encouraged individuals to consider the dynamics of difference and sameness within axes of power and how those were present in discussions.

The goal of intersectionality was to educate and activate through an understanding of the lives of marginalized peoples and their access to equality. For example, Crenshaw (1989) argued individuals should be able to represent various identities, not just one, which frequently placed into a single, specific area of power or disadvantage when in reality they were disadvantage or discriminated against based on multiple aspects of their identity. Although intersectionality was originally focused on race and gender, more recently, intersectionality has come to focus on the overall individual when seeking justice. With increased awareness of the intersections of individuals' identities, people were able to express and negotiate in group politics (Crenshaw, 1989).

### ***Critiques of Intersectionality***

Carbado (2013) offered various criticisms of intersectionality theory, including that intersectionality has been a static theory and did not capture the dynamic and contingent processes of identity formation. Additionally, Carbado suggested much of the

work on intersectionality was focused on Black women and that the theory had traveled as far as possible. Expanding intersectionality across disciplines has been met with some resistance because of disputes over its methodologies, history, and its relations to identity and identity politics. A final critique offered by Carbado was research stagnation, in which scholars suggested there was nothing more to be learned from the theory.

### ***Research Related to Intersectionality***

Bruning et al. (2015) used the intersectionality framework to understand women's commitment to engineering. The authors aimed to illustrate the effect of race or ethnicity and socioeconomic differences on female students' interest and engagement in engineering. Using a diverse sample of girls, including girls from low-income settings and students of color, the researchers implemented the FREE program to increase high school female students' interest in engineering. The project consisted of an after-school outreach program in which participants explored career opportunities and the researchers tracked participants' experiences with respect to engineering. Bruning et al. (2015) found "an intersectional lens intertwined group of social markers such as gender, social class, race, and ethnicity [can be used] to begin to explain young women's commitment or a lack thereof to the non-traditional and unfamiliar field of engineering" (p. 17). They found that despite feeling comfortable pursuing engineering as a field, participants needed to consider social stability and its effects on their families.

Leigh et al. (2020) explored how racialized and gendered identities informed student engagement for Asian-American women pursuing a doctoral degree. As Asian-American women, the authors argued that their identities afforded opportunities for them to be "dually stereotyped as being apolitical and subservient in [a] group context" (p.

175). The researchers used autoethnography to capture the experiences of Asian-American women in doctoral programs and how they navigated campus involvement, scholarship, leadership, and activism. Through storytelling, they gave voice to their own stories and provided counternarratives related to larger racist structures. The researchers suggested that Asian-American women needed to redefine leadership and activism on their own terms, understanding their overlapping identities. Additionally, they claimed that as activism-oriented leaders, they needed to be able to identify their definitions of a strong woman or activist and not be defined by others.

### ***Implications Based on Intersectionality***

Intersectionality theory can be used in this study to explore how different identities within individuals affect student leaders' motivation and experiences in holding leadership roles within the institution. Additionally, the theory will help to guide how the experiences of student coalition leaders as students can affect how they approach their work. Specifically, I can use intersectionality concepts to determine how various factors such as race, ethnicity, preferred gender, sexuality and socioeconomic background intersect in students' identities creating different experiences for students of color and having the potential to influence how student leaders interact with and advocate for the communities they serve.

### **Student Activism**

As university demographics change, campus leaders were tasked with applying new approaches to help all students and provide a sense of belonging to minoritized student communities. In turn, campus leaders leaned upon students to gather feedback and assist in developing support to ensure positive campus experiences by asking them to

build a community centered around inclusion and identity. In response, students identified demands and solutions to make systemic changes affecting the well-being of minoritized students. At times, institutions have not responded in timely ways nor have they offered solutions that supported students' experiences (Comeaux et al., 2021). Then, tensions have arisen between college students and university leaders because students perceived higher education institutions as unjust systems that perpetuated disparities among minoritized student populations.

Historically, student activism has taken form through protests, sit-ins, or walkouts and it was often at the center of diversity efforts. Most recently, students adopted social media outlets to push back against injustices and to share their opinions about events influencing their experience at the institution. For example, letters in response to events disrupting a positive learning environment were posted on social media accounts to educate individuals and rally students to join the fight against the institution and its policies. The reach and influence of social media have allowed for more public engagement in institutional policies (Broadhurt & Martin, 2017; Wheatle & Commodore, 2019).

From a slightly different perspective, student activism existed as an expression of students' voices defining the student experience (Broadhurst & Martin, 2014). Although historical movements have focused on the experiences of Black students before and after the desegregation of higher education, the change in campus demographics has also motivated students to challenge institutions to support the experiences of Latinx, Asian American, immigrant, and LGBTIA+ communities (Wheatle & Commodore, 2019). Essential milestones have been attained through student activism where campus



administrators have to balance making necessary policy changes to support the need for more inclusive environments while affording policies supporting freedom of speech and campus safety.

Student coalitions have emerged to build community as they engaged their peers to cultivate inclusive environments. The leaders of these coalitions have been recognized as representatives of the identities of the communities they serve and have provided feedback to university staff and leaders about the needs of students. As students work with university leaders, they implemented best approaches to present data and input for needed policy changes to successfully advocate for their communities.

Generally, university staff members and leaders have considered student activism disruptive to the environment. University administrators viewed students' actions as interruptions of the power structure and did not always address the needs that influenced these student actions (Martin, 2014, Linder, 2019, Linder et al., 2019). Because of the general perceptions of university staff members and leaders, student activism has been defined as risk-taking because it pushes against power structures for social justice and a better society. Activism has been centered around hope for better learning environments and political landscapes. Student activists intentionally disrupted current settings to effect change. At the same time, student affairs professionals have reframed their view of student activism and have now considered it to be a form of student engagement centered around students' opportunities to participate in civic engagement (Cabrera et al., 2017). Of particular relevance to this study was the idea of supporting student coalition leaders in identifying and communicating their needs and holding university leaders accountable

for implementing campus procedures that support inclusivity to assist in developing a more positive learning and social environment.

Cabrera et al. (2017) maintained activism and social movements only occurred when the cause was connected to a larger group of people. The authors suggested changes could not exist until activists worked with others and engaged in controversial conversations connected to a larger problem or form of oppression. Notably, students have employed different forms of relationship building to develop a collective and create influential change within learning environments. This included having intentional dialogue to increase awareness about forms of oppression that affected their communities. This form of power was born out of the student voice and its influence on institutional responses. Activism was an exercise of power because it allowed students to understand how they demonstrate and challenge power in spaces (Cabrera et.al., 2017).

### ***Student Activism and Leadership Development***

Minoritized students have challenged university policies or processes, which were often related to civic engagement. They met with campus leaders to express the need for institutional change, which influences minoritized students' experiences. They used their own experiences and have drawn from their identities to challenge power structures and activate change, which better supports reforming learning environments to be more consistent with their experiences as compared to the experiences of others at predominantly White institutions at which they were enrolled. In their efforts, they brought attention to the needs of students of color and held university leaders accountable for safe and positive learning environments (Byrd et al., 2021, Linder, 2019). Notably, these forms of engagement were leveraged to build communities among minoritized

students as they advocated for social change and learned valuable skills to better position themselves among the next generation of leaders (Hurtado, 2007).

Students who have participated in student activism have mobilized others, connected diversity to the common good of higher education institutions, advocated for those they served, and engaged their peers in social change (Byrd et al., 2021; Kezar et al., 2017, Martin et al., 2019). Student activism has been important in leadership development because it has sought to attain social justice by bringing individuals together (Cabrera et al., 2019). Student leadership has been and continues to be relational, whereby people work together and find a common purpose (Komives et al., 2005). Notably, collaboration among individuals and groups has been required for social change to occur.

Student activists have played an essential role in the higher education landscape, and university staff members and leaders have offered some support to them. The skills learned by activist participants were part of college learning outcomes and included critical consciousness, mediation, and strategizing, all of which were identified as being needed following graduation (Martin, 2014). The influence of activism on students' leadership development included advancing social responsibility, communication skills, negotiation skills, and critical thinking; all of which were desirable outcomes for college students. Although activism served in skill building and created communities among minoritized students, this sense of engagement was viewed as reacting to hostile campus environments (Martin et al., 2019). Linder et al. (2019) described activism as “a student’s efforts to interrupt power and dominance to create more just campuses” (p. 39).

When institutions failed to meet the needs presented by students, the institutions further harmed students' academic and activist experiences (Linder et al., 2019).

### *Institutional Responses to Campus Activism*

The relationships between student activists or leaders and university staff members and administrators often have been unsteady because staff members have tasked students with serving as the voice of students. Campus leaders have asked students to advocate and provide suggestions for changes that address campus climate concerns. Student activists facilitated such discussions with their peers and presented the information to university leaders, while also considering their own experiences as minoritized students. Nevertheless, Linder et al. (2019) cogently argued students should not be required to engage in this activism to ensure a positive learning experience. Linder et al. suggested serving in these student advocacy roles became strenuous on students' well-being.

Notably, in the current context student coalition leaders have expressed a high level of stress and concern with the time taken away from their academic experiences and other responsibilities. Engagement with university leaders and executing other responsibilities as student leaders has adversely affected their well-being because it shifted focus from their studies, families, and social life to constant communication about their role in the institution. When considering the relationship between student leaders and campus administrators, creating a streamlined process while helping students develop advocacy skills was important in supporting needed campus climate changes (Martin, 2014).

### ***Related Research on Student Activism***

Byrd et al. (2021) explored student movement trends and their relation to the support of marginalized student groups. In the study, the researchers sought to discover the relation between student activism and how students identified the next steps they advocated to the institutions' leaders. The study sampled student demands across the nation, the context surrounding those demands, and how they influenced institutional responses.

Notably, the researchers explore how students attempted to transform their institutions by issuing demands and how past movements related to current student activism (Byrd et al., 2021). First, they analyzed the demands on campuses across the country and then they considered the institutional context and how student demands reflected those contexts. They sampled 284 institutions, collecting institutional data by coding the types and frequencies of student demands and the institutions that received these demands.

Byrd et al. (2021) found students issued more demands among historically White colleges and universities (HWCU) than minority serving institutions, which also received demands. They found demands focused on transparency of institutional policies, students' implementation of these policies, acknowledgment of a history of racism in their institution, resources that support marginalized communities, and more diversity within the institution. This meant that despite the advances institutions have made toward supporting minoritized students, there were opportunities to improve and create more inclusive environments.

Comeaux et al. (2021) conducted a study at a Hispanic serving institution focused on how students responded and developed resistance to hostile campus climates. Using CRT and the resistance framework, the authors collected qualitative data focused on the student experience. The research questions focused on the interpretation of campus climate by minoritized students and strategies to resist. CRT's tenet of experiential learning was used to guide the researchers' methodology, which centered on students' voices as they spoke of their racialized experiences.

The researchers conducted seven focus groups and found students experienced microaggressions on the campus despite its composition of a majority of minoritized students (Comeaux et al., 2021). These focus groups allowed for open discussions in which researchers tried to gain understandings of students' racialized experiences as they asked questions of students about their experiences with faculty and staff members and other students. Based on the data, the researchers found that although students believed campuses promoted their commitment to campus diversity, the institution did not create conditions, promote, or engage students in meaningful interactions leading to educational benefits.

### ***Implications Based on Activism***

Theory and research on activism inform the research study in several ways. First, they provide information supporting the student leadership curriculum. Specifically, based on the activism literature it is clear that facilitating and supporting student coalitions to build communities among their peers will be an important element of the curriculum. Second, the activism literature suggests it will be necessary to provide leadership development opportunities in a way that will also benefit them in their roles as

students. Third, when student coalition leaders are viewed as activists or advocates, it allows them to draw on their experiences as student leaders as they hold conversations with university leaders about needed changes for their constituents. Based on the activist literature, knowing how students build community and a collective voice can assist in shaping how they represent themselves and their peers to university staff members and leaders.

Consistent with the literature on activism, I will focus the research on students and on their experiences and perceptions as they assume the roles of student leaders. The research will take into account the skills students gain from activism, including community building and negotiation skills, and I will design a curriculum that enhances these skills. I will also consider the tools students use to activate their communities and peers on social issues that may affect campus climate. I will work with the student coalition leaders to capitalize on opportunities to build relationships and gather information from their peer groups so they can share this valuable information with university staff members and leaders.

### **Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (1982, 1997) defined self-efficacy as judgments of how well individuals believed they would execute and perform during current or upcoming tasks and opportunities. Notably, Bandura (1994) argued, “beliefs in personal efficacy affect life choices, level of motivation, quality of functioning, resilience to adversity and vulnerability to stress and depression” (p. 16). Self-efficacy influenced individuals’ decision-making because they assess their performance and abilities and then used these assessments to determine their engagement and effectiveness in certain activities. For

example, if students believed in their capacities to complete or succeed in a task, typically they also developed intrinsic motivation and interest in the task. Such outcomes have been important to student development because it allowed student affairs practitioners to capitalize on these affordances as they considered methods to motivate, challenge, and engage students in topics that increased their efficacy and agency.

Bandura (1994) claimed self-efficacy could determine individuals' accomplishments and well-being because these factors influenced assurance about their capabilities, environment, and support systems. Further, he explained individuals with high self-efficacy approached challenges with less stress and more assurance, enhancing their accomplishments and personal well-being. Four sources of information have shape individuals' self-efficacy including mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal, which have been explained below.

Mastery experiences, successful accomplishments of tasks or positive attainments in somewhat challenging situations, were the most important information in fostering the development of self-efficacy. Individuals' successes increased self-efficacy, whereas failures decreased it. As individuals assessed their efforts and successes in a task or situation, they developed a higher level of motivation and perceived their abilities in a positive way (Bandura, 1982). If the task was not challenging enough, it did not positively affect individuals' self-efficacy. By comparison, if the difficulty of the task was sufficient in their view, individuals' accomplishments allowed them to see these successes as indicators of their capabilities. Moreover, if individuals possessed a high level of self-efficacy, they often considered failures to be the result of low levels of effort, and not their abilities.



Bandura (1994) also claimed vicarious experiences influenced self-efficacy. He suggested individuals developed self-efficacy by witnessing others being successful, which was affected by perceived similarity to the model. Specifically, he suggested individuals often assessed their capabilities or successes by comparing themselves to their peers because they shared similarities in experiences and interests. Further, he noted individuals sought models with similar experiences such as members of the same age group or individuals possessing skills and attributes they would like to acquire. Examples of these models within higher education and leadership development might have included peer mentors or mentors. These models provided meaningful information to the person about the task and helped to determine whether they would be successful. Without these opportunities, individuals were less likely to learn by observation how to deal with challenging situations or experiences.

As defined by Bandura (1982), verbal persuasion was concerned with comments others provided to individuals about their abilities. Naturally, positive comments tended to increase self-efficacy. Notably, Bandura (1982) posited that verbal persuasion alone had limited power. Nevertheless, Bandura suggested that when individuals' perceptions of their capabilities were coupled with words of persuasion from others and strong support circles boosted self-efficacy. Further, Bandura (1994) noted individuals "should cultivate people's beliefs in their capabilities while at the same time ensuring that the envisioned success is attainable. And, just as positive persuasions may work to encourage and empower, negative persuasions can work to defeat and weaken self-beliefs" (p. 12). Verbal persuasion came from various groups including peer, familial, or teachers and included cultural practices' influence on individuals' self-efficacy. Therefore, Bandura

encouraged additional consideration be allocated to cultural awareness and how individuals' environmental influences affected self-efficacy. He found cultural experiences may influence individuals' competence and self-efficacy attainment.

With respect to the fourth source of self-efficacy information, Bandura (1982) discussed the importance of the psychological state in judging individuals' capabilities and increasing their efficacy. Individuals' stress reactions influenced their self-efficacy. These stress reactions included fear, anxiety, and tension. Those with high efficacy were likely to view unfavorable circumstances as energizing, whereas those with low self-efficacy reacted to emotional arousal as debilitating. Individuals with high levels of stress and low self-efficacy associated this stress with their inability to perform. Instead of coping with the stress, those with low self-efficacy magnified their threats, impairing their level of functioning (Bandura, 1994). By comparison, individuals with high self-efficacy controlled their thoughts regarding their environments and situations.

### ***Implications based on Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory***

Bandura (1982, 1994, 1997) cogently argues self-efficacy is an indicator of how individuals face challenges. He suggests environmental, cognitive, social, and behavioral skills influence self-efficacy. Notably, in the current study, it is necessary to understand how the environment shapes student leaders' self-efficacy when exploring how minoritized students navigate systems that do not fully consider their experiences. Similarly, students' self-efficacy can determine how they influence and motivate others to succeed. With respect to this study, self-efficacy can support how student leaders' deal with their personal experiences, their autonomy for approaching data gathering, and how they perceive their own abilities as they conduct their student leadership roles while

advocating for the perspectives and needs of their peers to support positive learning and social environments. Further, self-efficacy is likely to influence how individuals set goals and standards to develop their leadership and communication skills. As we consider student coalition leaders, understanding their perceptions of their advocacy skills and how best to use their own experiences can help shape their approaches to student leadership and advocacy on behalf of their peers.

I will use Bandura's (1982, 1994, 1997) self-efficacy to support this research study as I develop the curriculum to ensure that as I develop student leaders' skills, I also will be influencing student leaders' perceptions of their capabilities as leaders and advocates. I will assist students in developing a connection with their peers for support and influence. In turn, their application of the curriculum will afford them with opportunities to attain mastery experiences, which can influence their emotional state and perceptions of the skills they learn.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

Guided by the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 2, in this action research study, I will explore the following constructs: perceptions of skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy of participants and how they are influenced by participating in an online leadership development program. The program will focus on developing the following skills among participants: relationship building, gathering data, advocacy and activism, and effective presentation and communication of students' perspectives. This study will be conducted using a concurrent mixed-methods action research approach to understand the influence of the online leadership development program on students' skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy.

#### **Action Research**

Brydon-Miller et al. (2014) described action research as a work in progress and considered this type of research as an opportunity to “generate knowledge that is both valid and vital to the well-being of individuals, communities, and for the promotion of larger-scale democratic social change” (p. 12). Action research has allowed researchers to consider a problem in their context, enact an intervention to change the situation, gather data on the effectiveness of the intervention, and reflect on the effectiveness of the action and consider the next steps (Mertler, 2020). This cyclical process enabled researchers to develop responses to problems because of their role in the study and the work itself. Notably, this research approach permitted participants and researchers to interact and remove the typical hierarchy associated with the research process. It positioned researchers both as observer and participant.

Tuhiwai Smith (2021) discussed the decolonizing of research methodologies and removing hierarchy by adopting goals representing the importance of relationship-building to demonstrate individuals' worlds were embedded in the collective. As the author mentioned, there was a need to listen to individuals' testimonies and narratives, allowing for the exchange of knowledge. Action research studies have been focused on implementing interventions to effect change. As researchers think about the wealth of information action research brings for implementing change, they must have been cognizant of how the intervention was welcomed and implemented within the community and among the participants (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Tuhiwai Smith (2021) suggested the approach to the intervention should have sought answers to the changes needed and how it supported the participants or settings. She recommended moving away from the idea that the person needed to change to fit the existing structures. This new approach to research allowed for the decolonization of methodologies and for exploration of participants' contributions to the collective in this new method of research.

With respect to epistemology of this research work, I have used a constructivist approach. Mertens (2015) described constructivists as believing there were multiple social constructs influencing knowledge and various experiences affected that reality. When answering the research questions guiding this study, I have used a constructivist lens to consider participants' leadership and cultural wealth data.

### **Setting and Participants**

The setting for the study was Arizona State University (ASU). ASU has been considered to be the 'New American University,' which was open to all those who are

qualified to engage in university level study. This position was reflected in ASU's charter (ASU Charter, 2014) that indicated,

ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.

In fall of 2021, ASU enrolled 107,425 undergraduate students in face-to-face and online programs. Of these students, 50% were European American, 24.4% were Hispanic, 5.6% were African American, 6.8% were Asian American, and 1.13% were Native American. Nevertheless, because undergraduate on-campus enrollments of Hispanic students exceeded 26.0%, ASU has been designated a Hispanic Serving Institution.

The research study participants were student leaders representing each of the eight student coalitions at Arizona State University. These coalitions include El Concilio, Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Asian/Asian Pacific Student Coalition, Rainbow Coalition, Black African Coalition, Coalition of International Students, Women's Coalition, and Accessibility Coalition. In all, 16 students served on the Council of Coalitions with two representatives from each coalition.

Participants represented a range in their experience as leaders of student coalition groups and across academic years. Because the student coalition leaders were representative of the communities they served, the participants of this study included members of the Latinx, Indigenous, Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, LGBTQIA+, International student, women's and students with disabilities communities.

## **Role of the Researcher**

In this research study, I served in several roles. First, I was a staff member of Educational Outreach and Student Services in which I supported student development. I have worked with students to create programs that support their success at the institution. In this role, I was an insider having deep knowledge of the context and of students who were involved in the coalitions. Additionally, I could observe and conduct research readily because of this insider knowledge.

Second, as researcher, I directly focused on the development of the intervention to be provided to minoritized student coalition leaders. In this researcher role, I built the curriculum and created a presentation focused on the leadership development of student leaders. Throughout their implementation of leadership roles, I provided ongoing support to student participants through the use of an online Slack channel. Through this form of communication, I supported student leaders and answered questions they had after they participated in the modules. Third, as researcher, I developed the survey items and interview questions. Fourth, I gathered data using surveys and through individual semi-structured interviews that focused on the students' perceptions of skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy after implementing the skills learned through the online modules. Then, I conducted data analyses and reported them. With respect to data analysis of the qualitative data, I carefully employed the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) throughout the coding and interpretive processes. Further, I employed reflective processes throughout the interpretive procedures of the analysis.

## **Intervention**

The intervention consisted of an hour presentation that supported the development of the following skills among the participants including (a) relationship building, (b) advocacy and activism, (c) data gathering, and (d) presentation and effective communication skills. This change from four modules as originally planned was in response to student coalition leader availability and their time commitment as well as a change in student leadership. Student coalitions did not have their full executive board assembled which made it difficult to recruit student leaders and provide the intervention. The delivery of the presentation was in the form of a narrated PowerPoint presentation and offered to all student coalition leaders. During the intervention, students were given the opportunity to discuss the topics they were learning and ask any questions to support their learning and implementation.

### ***Relationship building***

This section of the presentation was used to provide information about best practices for building relationships with peers, student organizations, and student organization leaders to create a more cohesive coalition and line of communication. The learning objectives of this part included,

1. The participants will articulate the importance of relationship building as student leaders and advocates of their peers.
2. The participants will articulate how relationship-building skills can provide a connection between those they represent to create and support the connection of their peers.
3. The participants will describe how relationship building influences collaboration.



4. The participants will adopt the skills presented in this module by implementing them within their networks.

### ***Activism/Advocacy***

This section of the presentation provided participants with the information about skills to effectively advocate and represent their constituents with university staff members, leaders, and students. The module provided participants with the information about skills to determine approaches to activating their communities to support change. Objectives included,

1. The participants will articulate effective ways to advocate for the students they serve.
2. The participants will articulate a clear understanding of how they are advocating for their communities.
3. The participants will adopt new techniques to find a common purpose with their membership to present to university staff members and leaders.

***Data Gathering***  
This section of the presentation provided students with information about the necessary skills and best practices to effectively gather data and input from their constituents. The learning objectives of this part included,

1. The participants will be able to identify the different modes of data collection to support their role as a student leader.
2. The participants will effectively communicate how they use acquired skills to gather and assess quantitative data through surveys.
3. The participants will express how they will use different modes of collecting qualitative data through student feedback and testimonies.

### *The Art of Delivering Presentations and Engaging in Effective Communication*

This section provided student leaders with information about the necessary presentation and communication skills to effectively provide valuable information and feedback to university staff members and leaders on behalf of those they represented.

Objectives included,

1. The participants will be able to determine key ideas or points they would like to present to university leaders.
2. The participants will identify their presentation style to communicate to university staff members and leaders effectively.
3. The participants will demonstrate the ability to develop a presentation that informs and advocates for the perspectives and needs of those they serve.

Table 1

*Planned Portions of the Presentation and Alignment to the Activism Framework and Social Change Model*

<b>Module Section</b>	<b>Alignment to Activism</b>	<b>Alignment to Social Change Model</b>
<b>Relationship Building</b>	Building relationships with university staff members and leaders	Collaboration
		Common Purpose
	Building relationships with students to develop a collective to create change	Controversy with Civility
	Mediation	
<b>Activism</b>	Align needs to requests	Common purpose
	Building a collective to advocate for change	Common Purpose
	Mediation	Controversy with Civility
<b>Data Gathering</b>	Reflection of power and privilege	Citizenship
	Supporting students' sense of belonging	Controversy with Civility
	Democratic	
<b>Presenting Data Effectively</b>	Social justice	Change
	Negotiation	Orientation to learning
	Navigation of existing systems	

**Ethical Considerations**

Mertler (2020) discussed the importance of ethical considerations when conducting action research when he indicated that the principle of honesty existed to

protect individuals participating in the research study by sharing relevant information and the intent of the research process and purpose. My goal in this study was to remain transparent as I interacted with participating student leaders. Because members of the Council of Coalitions received a stipend from the division, it was essential to define my role as the researcher and clearly define their role as a participant. This leadership training program was an opportunity to enhance requisite skills that supported them in their roles. Nevertheless, participation was not mandatory. There were no negative consequences to those who chose not to participate in the study. This was articulated to the Council of Coalition leaders during recruitment.

### **Instruments**

I used a concurrent mixed-methods design as I collected and analyzed the data to answer this study's research questions. When using this method, quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and merged (Ivankova, 2015) to determine whether the data demonstrate complementarity (Greene, 2007).

### ***Quantitative Strategies--Surveys***

To collect quantitative survey data, I used a post-intervention assessment followed one week later by a retrospective, pre-intervention assessment. This form of data collection avoided the problem of response-shift bias, defined as a shift in subjects' criteria by which they make judgments about the items on a survey, which can threaten internal validity in experimental designs (Chang & Little, 2018). This survey method ensured participants employed consistent criteria to evaluate their perceptions and avoid using more 'liberal' criteria at a typical pre-test survey followed by using more stringent criteria, they may have developed during the intervention, at the typical post-test

assessment. In other words, this survey procedure allowed participants to employ the same set of criteria as they completed both surveys.

The questions on each survey focused on participants' perceptions of skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy regarding their relationship building and presentation skills before and after they participated in the intervention. Note, that participants responded to items related to two groups of individuals—(a) peers and (b) university staff members and leaders. On the post-intervention survey, participants were asked to respond to items about their perceptions of skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy as they viewed themselves now, following the intervention. Three examples of items relevant for skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy items, respectively, were: “As a student coalition leader, I have the skills to network with my peers;” “I think it is important to practice my empathetic listening skills to build relationships with my peers;” and “I am certain I can build meaningful relationships with the peers I represent.” Because there are four items for each of the three constructs, there are 12 items in all that assessed their perceptions of skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy about their use of skills with peers and another 12 items that assess their use with university staff members and leaders. The complete post-intervention survey has been provided in Appendix A.

A week later, I administered the retrospective, pre-intervention assessment asking participants to think back prior to the intervention and respond to the same items. Three examples of skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy items, respectively, were: “Prior to participating in the project, as a student coalition leader, I had the skills to network with my peers;” “Prior to participating in the project, I thought it was important to practice my empathetic listening skills to build relationships with my peers;” and “Prior to

participating in the project, I was certain I could build meaningful relationships with the peers I represented.” The complete retrospective, pre-intervention survey has been provided in Appendix B. Participants responded to the items using a six-point Likert scale. The six choices on the surveys included 6 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Agree*, 4 = *Slightly Agree*, 3 = *Slightly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, and 1 = *Strongly Disagree*. Thus, there were 24 items in all—12 related to peer and 12 relevant to university staff members and leaders.

### ***Qualitative Strategies--Interviews***

I conducted interviews to understand participants’ experiences while participating in the intervention and as student leaders. This form of research will help answer the second research question guiding this study: *What do the narratives of student leaders who are representing and advocating for their minoritized peers reveal?* This type of interview style afforded the opportunity for the participants to share their knowledge as student leaders and members of the communities they represent. Influenced by Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth framework, this qualitative method was focused on the participants’ voices and the social and navigational capital they drew from as minoritized students. The prompts for the narrative interview have been presented in Table 2.

## **Table 2**

### *Narrative Inquiry Prompts*

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<b>Interview Prompts</b>
Share a story about your own experiences as a minoritized student leader.
Share a story about your proudest moment as a student leader of your coalition.
Share a story about how you advocated for you minoritized peers.
Share your most memorable experience as a minoritized leader at ASU.
How has participation in this leadership development program influenced how you build relationships with your peers?
What has been your experience in communicating with students, staff members, and administrative leaders after participating in the student leadership development program?
During the meetings with your peers, share your experiences about how you used the skills you learned during the leadership development program.
During the meetings with ASU staff members and administrative leaders, share your experiences about how you used the skills you learned during the leadership development program.

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### **Timeline and Procedures**

In Table 3, I have presented the timeline and procedures of the study. Specifically, I have provided detailed information about such things as recruitment, implementation of

the intervention, survey administration, interview timeframes, data analysis timeframes,  
and so on.



**Table 3***Timeline of Study Procedures*

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Procedures</b>
June-July 2022	Complete IRB; Finalize online modules; online pilot survey.
Aug.-Nov2022	Began recruitment and continued of participants by sending an email to student coalition leaders. present information about the Student Leadership Program to students encouraging participation during fall semester retreat (Date to be announced).
Oct. 26-27, 2022	Provided Student Leadership Development Presentation to individual student coalitions.
Oct. 26-Nov.7, 2022	Allowed time for participants to implement skills learned from the fourth module.
Nov. 7, 2022	Sent the post intervention assessment survey to participants (n=16). Sent follow-up reminders to complete a consent form and the online survey completion.
Nov. 9, 2022	Sent follow-up reminders encouraging survey completion.
Nov. 14, 2023	Sent the retrospective, post intervention assessment survey to participants (n=10).
Nov. 16, 2022	Sent follow-up reminders encouraging survey completion.
Nov. 22, 2022	Conducted narrative interviews ( $n = 5$ ).
Dec. 2022	Organized quantitative data. Computed statistics. Transcribed narrative and review interviews.
Jan. 2023	Completed narrative transcript coding. Complete Slack channel coding. Began reviewing and editing chapters 1-3.
Feb. 2023	Write Chapter 4 – Results. Wrote Chapter 5 – Discussion.
April 2023	Dissertation defense; complete needed revisions; submit the final dissertation.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In the previous chapters, I provided context to understand better the problem of practice, theoretical perspectives, and related research to inform the study and the methods for intervention, data collection, and data analysis afterward. In this chapter, I have presented information about the data analyses and results, which have been used to answer the study's research questions. The quantitative results help to answer the first research question and seek to understand the intervention's influence on student leaders. The qualitative results aid in answering part of RQ 1 and RQ 2, which was concerned with understanding the overall narrative of student leaders.

RQ 1: How and to what extent does participation in the student leadership development program influence participants' (a) perceptions of their skills, (b) attitudes, and (c) self-efficacy for building relationships with peers and effectively communicating with ASU staff members and leaders on behalf of members of their organizations?

RQ 2: What do the narratives of student leaders representing and advocating for their minoritized peers reveal?

#### **Quantitative Data Collection**

A total of ten students participated in the Student Leadership Development Program. After completing the program, all were asked to complete two surveys. I used a post-intervention assessment followed by a retrospective, pre-intervention assessment for the surveys to collect quantitative data. The first survey was conducted one week after the

participants completed the program to allow time to practice the skills presented during the leadership development program. A week later, participants received the retrospective, post-intervention survey and completed it. Of the 10 participants who participated in the Student Leadership Development presentation, seven completed the surveys. I conducted interviews with five randomly selected participants to gather their experiences and narratives.

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

During the implementation of the intervention, I took notes to of the discussion and questions presented by the participants who attended the presentations. These notes served as opportunities to understand better the experiences of student coalition leaders and their work in supporting inclusive environments. After completing both surveys, participants who completed the survey received an invitation to participate in an interview. Interview participation was optional. To collect qualitative data, I randomly selected five participants from the seven participating in the study. During the data collection, I made observations and took notes to better support the study. I included these notes as qualitative data.

To enhance the validity of the quantitative and qualitative findings, I triangulated by merging the results (Creswell, 2016, Ivankova, 2015). By doing so, I was able to find relations between the survey results and the interview findings. In turn, this allowed a me to use the grounded interpretive approach for the qualitative data to understand better the quantitative data. Further, I used the theoretical frameworks to guide me as I conducted the interpretive work for the qualitative results.

## **Quantitative Data Analysis and Results**

I transferred the results for both the post-intervention survey and the retrospective, pre-intervention survey to separate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and then combined them into one to analyze the results using SPSS 28 (IBM, 2022). A total of seven participants completed both the retrospective, pre-intervention and the post-intervention surveys. These data were matched to the participants using a unique identifier constructed by the participants.

### ***Reliability Analyses for the Surveys***

Then these data were imported to SPSS for analysis. As a first step, I conducted reliability analyses of the various scales to obtain Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients, which were a measure of internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients equal to or exceeding .70 have been considered to be acceptable levels of reliability. Recall, survey responses were assessed using a 6-point Likert scale 6 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Agree*, 4 = *Slightly Agree*, 3 = *Slightly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, and 1 = *Strongly Disagree*.

Overall, results for the reliability analyses showed the scales were quite reliable. Reliability coefficients ranged from .66 to .95. Moreover, 10 of the 12 reliability coefficients equaled or exceeded .70 with the other two being near .70 and having values of .66 and .68. See Table 4 for the complete set of reliability coefficients.

**Table 4***Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Reliability Coefficient for the 12 Scales (n= 7)*

Scale	Pre-Intervention	Post-intervention
	Reliability	Reliability
Peer		
Skills	.70	.70
Attitudes	.87*	.71*
Self-efficacy	.95	.84
Staff		
Skills	.88	.68
Attitudes	.66**	.75**
Self-efficacy	.93	.82

*Note.* \*— Item 4 was removed. \*\*—Item 2 was removed.

***Results of Comparing the Means for the Retrospective, Pre-intervention and Post-intervention Surveys***

A multivariate, repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there were differences in the dependent variable across time and groups. The multivariate, repeated measures ANOVA for time, i.e., retrospective, pre-intervention means versus post-intervention means was not significant, multivariate- $F(3, 4) = 6.51, p = .051$ . Similarly, the test for group was not significant, multivariate- $F(3, 4) = 0.28, p < .85$ . Likewise, the test for the time x group interaction was not significant, multivariate- $F(3, 4) = 0.07, p < .98$ . Usually, at this point, the analysis would be concluded, but given the exploratory nature of this work, the individual

tests for the three measures—skills, attitude, and self-efficacy—across time were conducted. The repeated measures ANOVA test for skills across time was significant,  $F(1, 6) = 6.05, p < .05$ , with  $\eta^2 = .50$ , which is a large effect using Cohen's criteria (Olejnik & Algina, 2000). In particular, the retrospective, pre-intervention mean score for skills, which was 4.39 was significantly different than the post-intervention mean score of 4.93. Similarly, the repeated measures ANOVA test for attitudes across time was significant,  $F(1, 6) = 14.61, p < .01$ , with  $\eta^2 = .71$ , which is a large effect. Specifically, the retrospective, pre-intervention mean score for attitudes, which was 4.93 was significantly different than the post-intervention mean score of 5.60. By comparison, the repeated measures ANOVA test for self-efficacy was across time was not significant,  $F(1, 6) = 1.01, p < .36$ . No other follow-up ANOVAs were conducted. Thus, averaged over the two groups (peers and staff) there were increases in participants' skills and attitudes across pre- and post-intervention assessments.

**Table 5***Means and SDs\* for the Dependent Variables at Two Times of Testing and by Peer vs.**Staff Groups (n= 7)*

Group/Dependent Variable	Pre-Intervention	Post-intervention
	Score	Score
<b>Peer</b>		
Skills	4.43 (0.89)	4.96 (0.73)
Attitudes	4.95 (1.03)	5.71 (0.30)
Self-efficacy	4.29 (1.44)	4.71 (1.05)
<b>Staff</b>		
Skills	4.36 (1.04)	4.89 (0.94)
Attitudes	4.90 (0.66)	5.48 (0.57)
Self-efficacy	4.21 (1.37)	4.68 (0.90)

*Note.* \*—Standard deviations (SDs) have been presented in parentheses.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis and Results**

I began my quantitative and qualitative data analysis after I gathered all survey and interview data. The qualitative data included interview transcripts analyzed using HyperResearch 4.5.4 software (Researchware, 2022). First, I used an initial coding method that searches for the most frequent or important codes to develop salient categories (Saldana, 2021). I used this method to analyze each transcript individually. Once each transcript was reviewed and analyzed, I used HyperResearch to run a frequency report. This report assisted in identifying which codes were represented throughout to link all interviews together. I used code mapping to categorize the initial

codes to transition to the second coding cycle. I completed this process by reviewing and comparing the codes presented to determine a relation among them. Finally, I used focused coding to develop themes and conceptualize the data. Additionally, I used analytical memos to reflect on participants' actions and reactions. The analytical memos were created as "notes to self" while transcribing the interviews (Saldana, 2021). I used these memos to inform my coding.

### ***Qualitative Data Results***

The qualitative data analysis was used to help to answer the second research question: What do the narratives of student leaders representing and advocating for their minoritized peers reveal?

Five themes emerged from the qualitative data that helped me to understand better the experiences of student leaders. These themes included (a) personal reflection, (b) creating space, (c) leveraging their voices, (d) working together, and (e) dynamics of identity. In Table 6, I have provided information about the theme-related components, themes, and assertions based on interpreting the interview data.



**Table 6**

*Themes, Theme-related Components, and Assertions Based on Student Interviews*

Themes* and Theme-related Components	Assertions
<i>Personal reflection</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students found purpose and fulfillment in their role as a leader.</li><li>2. Students felt empowered and confident in their leadership skills.</li><li>3. Students noted they felt pride and honor to represent their communities.</li><li>4. Students identified areas of improvement to strengthen their leadership skills.</li></ol>	Students showed a desire to pay it forward during self-reflection.
<i>Creating space</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students indicated one of their roles as student coalition leaders was to connect with peer students.</li><li>2. Students found a strategy to encourage peer participation.</li><li>3. Students identified strategies to celebrate with their peers to build affinity regularly.</li></ol>	Students used a variety of strategies to create spaces to build community.
<i>Leveraging their voice</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students were comfortable asking critical questions to understand better institutional processes.</li><li>2. Students felt peer-to-peer conversations were essential in influencing their environment.</li><li>3. Students maintained they understood how sharing feedback could create change.</li></ol>	Students asked critical questions to advocate for their peers effectively and confidently.
<i>Working together</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students described relationships with coalition advisors and university staff members as informational.</li><li>2. Students elected to work with individuals whom they trusted.</li></ol>	Students recognized a shared purpose to reach goals and improve environments.

*Dynamics of identity*

1. Students demonstrated an understanding of peers' different experiences.
2. Students had differing definitions for the term minority.

Students recognized the complexity of identity dynamics and its relation to intersectionality as well as the importance of an inclusive environment.

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*Note.* \*—Themes have been presented in italics font.

In the following sections, I have described the themes and theme-related components that support each assertion. Moreover, I have provided participants' quotes to support the interpretations of these data.

**Theme 1—Personal Reflection.** *Assertion 1: Students show a strong desire to pay it forward during self-reflection.* Theme-related components contributing to Theme 1 that guided Assertion 1 were (a) Students found purpose and fulfillment in their role as a leader; (b) Students felt empowered and confident in their leadership skills;(c) Students noted they felt pride and honor to represent their communities; and (d) Students identified areas of improvement to strengthen their leadership skills. I have elaborated on these components and provided examples to support these components in the next section.

*Students Found Purpose and Fulfillment in Their Role as a Leader.* They reflected on their student experiences and adopted a sense of responsibility in supporting their peers. Despite the challenging work and different processes, students continued to serve in these positions because they recognized their effects on their peers' experiences. One student spoke about their role as increasing awareness of students' experiences to the institution staff members by sharing “as much as staff members are aware of how

student's feel about just anything or their perspective, the more that we can better the community." Another student found fulfillment in his role as a student coalition leader by affording students opportunities to serve in leadership roles. He claimed, "when we get new officers and they try to express themselves, they do not feel nervous even though they just began their journey." They identify their position as student leaders as the opportunity to pay it forward. For example, Emily (all names were pseudonyms) asserted,

Student organizations have made such an impact on me, and that is why I wanted to be part of them and continue to advocate for them because, my whole ASU experience would have been completely different if I didn't find like HBSA and El Co. ... these spaces are here and there, and we're still trying to continue to grow them. For people that have never heard of them, trying to get them connected is really important because if I hadn't known about them, my whole opinion of ASU would be night and day [different].

One student spoke about the opportunity to grow as a student leader. Because he was new to his role, he defined his role and found fulfillment in representing his peers; "Even if my opinion doesn't give us a reason, it might help in conversation." Students understood their levels of engagement with their peers could help in advocating better for their peers' experiences.

***Students Felt Empowered and Confident in Their Leadership Skills.***

Participants shared comments about confidence in building relationships with their peers to understand their needs and to be influential leaders. They noted the student leadership development program encouraged and motivated them to share their opinions and perspectives more openly. One student indicated the program encouraged him to share

his feedback, when he maintained, "It gave me the confidence to be wise to voice my concerns." A second indicated he felt "competent" in sharing students' perspectives with administrators and university staff. Another student reflected on how she shared her perspectives in the past and illustrated the confidence she had now, when she declared,

I would have in the past, [been] shy to share my perspectives, because I just don't want to especially like my perspective, you know, like, on giving feedback, because, you know, like, given especially constructive feedback, because I feel like I just don't want to offend people, but now I feel more comfortable especially because ASU is such a diverse university.

Another student leader spoke about his experience as a new leader within the coalition and how this program helped with his confidence when he stated, "I'm a fairly new leader, before I felt like I wasn't qualified or I guess, to share my peers' experiences. Now I am more aware."

***Students Noted They Felt Pride and Honor to Represent Their Communities.***

Students shared they were honored to teach others about their culture and shared their excitement in showcasing their culture through large-scale events visible across all the campuses. One student described the honor she felt in being a representative of a minoritized group by sharing, "I am proud of it and I'm happy and feel very honored to represent [my group]." One student asserted, "it was an honor telling people about our culture, showing people what our culture is."

Another student demonstrated excitement in recognizing people's identities and cultures. She reminisced about an event featuring food from different areas of Latin America and shared her experience in serving pupusas at the event allowed her to provide

a different experience for her peers. She described the reaction of a student who had attended the event when she stated, “having made a connection with people through food in that way, her face lit up.”

Students recognized the opportunities to speak to students with different experiences and represent the diversity within their coalition. One student shared that she was proud of representing her peers from different countries when she claimed,

I was really proud that I could represent like students from like different countries, which is a lot not just in America, but just all around the world. And I was also really proud that I had an opportunity to communicate with people from around the world.

***Students Identified Areas of Improvement to Strengthen Their Leadership***

***Skills.*** Students mentioned the leadership development program encouraged them to use their voices to advocate for their peers. One student suggested she would like to learn more about existing policies and awareness of processes to be a more decisive leader. "I think having a conversation with the Council of Presidents was informative because if this continues to happen now, we kind of know how to go about it in the future." The students spoke about the need to understand the institution's infrastructure. Another student indicated the student leadership program was beneficial to her position when she maintained, "I really enjoyed the program that we had. Ideally, it'd be great if there's more programs like that. We can participate."

Still, another student described the opportunities presented with respect to relationship building and giving feedback to staff members when she mentioned, “now I feel more comfortable voicing out what I think because it’s just normal. We are sharing.”

Finally, a student shared that although what he learned from the professional development program may not have been used now, he indicated, “it would help me in a long [at a future] time”.

**Theme 2—Creating space.** *Assertion 2: Students used a variety of strategies to create spaces to build community.*

Theme-related components that led to this theme and assertion included (a) Students indicated one of their roles as student coalition leaders was to connect with peer students; (b) Students found a strategy to encourage peer participation; (c) Students identified strategies to celebrate with their peers to regularly build affinity.

*Students identified one of their roles as student coalition leaders was to connect with peer students.* Through observation and recruitment strategies, students determined peers that could be part of the community they represented. One student used his student leader role to encourage others to attend the group’s meetings. He described his experiences for marketing events through resource fairs by sitting outside with a table to highlight upcoming events when he said,

I was freshly appointed event director. It was my first event and I had tabled [set up a table to promote the event] a couple of days before the welcome carnival inviting everyone telling them "you should be at the carnival. You will have fun, will love things, and Welcome Carnival is good."

Students thought of their own experiences in engaging with organizations and their peers. Based on reflections, they recognized that their peers might be too intimidated to attend meetings or be present at events. This hesitation for students to attend meetings could result from the lack of knowledge of the coalitions, their purposes,

and so on. Other students considered their own identities as reasons their peers did not engage. For example, students spoke of being "white-passing" or "coming from a place of privilege." One student recognized her peers' sacrifice in attending events and being present in meetings when she acknowledged,

Even if you see your friends, go talk to the person who's sitting by themselves because it does take a lot of initiative and courage to come to a meeting even by yourself and to continue to show up for yourself in that way. I think that as e-board we should acknowledge that because you're taking time out of your day when you could be doing homework or on your phone, you know, you're in showing up for yourself.

Students felt it was important to "as a leader I have to make students feel like they are a part of the community by reaching out to them and take initiative". Another student acknowledged the importance of connecting to students during their first year at the institution. He compares his experience as a first-year student and how he hopes to build connections with the student he represents. Hector shared "last year coming in, I saw there was a bigger community and I really wanted to be able to welcome them. Students like me, like we're freshmen, we're barely coming in and like they don't really know if it's fitting in or not, or if there's a space for them."

***Students Found a Strategy to Encourage Peer Participation.*** Students indicated they encouraged peer connection and participation by using the time with students to create and showcase an informal environment where peers could have conversations and connect. For example, one student stated, "If someone else says that, I would feel like they are approachable, and then I would not be afraid to talk to them." Similarly, another

strategy was to be visible to peers and the students they represented. Another student leader indicated using any opportunities to connect with people in her role as a student leader of the coalition. "Every opportunity I have, I'm making connections with people, like people from other countries."

Others shared their strategies to encourage participation by adopting "suitable approaches where people can share their culture and thoughts. We can send more direct direction [*sic*, connections] through communication." Finally, students shared they used established meetings to continue building connections "on our first general body meeting, we all meet each other for the first time. That is amazing to see."

***Students Identified Strategies to Celebrate with Their Peers to Build Affinity Regularly.*** Students celebrated culture and identity by planning and promoting large-scale events visible to everyone in the community. Attendance at these events ranged from 300 to 6,500 students. In planning these events, they considered the institution's diversity and adopted teaching about their cultures as one of the strategies. One student commented, "we broke a record [attendance] and everyone came out to the event, and every time that happens people want to learn more." Another student claimed the time spent on planning for a large-scale event was rewarding when they said, "[the event] was a really big thing I was very proud of because people could come out to the event."

They found events were a way to celebrate different identities and provide students an opportunity to experience and visualize the institution's diverse environments. For example, one student shared,

First of all, I had never been to a drag show in the first place. Because it's very nice to me in the first place. It was just so cool. Like seeing everyone being so



excited and coming together and like just seeing people that come from my background, but also just like people, like from the LGBT community and just a lot of like different students, not just like one ethnicity or race or any backgrounds.

When these large-scale events were held, organizers extended an invitation to all students. They promoted the different student organizations affiliated with their coalitions to continue creating community and opportunities for students to engage with available resources. Students also found large-scale events built affinity to the institution by celebrating culture and being together. One student shared about his experience as a university mascot at a coalition event and how he also stepped out of his comfort zone when he affirmed,

And in my entire life, I've not bought a single shoe that was not Nike, but I have to buy Adidas [now] because I had to play [mascot] so I went above and beyond and bought my first pair of non-Nike shoes. I played [mascot], it went absolutely well I loved it. Everyone loved it.

**Theme 3—Leveraging Voice.** *Assertion 3: Students ask critical questions to advocate for their peers effectively and confidently.* Theme components leading to Theme 3 and this assertion were (a) Students were comfortable asking critical questions to understand better institutional processes; (b) Students felt peer-to-peer interactions were essential in influencing their environment. C. Students shared they understood how sharing feedback could create change.

***Students Were Comfortable Asking Critical questions to Understand Better Institutional Processes.*** Students identified one of their responsibilities as student

coalition leaders was to be the voice of the communities they served. They felt comfortable meeting with other student organizations and university staff to ask necessary questions and gather information about other events or conversations that could influence their peers' experiences. For instance, one student spoke about her meetings to seek clarification about an event that created a sense of feeling unsafe for her community, when she stated,

I was on a call with the Council of Presidents because I was still trying to understand some details about the event. At least my understanding of what happened is that it's still a registered student organization and the event went through [student organization portal]. It still got funding and was still able to be up on the website, and to my understanding, that still goes through like student government.

Other students identified their leadership position as an opportunity to ask questions to create successful events, as noted when one student noted, "We have to abide by the university's regulations, and there is just a lot of things that we don't know." Further, students understood that sharing perspectives with staff and university leaders "can better our community." Others indicated their position as student coalition leaders allowed them to "share constructive feedback."

***Students Felt Peer-to-Peer Interactions Were Essential in Influencing the Environment.*** Students felt conversations with their peers helped them to understand their peers' perspectives to share this information with staff members. One student shared,

It's very important to communicate how students feel because we are students so I can think from both perspectives. Also, I can get direct input from students who are attending events. You give those inputs to the staff members, and it's very important you do that because that's when everyone can learn. And constant progress is very important.

Another student discussed the importance of peer-to-peer communication for students to feel more comfortable sharing their perspectives when they claimed,

I mean, obviously faculty to student conversations are very different than students [to] student conversations. I think like, it kind of just comes off more natural. I think it seems less intimidating. I feel like it's just or even just talking with someone who's your age is just conversations are just different.

One student discussed his experience as a minoritized student pursuing a degree in STEM. He indicated his role as a student coalition leader allowed him to relate and support other students by helping them and influencing their environment. Hector said,

We started talking and we had a really good conversation about feeling like not being in or stuff like that, especially in the STEM community because even one time it's harder to find people like me, or like, that come from my background.

***Students Maintained They Understood How Sharing Feedback Could Create Change.*** Students indicated that providing feedback to university staff members and administrators can drive change. For example, one student asserted, "It's very important if the staff members or the administrative leaders don't know what students feel, they cannot improve. They cannot make things better." Another student indicated that

feedback could increase awareness of the resources needed to support students, when they stated,

As much as the ASU staff members are aware of how like a student's about anything or their perspective, the more that we can better our community. And the more resources that we can provide. We can just send more like direct [offer] direction through like those kinds of communication.

One student shared a key takeaway from participating in the Student Leadership Development Program was an opportunity to gather additional feedback. She stated,

I took away different initiatives whenever I make conversation with students, I tried to be willing, more approachable, to be more available. The survey was practical advice, I took notes and gave it to a student leader to use in the future.

**Theme 4—Working Together.** *Assertion 4: Students recognized a shared purpose to reach goals and improve environments.* Theme-related components leading to this theme and assertion included (a) Students described relationships with coalition advisors and university staff members as informational; and (b) Students elected to work with individuals whom they trusted.

*Students Described Relationships with Coalition Advisors and University Staff Members as Informational.* Students indicated the communication with their advisors was focused on matters related to guidance about policies and procedures. In addition, they understood advisor's roles were to provide support and to help create positive environments. They saw their advisor as someone with whom they could share opinions as illustrated when one student claimed, "I'm a student leader and I should be able to voice their opinions and stories to administration."

Another student spoke about the common goals of student leaders and university staff members and the need to continue communicating the need to support diversity when they stated,

I always go back to the Jared Taylor example, only in that, like if we have all this infrastructure in place to advocate for diversity to advocate for minority students, and we're not listening to them, then it's like, it's just it seems like what we're doing is just performative, you know. The whole reason we're here is to like, is for students, you know, and so, like, I feel like that is a similar goal with faculty as well.

Another student shared how she facilitated conversations between her peers and her advisor. She indicated at times, students did not understand the involvement of advisors when she stated, "I ask advisors more questions and I discuss with them more." Another student spoke about the opportunities meeting with advisors offered when she said, "We are students so I can think from both perspectives and can communicate how students feel."

*Students Elected to Work with Individuals Whom They Trusted.* Students showed differences in who they trusted as a student coalition leader. They felt they could trust their advisors to provide support while learning their coalition roles. For example, one student noted,

I have less trust on [*sic*, of] my members, and I have more trust on my advisors, but I don't show that I don't really let them know. But you know, I asked my advisors more questions and then I would discuss with them more.

Another student spoke about her experiences advocating for her peers. These experiences included her interactions with people during that process and her concerns with the information provided during those meetings. Specifically, she mentioned,

I don't remember her name but somebody who's I think it's ... was even saying that the day that that had happened, someone had to walk a student back to their place because they were so scared. And I'm like, if ... if there's a student who can't walk back to like this, this is not like I don't know what [more] clear ... an example, there needs to be that this is like a safety concern.

Another student shared her experiences working with members of her coalition. She indicated she listens to students' feedback on how to plan events or lead the coalition when she stated, "If the point makes sense, I would definitely do that. If it doesn't make sense. I don't say it, I'll use my judgement to make decisions. Further, she indicated her relationship with her coalition advisor was one that was safe because it supported her growth, "I can apologize and advisors don't care that I make a small mistake, or even consider it a mistake."

**Theme 5—Dynamics of Identity.** *Assertion: Students recognized the complexity of identity dynamics as well as the importance of inclusive environments.* Theme-related components that led to Theme 5 and this assertion included (a) Students demonstrated an understanding of peers' different experiences; (b) Students had different definitions for the term minority.

***Students Demonstrated an Understanding of Peers' Different Experiences.***

Students understood the experiences of their peers varied because they were from different cultures or because their parents were from different backgrounds. For example,

one student claimed, "My most memorable experiences are to be able to connect with people from different countries like, you know, make connections and then build those relationships." Another shared excitement in representing and recognizing the value of food, recognizing the diversity within their institution and providing that experience to students who needed that connection to the coalition and community.

I know it's like something really small but because we got the pupusas and empanadas and like, we would not have had that if we went through ASU catering. There was somebody ... who came up to me at the event and was like, "Hey, I hadn't had pupusa since my mom made them. It's great to be able to finally. " It's having that recognition through food like and has been able to make a connection with people.

Students reflected on the importance of listening to others' opinions. They created safe, open environments to afford the opportunity to learn without fear as they shared different perspectives. One student suggested listening could help to build a safe environment when they said, "to understand everyone's opinions." Another student shared, "it is a diverse world, you just need to learn to accept different opinions."

Students shared how those experiences affected how they represented and celebrated their peers' identities. They demonstrated excitement in planning events that allowed space for many different students' identities to be present and to embrace the diversity within the institution. For example, one student said,

I am white, and I am only part Mexican and I think that does definitely like affect who I am as a student leader, and I think it's something that I recognize like even

from the get-go of being on the Council of Coalitions because I know like for some students that like may be part Mexican and things like that, they see me.

Students understood different experiences could lead to varying opinions. One student shared: "So, the more diverse ASU [is], the more different opinions, and being in such a diverse world, you just need to learn to accept different opinions." They illustrated how to respond and lead within the coalition, when they acknowledged,

You have to be really cautious we're from a different culture. And she might be from a different culture background. So, it was important to be cautious about the words that I'm using. I have a different way to like approaching people like from which cultural icons they came from.

*Students Had Differing Definitions for the Term Minority.* Some students whom I interviewed spoke about their experiences as a minoritized person and determined these experiences served as reasons to represent their communities. For example, one student stated,

She found out I was Hispanic because of my last name because I'm kind of white-passing. Sometimes people get shocked. She saw my last name on my nametag, and she already sees that I was Hispanic and she asked me if I was and we just started talking. We had a really good conversation about feeling like not being in or like, stuff like that, especially in the STEM community because I think even one time like it's even harder to find people that are like me, or like, you know, come from my background.

International students interviewed did not believe they or their communities were minoritized. For instance, a student maintained, "At ASU, I believe, international



students are no longer minoritized because you know, we have such a big group, but I do think being like a student leader of international students, I think I'm proud of it."

Another student claimed,

I don't feel like we are the minority as we are the coalition of international students. And it was an honor telling people about our culture, showing people what our culture is, and ever since I've been an ASU I've never been treated like I don't belong here.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

Evidence that leadership development is an essential discussion within higher education to support the growth of all students, including minoritized communities, and provides context for the study. The opportunity to understand better how to support student coalition leaders within the institution as they advocate and create change for their minoritized peers guided this study. Previous chapters recognized student coalition leaders' responsibility and influenced their campus environment through activism and advocacy. These chapters also illustrated the need to provide student coalition leaders with the tools and training to succeed in their roles. Previous chapters also detailed the intervention providing tools for students to better activate and advocate for their communities, including relationship building, data gathering, and advocacy. Student coalition leaders received an invitation to participate in presentations to gain more knowledge about these topics, develop a community of practice, and ask questions to support their role as student leaders.

#### **Complementarity and Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

Creswell and Guetterman (2019) described integrating mixed methods results as the opportunity to view and combine qualitative and quantitative data to display a more comprehensive picture of the findings. In this study, the integration occurs during the data analysis, when I find points that complement one another to triangulate the data (Ivankova, 2015). This process involves comparing the quantitative and qualitative data side-by-side to determine their complementarity, the extent to which the quantitative and

qualitative data point to the same conclusions and thus reinforce one another (Greene, 2007).

The increases in skills demonstrated in the quantitative data are also reflected in the qualitative findings. Specifically, findings of participants' descriptions of using strategies to engage peers and to collect information to share with university staff. The findings also illustrate their use of skills in fostering peer participation in their organizations. Similarly, increases in attitudes were shown as participants identified the importance of relationship building and creating opportunities for students to connect. Additionally, they showed an increase in attitudes in representing their peers.

By comparison, the data for self-efficacy are discrepant, rather than being complementary. Specifically, the qualitative data indicate students possess substantial levels of self-efficacy for representing their peers and organizations. On the other hand, the quantitative data do not reflect a change in self-efficacy. These outcomes might be explained in two different ways. First, the lack of change in the quantitative scores might be due to an inability of participants to implement all the skills learned during the Student Leadership Development presentation. This outcome could be explained using Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy framework. In particular, students may not have had enough time to attain mastery experiences on these skills, so their self-efficacy did not increase substantially. Second, the quantitative instrument requires students to respond to statements about themselves as individuals—for example, "I am certain I can ...;" whereas, students are describing a communal approach in their interview responses. Thus, individual responses might be lower because they are comfortable with using a

communal approach, which is consistent with social capital from CCW (Yosso, 2005) and CRT (ref, year).

### **Discussing the Findings Relative to Theoretical Frameworks and Research**

The Student Leadership Development Program (SLDP) participants demonstrate a strong desire to pay it forward, which is consistent with consciousness' of self, one of the seven Cs, the essential elements of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development ([SCM;] Skendall, 2016). In particular, in this program participants reflect on their values, skills, motivations, and alignment with their roles, which is highlighted in Skendall's work.

Notably, students also reflect on their experiences as new students, their feelings of not being connected, and how they worked to find their community, and now they draw upon these experiences to aid others in finding and building community through collaboration and common purpose (Skendall, 2016). Because of their own experience, they can identify peers who could benefit from participating in the student coalitions and the communities they create and demonstrate a high level of responsibility in connecting and advocating for their peers to support a positive environment, which is consistent with navigational capital from CCW (Yosso, 2005). The quantitative data illustrated this as students found that connecting to their peers was essential to their work. Similarly, students' narratives spoke to the importance of relationship-building to strengthen relationships and deepen the understanding of the needs of their communities, which reflects CRT (Crenshaw, 1988) and social capital from Yosso's (2005) work.

Finally, participants demonstrate a sense of empowerment and confidence when sharing their stories about their work with their student organizations, which is linked to

the importance of storytelling in CRT (Crenshaw, 1988; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In doing so, student participants connect their work to values-driven perspectives in which they believe. These values and attitudes allow them to attain congruence, another of the Cs from the SCM (Skendall, 2016). Congruence is the consistency between an individual's values and beliefs and how they act as they build relationships with others. These outcomes exemplify their ownership and motivation to continue their roles in representing their peers.

Notably, collaboration, another of the seven Cs from the SCM, is evident in the responses of these developing student leaders. Through collaboration, student leaders share responsibility to achieve mutually determined goals and nurture relationships to support diverse perspectives (Skendall, 2016). Efforts by participants include increasing their understanding of and their actual abilities to work more effectively with others .

Moreover, student leaders identify the importance of working together. They recognize a shared purpose to reach goals and improve the environment. Student leader participation in the Student Leadership Development Program exposed them to the differences and opportunities in advocacy and activism and the value of identifying group values as noted in the SCM (Astin, 1996; Dugan, 2006; Skendall, 2016). Notably the qualitative data illustrate students' interests and commitment to building relationships with their peers and university staff to move their goals forward. Further, the quantitative data support this finding showing an overall increase in students' perceptions of their skills and attitudes for building relationships with peers and effectively communicating with university staff members.

Another theme in the qualitative narrative results demonstrates student leaders' ownership of creating a space for minoritized communities to support their peers' participation and build community. Drawing upon their cultural wealth student leaders believe they can use their leadership roles to support their peers' sense of community by drawing upon their aspirational and social capital (Yosso, 2005).

Participants in this study use their cultural knowledge to support and guide their peers to be involved and participate in student engagement opportunities outside of the classroom to find their community. Further, Yosso (2005) argues that minoritized students' cultural wealth assists them as they navigate higher education systems. As part of this community building, student coalition leaders display their influence in creating a sense of belonging. In their interview responses, they offer instances in which their peers' connection to their coalition supported them. By planning events that acknowledge identity, tradition, and cultural diversity, the coalition leaders influence a sense of belonging and celebration of diversity (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). One of the student's stories highlighted how she practiced her relationship-building skills by approaching all students in her role to create space for her peers to share their experiences and struggles in classes to demonstrate that they are supported in the student organization. All student coalition leaders perceive the value of creating space as crucial to their work to create inclusive environments. This demonstration of using their cultural wealth to support their peers are a skills and values clearly represented in the qualitative data (Yosso, 2005). Moreover, their stories also illustrate student coalition leaders' social, navigational, resistant, and aspirational capital through their stories of events, forms of

advocacy, and individual conversations, which is consistent with Yosso's cultural wealth model.

The SCM (Astin, 1996; Skendall, 2016) supports the design of the intervention and provides a structure to encourage conversations with student coalition leaders about their leadership roles and how they collaborate with other peer organizations, students, and university staff members. The data include student coalition leaders' attitudes and perceptions of communicating and advocating on behalf of their peers to university leaders (Byrd & Sanders, 2021; Linder, 2019). In their post-intervention survey, students demonstrated increased skills and attitudes toward collaborating with student peers *and* university leaders to address students' perspectives. The qualitative data help to 'unpack' this quantitative data because students' responses showcase the importance of the relationship between the student peers and the coalition leader and advisor. In the student leaders' stories, there were minimal descriptions about individual conversations with university administrators. Instead, the qualitative data illustrate student leaders found support in working with their advisors. Students view their advisors as individuals who can interpret policies, help with their event planning, and answer any questions centered around logistics. The involvement of advisors in their coalitions can affect the student experience because advisors serve as liaisons between the university and students. Data indicate students frequently engage in transactional relationships in which they seek assistance from the advisors to guide them as they work with peers in minoritized student communities. Notably, students demonstrate an increased awareness of and greater appreciation for the experiences their peers bring to the table, how those differ from their own, and how they can continue to create spaces to celebrate and support each other's

different backgrounds, thoughts, and opinions, which links to storytelling related to CRT and CCW (Crenshaw, 1988; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1996; Yosso, 2005). Through the survey data, students increase their perceptions of their skills and attitudes as they facilitate healthy dialogues with students and deal with differing opinions. Most importantly, this emerging sense of intersectionality allows them to think beyond their experiences and their traditions to celebrate others and build community (Cho et.al., 2013).

Differences appear in the narratives among students when they are asked about advocating for their peers. Notably, some students do not discuss their steps for gathering data and do not provide examples advocating for positive change that supports their peers' learning environments. Instead, some speak of the importance of understanding the needs of students through relationship-building and conversations (Astin, 1996; Skendall, 2016). Specifically, international student leaders consider their community's strength in supporting one another and having a strong presence and relationships fostered through events and daily connections among students. In comparison, other student coalition leaders considered their work in relationship building as necessary as they worked toward advocating for students' needs for feeling safe and belonging to the university community. After participating in the intervention, all students recognize the importance of effectively gathering data to represent students' experiences when advocating to university staff members.

### ***Differing Definitions of the Term Minority***

The definitions of the term's minority and minoritized varied in an interesting way. When asked to share their experiences as minoritized students, participants who



represented the Council of International Students did not identify as minority or minoritized students. Participants who represent other coalitions associate their experiences as minoritized with a lack of representation of their perspectives within the larger culture. By comparison, international students spoke about their positive experiences at the institution and the strong community among them. Specifically, they speak about the enormous diversity of international students within the institution. Their experiences can be related to the large number of international students attending the institution and the broad representation of countries and cultures at the institution.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are a number of limitations to the study including two threats to validity, the limited number of participants, and the brevity of the intervention and time for participants to implement what they learned. Threats to validity, that is to say alternative ways to explain the outcomes in a study other than attributing it to the intervention, include history and the experimenter effects (Smith & Glass, 1987). The history threat effect occurs when something outside the intervention, affects participants' skills, attitudes and self-efficacy to work with university staff members. For example, some participants in this study are members of other student organizations. Therefore, in their responses, these individuals speak about their overall experience supporting students. They may have considered the role of other student organizations when answering. Additionally, student organizations with active advisors or peer mentors receive recurring advice to support their peers, which may influence how they represented perceptions of their skills, attitudes, and self-efficacy when completing the surveys.

Moreover, respondents' narratives indicate that some student leaders who were part of other student organizations before their role as student coalition leaders found a sense of belonging within other organizations. This form of social capital is embedded in nationally recognized student organizations such as the Hispanic Business Association and provide a sense of self-efficacy and positive attitudes when participating in the study. This experience may lead to some participants speaking about the history of their student organization involvement, not limiting their survey answers or their interview responses to their role as student coalition leaders.

The experimenter effect occurs when participants react to the experimenter rather than to the intervention (Smith & Glass, 1987). Initially, I planned to deliver the intervention in modules using technology. Nevertheless, department changes in staff members and leaders limited my access to student coalition leaders. The change in staffing minimized communication with student coalition leaders initially because the staff member was learning the position and developing their relationships with student organizations. The difference in staffing and timing means understanding their role as student coalition leader advisors, including the level of training student coalition leaders receive. Because of this, I altered my information delivery and hosted a presentation encompassing modules to interested student coalitions. The participants' responses may have reflected this as some knew me from my previous roles and answered questions based on our relationship. To mitigate the experimenter effect, I designed the interview questions to address their experiences as leaders and reminded them of the confidentiality of the study.

Further, the number of participants was quite small with seven students in all participating in the data collection. As a result, these participants may have been those who were most receptive to the study and its implementation. Thus, they may have provided more favorable responses to the surveys and the interviews. Finally, there were some required changes in the delivery of the intervention and the time for students to implement what they learn in the sessions. Changes in the study may affect the data because students only had a short time to implement what they learned from the presentation. Initially, the timeline allowed a month of information delivery and an opportunity for implementation. I took a different approach due to the time constraints of study and the availability of student coalition leaders. In response to this change, I voice my continued support for students through Slack and my availability as they implemented the skills shared in the sessions. Although forms of support existed, students did not contact me with any questions or concerns.

### **Personal Lessons Learned**

When I began the program, I needed to recognize the impact of action-based research on how we approach work within student development. It is easiest to create a one-size fits all model as we consider the building of leadership skills for college students. We focus on influencing young adults' critical thinking and negotiation skills and how to use their voices to make a change. Doing so with the same playbook and strategies may not benefit the students we serve. Action research allows us to implement strategies and make changes, considering environmental influences, participants, and real-time feedback. This approach allows student affairs practitioners to answer the needs of the students we serve in real-time.

There are many terms researchers, practitioners, administrators, and student leaders adopt to identify or label the individual in such a diverse world. However, through my research and data collection, I was reminded that individuals define identity. For example, research explains why we should move away from the terms underrepresented or minority to consider this a system outcome, not a person's decision. Nevertheless, students may see themselves by their feelings, considering their experience and not the label. We can only gather this through storytelling, conversations with individuals, and asking questions. This rich data is gathered by providing a platform for students to share their stories.

This process reinforced the value of community. Not only as we support our students but how they support one another. It reinforced my community as personal challenges forced me to question how I would complete this dissertation. The community pulls you up and stands by you. I can see that through my data as I work with students, and I can see that in my own experiences. As higher education professionals, we should consider this first, as a student's success depends on is highly affected by their experiences. Specifically, we should consider whom we are leaving out and our responses to how we bring them in.

There are opportunities to consider students' experiential and social capital of our students and reframe how we approach our work in transitioning them from our K-12 systems to higher education. My understanding of this, along with action research, has allowed me to dig deeper into research, create strategic plans supported by literature and check in with those plans daily to see their impact on the work. In my new position within the institution focusing on outreach and college readiness work, action research

will support my own growth as I direct programs that focus on our minoritized students as well the growth of the department as we tackle college education attainment.

The biggest lesson I took from this program is the value mixed methods have on telling the whole story. In developing my intervention, I considered the skills student leaders needed to communicate effectively with the institution's leaders. One of the ways we speak to our senior leadership is through metrics and outcomes. Numbers talk when people are not there to tell the story. It allows us to pinpoint where we need to make changes to consider what are some possible interventions and responses to the presented data. I am now a mixed-methods research advocate as the qualitative and quantitative data allowed me to not only understand the experience of our minoritized student leaders, it assisted me in seeing the change after the intervention itself.

### **Implications for Practice**

The Student Leadership Development Program to support minoritized student leaders effectively provides support and resources to students connecting with and advocating for their peers. Results of the study indicate a need to provide leadership training for students to support their work and foster student-to-staff relationships to collaboratively create a positive learning environment and sense of belonging for all students. Student service professionals, for example, student advisors, should plan leadership development programs to increase participation and prepare student leaders for their roles. Additionally, continuously providing student leadership opportunities throughout their tenure as student leaders will equip students to respond to and advocate more effectively for the needs of their peers.

Additionally, when considering the literature supporting this study and the narratives student coalition leaders share about their experiences, it is crucial to create a sense of community early on as student coalition leaders and minoritized students. Specifically, student leaders readily create spaces where members of their organization could connect with one another. Notably, they focus on building affirming spaces that allow students to share experiences and background, concerns, and aspirations. Creating space is a powerful approach that should be used more fully going forward. For example, staff members might emphasize this notion as they create a platform for student leaders to work collaboratively with their peers.

Student engagement staff and advisors should acknowledge the experiences of minoritized students and address their specific needs in advocating for positive learning environments. The responsibilities of student coalition leaders focus not only on student engagement but on reacting and advocating for change when there are threats to their learning environment. As student service professionals, we should strive to create leadership development programs that speak to their cultural wealth, activism, and advocacy needs to help create a safe space in which they can carry out their leadership roles. By considering cultural wealth, such as personal experiences and cultural backgrounds, staff members can avoid a color-blind approach to student leadership development as they support student coalition leaders and build a collaborative relationship.

Further, staff must develop relationships with their student coalition leaders early in this process. This form of relationship building may not always be possible due to staff changes. Moreover, student coalition advisors are usually entry-level positions, and there

is constant transition within the department. Overall, developing initial relationships with student leaders will afford a sense of support to the coalition leader and will provide the opportunity for advisors to gauge the needs of their coalition leaders. Based on these needs, advisors can deliver training to support minoritized student leaders' self-efficacy, skills, and attitudes in advocating for their peers.

Notably, student coalition leaders find value in the Student Leadership Development Program because it provided steps for them to take to build better relationships with their peers and gather data to effectively advocate for the needs of their peers to university staff members. Student coalition advisors are responsible for these leaders' everyday support and development. As mentioned previously, most advisors serving the Council of Coalition are entry-level professionals or student engagement staff not familiar with the specific needs of the student coalition needs. I propose that professional development opportunities be offered to advisors for their self-efficacy and skills as they navigate the conversations with our minoritized students. As a result, this can strengthen and streamline the development of the relationship with the student coalition leaders they advise.

Moreover, considering the student leaders' level of involvement and tenure with the student coalition leader group could lead to developing specific workshops for new, incoming student coalition leaders, which differ from workshops for those who have previously served in that role. Finally, it is essential to display a deep understanding of minoritized students' specific challenges and experiences to appropriately respond to those and provide the support necessary as they navigate the policies and procedures as

student coalition leaders while they continue in their roles as students in pursuit of a degree.

## **Conclusion**

Leadership development training encompasses more than the logistical approaches to event planning, conducting general body meetings, and electing students to represent their communities. The context, theories, and conclusions highlight the importance of building a sense of community to collaborate, support and initiate conversations that will positively influence the student experience. The narratives presented by participants speak to the richness of student recognition and relationships to create space and a sense of belonging within the institution. As we support student coalition leaders, we must listen to their experiences as minoritized student leaders. Often, these experiences shape their leadership approach and motivate them as they serve in these roles.

To support our minoritized student coalition leaders, we must abandon deficit thinking and consider how their own experiences were life lessons that shape how they navigate the institution as students and leaders. Workshops, training, or individualized sessions that consider both the student coalition leader's challenges in their role and the wealth of knowledge they bring to the table could continue to increase their motivation and their purpose in advocating for change. Students demonstrate their abilities to make peer-to-peer connections and understand the importance of enriching these connections by speaking to identity and recognizing diversity in thought, language, and upbringing. As student service professionals, we must continue to highlight the value of these



conversations because they influence students' experiences and sense of connection to the institution, as revealed in the stories student leaders share.

The Social Change Model provided a framework to revisit students' consciousness of self, congruence, and collaboration abilities to lead and create change effectively. The data demonstrates students understand their purpose and role as student coalition leaders and illustrate a need for continued support as they navigate this responsibility. Student leaders indicate relationships between staff members and student leaders are essential to fulfilling their roles as coalition leaders. Nevertheless, this relationship tends to be one of information-sharing and is process and procedure driven.

One essential function of student coalition leaders is to build community within their institution, and they succeed in planning events that celebrate the diversity within the institution. Naturally, as these student leaders build their relationships with peers and establish connections, their peers will share their experiences and be more inclined to suggest ways the institution could support a positive learning environment and a sense of belonging for them. To do this, student coalition advisors and leaders should determine the best approach to sharing this feedback and advocate for change. For example, suppose the purpose of student coalition leaders is to be the voice of those they represent. In that case, the university's staff members will provide them with the tools necessary to speak to their specific challenges as leaders representing minoritized communities.

Finally, having a one-size-fits-all approach to how we support student leaders advocating for their communities clearly is not an effective approach. The data illustrate that students have differing definitions and lived experiences with respect to the terms *minority* and *minoritized*. For all participants, community affects their connection to their

institution and how they view their experiences. This sense of community is enough for them to celebrate and learn from one another. To others, a sense of community is a safe space within a large institution that supports their safety and positive experience. For these student leaders, remaining diligent and informed is necessary to support their peers' experiences, celebrate various identities through events, and guide their spaces to ultimately influence the university community.

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APPENDIX A  
POST INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT

## Peer-focused Items

### Skills

1. As a student coalition leader, I have the ability to deal with conflicting opinions during meetings with students.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
2. As a student coalition leader, I have the skills to network with my peers.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
3. As a student coalition leader, I have the ability to build relationships with peers whom I represent.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
4. As a student leader, I possess talents to collaborate with students.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree

## **Attitudes**

1. As a student coalition leader, I think it is important to create opportunities to connect with students.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. I believe it is critical to use my relationship-building skills to learn more about the peers I represent.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. As a student coalition leader, I am excited to create opportunities for healthy dialogue with students.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. As a student coalition leader, I believe students who have varying opinions/ideas are beneficial to the student group.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

### **Self-efficacy**

1. I am certain I can build meaningful relationships with the peers I represent.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. I am sure I can collaborate with my peers.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. I am certain I can provide space for my peers to connect with me.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. I am confident I can build trust with the students I represent.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

### **University Staff Member- and Administrator-focused Items Skills**

1. As a student coalition leader, I have the ability represent students' perspectives to university staff members and administrators during meetings.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
2. As a student coalition leader, I have the skills to network with university staff members and administrators.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
3. As a student coalition leader, I have skills to deal with conflict when working with university staff members and administrators.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
4. As a student leader, I have the ability to build relationships with university staff members and administrators to move students' interests forward.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree

## **Attitudes**

1. As a student coalition leader, I think it is important to create opportunities to connect with university staff and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. I believe it is critical to use my relationship-building to develop connections to university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. As a student coalition leader, I am excited to create opportunities for healthy dialogue with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. As a student leader, I believe it is important to represent students' varying opinions/ideas to university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

### **Self-efficacy**

1. I am certain I can build relationships with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. I am certain I can collaborate with university staff members and administrators to address students' perspectives.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. I am certain I can successfully represent students' needs/interests when meeting with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. I am certain I can create opportunities for healthy dialogue with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

APPENDIX B

RETROSPECTIVE, PRE-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT



## **Peer-focused Items**

### **Skills**

1. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I had the ability to deal with conflicting opinions during meetings with students, as a student coalition leader.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
2. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I had the skills to network with my peers as a student coalition leader.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
3. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I had the ability to build relationships with peers whom I represent.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree
  
4. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I possessed talents to collaborate with students as a student coalition leader.
  1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree
  3. Slightly disagree
  4. Slightly agree
  5. Agree
  6. Strongly agree

### **Attitudes**

- Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I thought it was important to create opportunities to connect with students.
1. Strongly disagree
  2. Disagree

3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. Prior to participating in the leadership program, believed it was critical to use my relationship-building skills as a student coalition leader to learn more about the peers I represent.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I was excited to create opportunities for healthy dialogue with students.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I believe students who have varying opinions/ideas are beneficial to the student group.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

### **Self-efficacy**

1. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I was certain I can build meaningful relationships with the peers I represent.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I was sure I could collaborate with my peers.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I was certain I could provide space for my peers to connect with me.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I was confident I could build trust with the students I represent.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

## **University Staff Member- and Administrator-focused Items**

### **Skills**

1. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I had the ability represent students' perspectives to university staff members and administrators during meetings.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I had the skills to network with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I had skills to deal with conflict when working with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student leader, I had the ability to build relationships with university staff members and administrators to move students' interests forward.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

## **Attitudes**

1. Prior to participating in the leadership program as a student coalition leader, I thought it was important to create opportunities to connect with university staff and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I believed it is critical to use my relationship-building to develop connections to university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I was excited to create opportunities for healthy dialogue with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
7. Disagree
8. Slightly disagree
9. Slightly agree
10. Agree
11. Strongly agree

4. Prior to participating in the leadership program, as a student coalition leader, I believed it is important to represent students' varying opinions/ideas to university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

### **Self-efficacy**

1. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I was certain I could build relationships with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

2. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I was certain I could collaborate with university staff members and administrators to address students' perspectives.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

3. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I was certain I could successfully represent students' needs/interests when meeting with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

4. Prior to participating in the leadership program, I was certain I could create opportunities for healthy dialogue with university staff members and administrators.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Slightly agree
5. Agree
6. Strongly agree

APPENDIX C  
IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

[Ray Buss](#)  
[Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - West Campus](#)  
602/543-6343  
RAY.BUSS@asu.edu

Dear [Ray Buss](#):

On 7/21/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Supporting Student Leader Development: Building Student Voice to Represent Minoritized Students' Perspectives
Investigator:	<a href="#">Ray Buss</a>
IRB ID:	STUDY00016272
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ASU Approval from Shelly Potts, Category: Other;</li><li>• Intervention, Category: Other;</li><li>• Interview Protocol, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li><li>• IRB Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol;</li><li>• Recruitment Consent Letter, Category: Consent Form;</li><li>• Survey 1, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li><li>• Survey 2, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li></ul>



The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 7/21/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at [research.integrity@asu.edu](mailto:research.integrity@asu.edu) to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

**REMINDER** -- Effective January 12, 2022, in-person interactions with human subjects require adherence to all current policies for ASU faculty, staff, students and visitors. Up-to-date information regarding ASU's COVID-19 Management Strategy can be found [here](#). IRB approval is related to the research activity involving human subjects, all other protocols related to COVID-19 management including face coverings, health checks, facility access, etc. are governed by current ASU policy.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc:

Bibiana Rivera  
Jill Wendt